

THE INSTITUTE OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS (IN NORTHERN IRELAND) LIMITED

DIRECTORS' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

The Directors, who are also trustees of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006 present their annual report together with the audited financial statements of The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Northern Ireland for the year ended 31 December 2023.

The Directors confirm that the Annual Report and financial statements of the company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the company's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) as amended by Update Bulletin 1 (effective 1 January 2019).

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The charity was established on 16 March 2005 as a charitable company and is limited by guarantee, not having a share capital. The company's registered number is NI054357 and its registered charity number is 101722.

Governance

The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (In Northern Ireland) Limited is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association which were amended by special resolution on 30 August 2005.

Directors

The Directors, who are also the Trustees of the charity, at the date of this report and those who served during the financial year together with the dates of any changes are set out in the legal and administrative details on page 1.

The Directors of the charity are appointed by the Provincial and Council of the De La Salle congregation, as set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association. The number of Directors is determined by the Council, with a minimum of two and a maximum of seven. Directors are selected based on their willingness to serve, governance skills, relevant experience, and alignment with the ethos, mission, and philosophy of the charity. Their term of office is four years, renewable as deemed appropriate by the Provincial and Council.

Members of the charity also have the power to appoint new Directors or fill casual vacancies and may, by special resolution, remove a Director before the expiry of their term. Directors do not receive remuneration but may be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses, and no Director may be employed by the charity.

The secretary who served during the year was Brother Michael Loran.

Management

The Directors are responsible for setting and implementing the charities policies. The board meets regularly in compliance with its statutory responsibilities and review the impact of the charity and its achievements.

Directors are not remunerated for their services and are not reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The Directors are responsible for setting the charities internal systems and controls and for reviewing them for effectiveness. The internal systems and control system is designed to manage, rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve the charities objectives and can only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance against material misstatements or deficit. The Directors are not aware of any specific risks or uncertainties which would have an impact on the company.

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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The object and principal activity of The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (In Northern Ireland) Limited is that of advancing the Roman Catholic Faith in Northern Ireland and to provide or assist in the provision of education of children and young person's attending in any school or educational establishment in which religious instruction in the doctrine, principles and precepts of the Roman Catholic Faith is given.

Our main charitable activities are the support of Brothers and their ministries which facilitates the core activities of the Institute carried out through:

- the management of two schools, De La Salle High School Downpatrick and St Patrick's Grammar School, Downpatrick. As of September 1, 2024 these two schools merged with St Mary's High School to form Lecale Trinity Grammar School, a new 11-19 co-educational voluntary grammar school under the trusteeship of The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (In Northern Ireland) Limited. The Brothers were active members on both boards of management the end of the academic year 2023-2024.
- the operation of two residences at Glen Road Belfast and Downpatrick.
- funding to the De La Salle Pastoral Centre in Belfast.

The Institute also acts as bare trustee for the properties of the De La Salle Congregation in Northern Ireland as outlined in note 12 to the financial statements.

Public Benefit

The Directors have reviewed the relevant guidance published by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland concerning the principles of public benefit in relation to both the advancement of education and the advancement of religion. The Directors are satisfied that all of the activities of the charity,, as outlined in the achievement and performance section of this report, fall within its stated charitable objectives and provide a clear benefit to the public.

The Charity's facilities offer opportunities for young persons and adults to grow physically, mentally, and spiritually through training, instructions, counselling and supervision, alongside the provision of suitable educational and instructional resources.

The two schools - one secondary and one grammar – share a common ethos, fostering an environment that supports the growth and promotion of Lasallian Catholic faith in Northern Ireland.

In response to the Department of Education policies and Government's Area-based Planning requirements, the Institute is actively assisted the three post-primary schools in Downpatrick - De La Salle High School, St Patrick's Grammar School, and St Mary's High School - in establishing a partnership. Together, they worked towards creating a model of co-educational provision for 11 -19-year-olds in Downpatrick and the surrounding rural area. As of September 1, 2024 the two Lasallian schools in Downpatrick merged with St Mary's High School to form Lecale Trinity Grammar School, a new 11-19 co-educational voluntary grammar school under the trusteeship of The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (In Northern Ireland) Limited.

The direct benefit following from the charitable purposes of the Institute are of a pastoral, spiritual, educational and inclusive nature. These activities help students and adults develop their personal development, social skills, faith, and spiritual lives. It enables them to improve their self-esteem, have a greater awareness of themselves and others. The spiritual dimension permeates daily activities, and the students are encouraged to believe in their own worth as children of God by whom they are loved unconditionally.

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Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the De La Salle Pastoral Centre in Belfast catered for an average of 39 schools each year with over 2,000 young people attending one of the various retreat programmes available each year. Throughout 2023 the number of schools participating in the La Salle Pastoral Centre continued the steady increase back to pre-Covid numbers. The value of these activities is evidenced by positive feedback from participants. The relationships formed among teachers, students, and the pastoral care framework are as vital to shaping a school's ethos as the formal curriculum or the skills of the educators.

The primary beneficiaries of the De La Salle Pastoral Centre are students in local schools in the Belfast, as well as the wider community, who use the pastoral facilities.

Through the Institute's international connections, teachers and pastoral staff at the two schools, and the pastoral centre in Belfast benefit from a variety of formation and training programmes aimed at their ongoing personal, professional and spiritual development.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Throughout 2023 the number of young people who benefited from the programmes of the Belfast La Salle Pastoral Centre has reached again the 2019 pre-pandemic levels. Throughout the year the centre offered the following programmes:

- For Primary School students, Confirmation Retreats and Transition Retreats (primary to secondary)
- A range of age-appropriate retreats for secondary students from Year 8 to Year 14
 - Year 8: New Beginnings
 - Year 9: Love One Another
 - Year 10: What Can I Do?
 - Year 11: Finding a Moral Compass
 - Year 12: Self-Esteem and Resilience
 - Year 13: Beliefs and Attitudes
 - Year 14: God Speaks to the Heart
- Retreats based on resilience
- Advent and Lenten retreats
- Programmes and sessions offered in school rather than at the centre:
 - Journey of Your Heart – a meditation programme delivered over three class period sessions for Years 13 and 14 students
 - Ignatian Daily Examen for Years 13 and 14 students
 - Meditation for Year 8 students
- Advent and/or Lent online short reflections via Zoom for school groups
- Retreats for other groups including school staffs, parish groups, folk groups, youth groups
- Art Psychotherapy programme on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons and evenings
- A School Chaplaincy programme.

The chaplaincy programme is a joint initiative between the Pastoral Centre, three local priests and staff members in schools. The school chaplaincy programme was initiated in De La Salle College, Belfast and then extended to three other schools. The idea is to support a small group of teachers to act as chaplains within their own schools.

The De La Salle residence in Glen Road Belfast accommodated the Cursilio Group two nights weekly and a St Vincent de Paul group weekly throughout the year. An Art Therapy Group was also occasionally hosted there. The De La Salle residence in Downpatrick accommodated a St Vincent de Paul group throughout the year.

All facilities provided by both residences were provided free of charge.

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The three post-primary schools in Downpatrick; De La Salle High School, St Patrick's Grammar School, and St Mary's High School have been supported to establish a partnership in which they worked together to create a model of co-educational 11-19 provision for the Downpatrick area. Since January 2023 this work has intensified.

The De La Salle Trustees and Diocesan response to the Department of Education policies and Government requirement for Area-based Planning is an all ability co-educational 11-19 school. This new school is designated a voluntary Grammar school offering pathways to a curriculum with academic and vocational choices. This one school model will maximise and ensure the accessibility of high quality 2nd level Lasallian Catholic education in Downpatrick into the future. Trustees have successfully ensured the appointment of highly competent and widely respected members of the community as independent members on the Interim Board of Governors (IBOG) of the proposed new school.

The process has been evolutionary; Principals, Boards of Governments and Trustees have been working on this since 2012. The inaugural meeting of the Interim Board of Governors Meeting of the New School in Downpatrick took place on 19th January 2023. Over the course of the subsequent monthly meetings of the IBOG, an implementation plan was agreed to ensure the successful and timely fulfilment of the various steps and actions required to ensure the opening of the new school by September 2024. During this period, it was agreed, following consultation with representative groups of students, parents and staff from the three schools involved, that the name of the new school would be Lecale Trinity Grammar School. This new educational institution will build on the long established and great educational tradition of the Mercy and De La Salle congregations.

HIA Inquiry

The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (in Northern Ireland) Limited have been involved with the Historical Institution Abuse inquiry (HIA) since 2012 and supplied HIA with all its needs in relation to legal matters.

In 2014 and in 2015 members of the Company attended the HIA Inquiry, made statements and gave oral evidence to it. Following the publication of the HIA report in 2017 the members of the Company continued to support the redress board set up by the HIA.

Members of the Company together with members of other Congregations/Companies met with the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister to discuss the question of redress.

Members of the Company had a private meeting with an independent facilitator to discuss the question of a voluntary contribution to the redress scheme

At the time of approving these financial statements, voluntary contributions to the redress schemes have not yet been finalised and no estimate of future contributions, if any, have been included in the financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2023. The publicised contribution to the Redress Scheme was made by the De La Salle Order in the Republic of Ireland.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

During 2023, the total income amounted to £248,266 (2022: £299,803) which is made up of brothers' donated pensions, community income and bank interest. Expenditure amounted to £457,975 (2022: £230,693). Legal costs (£195,615) & community stipends (£136,400) were the largest expenditure items in 2023. Net expenditure for the year amounted to £209,709 (2022: net income of £69,110).

Reserves Policy

Reserves are needed to retain surpluses which are not distributed or spent shortly after an accounting year end but rather retained to allow for any further reductions in income or unanticipated expenditure not provided for in annual budgets. The Charity Commission requires that Directors recognise the reserves issue, assess the needs of the entity, seek to reach an appropriate level within a reasonable timescale and report their reserves policy in the annual report accompanying the financial statements. The actual reserves at 31 December 2023 were £1,984 (2022: £211,693).

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The policy relating to the reserves of the charity are reviewed annually by the Directors.

The Directors have reviewed the Charities future budgets and forecasts and are confident that there is sufficient funding available to ensure the charity can continue its activities for the foreseeable future, and the financial statements can be approved as a going concern.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The Directors have no plans to change the activities or objectives of the charity.

POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS

There have been no significant events affecting the company since the financial year-end.

Auditors

The auditors, Walsh O'Brien Harnett, (Chartered Accountants) have indicated their willingness to continue in office in accordance with the provisions of Section 485 of the Companies Act 2006.

Compliance with Sector-Wide Legislation and Standards

The company engages pro-actively with legislation, standards and codes which are developed for the sector. The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (in Northern Ireland) Limited subscribes to and is compliant with the following:

- The Companies Act 2006
- The Charities SORP (FRS 102)
- Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (CCNI) guidance
- The Charities Act 2008

Political Contributions

The company did not make any disclosable political donations in the current year.

Special provisions relating to small companies.

The above report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to small companies within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

Disclosure of information to auditors

Each of the Directors has confirmed that there is no information of which they are aware which is relevant to the audit, but of which the auditors are unaware. They have further confirmed that they have taken appropriate steps to identify such relevant information and to establish that the auditors are aware of such information.

Approved by the Board of Directors and signed on its behalf by:

Br Eamonn Manning
Director

Br James Mangan
Director

Dated: 22 september 20 24