

# Catholic Schools' Trustees Service



## Introduction

The Catholic Trustees, comprising Diocesan Bishops, Religious Congregations and Lay Trustees, are responsible for the defining mission, ethos and ownership of 489 maintained special, nursery, primary and secondary schools as well as 29 Voluntary Grammar Schools in Northern Ireland. This represents some 43.4% of the school estate. In 2016/17, some 150,253 pupils were enrolled in schools managed by Catholic Trustees, representing 44% of the school-going population and making Catholic managed schools the largest school sector in Northern Ireland.

Trustees have responsibility for decisions relating to all aspects of the property and buildings of Catholic schools, including complex and resource intensive financial, legal, planning, procurement, maintenance, disposal and other responsibilities.

Trustees have continuous oversight of the strategic direction, organisational nature and collective ethos of the whole Catholic school sector. This includes responsibility to provide cohesive and professionally informed support to Catholic schools in key areas of Department policy such as shared education, jointly-managed Church schools, community use of schools, local community outreach and engagement, promoting good relations, cross-sectoral planning, procurement, expansion, enhancement and closure of schools, raising standards and post-primary transfer.

## Who we Are and what we do

The Catholic Schools' Trustee Service (CSTS) provides The Trustees with a professional support body to assist them in carrying out their responsibilities within the network of Catholic managed schools in Northern Ireland.

CSTS, as a sectoral support body for Catholic schools, will seek to develop systems in support of all Catholic school Trustees.

The role of the CSTS is to:

- provide appropriate advice and support to the Trustees in developing and promoting, at all levels, the ethos of Catholic education, based on the personal teaching and witness of Jesus Christ;
- support the Trustees in promoting the ethos of Catholic-managed schools, through the provision of advice and guidance to Governors and Principals;
- provide professional support and advice to the Trustees in respect of area planning for the Catholic Managed Schools' sector on the basis of agreed protocols with CCMS, EA

and DE and mindful of the new role of Local District Councils in community planning for schools;

- assist the Trustees in engaging with other Churches in developing arrangements for 'Jointly-Managed' Church schools as envisaged in Department Circular 2015/15;
- assist the Trustees in their commitment to developing the role of Catholic schools in shared education.
- assist the Trustees in working with all Catholic schools to develop more cohesive engagement within the sector in response to Department policy in areas such as shared education, area planning and post-primary transfer.

## **Strategic Context**

CSTS is a key sectoral support body playing a significant role in its contribution to shaping current and future educational provision in Northern Ireland. At a time of rapid change within society in Northern Ireland and the increased pressures on public finances the CSTS seeks to represent the interests of Trustees in promoting the ethos of Catholic Education within the education system in Northern Ireland. As a key sector, the role of CSTS is vital to the promotion and growth of this sector which is based on a vision and values central to the development of a well-rounded society and responsible citizens with an inclusive and caring outlook on life.

## **Our Vision, Mission and Values**

### **Vision**

Our Vision for the provision of Catholic Education is outlined in Building the Peace and Shaping the Future [http://www.catholicbishops.ie/wp-content/uploads/images/docs/buildingpeace\\_october.pdf](http://www.catholicbishops.ie/wp-content/uploads/images/docs/buildingpeace_october.pdf)

*Education must pay regard to the formation of the whole person, so that all may attain their eternal destiny and at the same time promote the common good of society. Children and young persons are therefore to be cared for in such a way that their physical, moral and intellectual talents may develop in a harmonious manner, so that they may attain to a greater sense of responsibility and a right use of freedom, and be formed to take an active part in social life. (Code of Canon Law, can. 795)*

This strategy is based upon the Catholic Vision 2006 and can found at <http://catholiceducation-ni.com/content/view/33/64/>. This vision is sourced from the following key documents:

*Proclaiming the Mission – The Distinctive Philosophy and Values of Catholic Education, The Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland, (Ara Coeli, Armagh 2001);*

*Building Peace Shaping the Future, The Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland, (Ara Coeli, Armagh 2001)*

*Life to the Full: A Vision for Catholic Education. CCMS Council for Catholic Maintained Schools. (Veritas1996)*

This strategy is further informed by Vision 08 the vision for Catholic education in Ireland found at:

<http://catholiccommunications.ie/vision08/vision08pastoralletter.pdf>

Catholic education has the Gospel at its core:

*“Worship of God through prayer and the celebration of liturgy and the sacraments, ‘the doors to the sacred’, belongs at the very centre of the Catholic school’s life”*

*Catholic education is inspired by the Gospel and, as such, respects the freedom and dignity of every human being.”*

## **Mission Statement**

**The CSTS, in promoting a culture of excellence in education will provide strategic leadership, support and guidance to the Trustees of the Catholic Managed Sector, in developing its distinctive ethos and positive contribution to Education in Northern Ireland.**

## **Values**

The CSTS promotes the values of Catholic Education as follows:

**Catholic Education** takes place in communities inspired by the Spirit of Christ's commandment to love God and neighbour inspires a caring ethos which is expressed in relationships within and beyond Catholic schools.

**Catholic Education** is person-centred. It promotes the dignity, self-esteem and full development of each person who is made in God's image and uniquely loved by God.

**Catholic Education** is inclusive. It is respectful of, and engages with people of all beliefs; it encourages the religious development of all in their own faith.

**Catholic Education** is rooted in the Gospel values of Respect for Life, Love, Solidarity, Truth and Justice; it aims to harmonise faith and culture, build a better society and pursue the Common Good.

*Together, Catholic Schools provide high quality, rounded education for all young people, so that they develop their full uniqueness and potential.*

## **Corporate Aims**

The CSTS has articulated its corporate headings under the three broad headings below:

### **Mission**

In recognition of the rich tradition underpinning Catholic education and its positive contribution to the Common Good, CSTS, working on behalf of the Trustees and in partnership with other stakeholders, will continue to articulate and promote the vision of Catholic Education, its ethos and values. The CSTS will actively contribute to the development of greater coherence within the Catholic sector as well as positively supporting, in collaboration with others, the progression of the wider shared agenda within the Education Service.

### **Policy**

Through the development of Policy, CSTS will seek to contribute to an effective, efficient and coherent Education system which embraces a culture of empowerment and promotes respect for diversity within catholic-managed schools. It will seek to inform policy development by other bodies and act as an advocate for the Catholic-managed schools generally, and in particular, with respect to policy development.

### **People**

CSTS, will work in partnership with other bodies, to promote strategies and operational mechanisms to develop a more professional and flexible workforce, capable of fostering the philosophy of Catholic education and meeting the spiritual, pastoral and educational needs of children.

## **Key Strategic Priorities**

CSTS Corporate objectives are:

1. To provide appropriate advice and support to the various groups of Trustees in developing and promoting at all levels the ethos of Catholic education, based on the personal teaching and witness of Jesus Christ.
2. To support the Trustees in promoting the ethos of Catholic-managed schools through the provision of advice and guidance to Governors and Principals;
3. To provide professional support and advice to Trustees in respect of area planning for the whole Catholic Schools Sector on the basis of agreed protocols with CCMS, EA and DE and mindful of the new role of Local District Councils in community planning for schools.
4. To assist the Trustees in engaging with other Churches in developing the arrangements for 'Jointly Managed' Church Schools as envisaged in Department Circular 2015/15.
5. To assist the Trustees in working with Catholic Schools to develop more cohesive engagement within the sector to Department policy in areas such as shared education, area planning and post primary transfer.
6. To assist the Trustees in their commitment to developing the role of Catholic schools in shared education.
7. To deliver the highest standards of governance and management of the CSTS.

### **Key Outcomes**

- A clearly defined vision for Catholic education is articulated, shared and living within the Catholic managed schools sector.
- The views of Trustees have been taken account of in the shaping and implementation of policy in relation to shared education, area planning and other key educational policies.
- The positive impact and value of Catholic education is shared and celebrated.
- Information on Catholic Education in Northern Ireland is communicated and promoted.
- Governors and schools are assisted in their promotion of the ethos of Catholic education.