



Le Chéile Update

November 2009

Volume 3 Issue 1

Special points of interest:

- The Le Chéile Education Office opens.
- Le Cheile celebrations in schools
- Understanding and living the Le Chéile Charter
- Cluster Meetings
- Le Chéile inaugural conference February 4th and 5th 2010.
- School Insurance
- Prayers for Advent ceremonies and assemblies

Uniting with Le Cheile

Congratulations to all schools on the wonderful celebrations held to mark the hand-over of trusteeship to the Le Chéile Schools Trust.

The twelve founding congregations, with the guidance of Fr. David Tuohy, have spent a number of years planning and designing the model of trusteeship that is now the Le Chéile Trust. Their vision is outlined in the Le Cheile Charter which states the hopes and aspirations that the congregations brought to their own work in schools and that they are confident will be carried into the future.

The Le Chéile Office opened on 1st September to support the schools in their work and to exercise the trustee functions for the forty-seven voluntary

secondary schools and eight community schools under the Le Chéile Trust.

Schools are currently facing many challenges, including serious financial cutbacks, a reduction in the number of teachers and post holders, the reality of swine flu and the possibility of further industrial action. Unfortunately the December budget is not likely to improve the situation.

Through these difficult times it has been particularly heartening for the Le Cheile team to visit schools and share in the “hand-over” or “uniting” ceremonies and to see the wonderful talents of staff and students, the commitment and sense of loyalty to their school ethos and the dedicated leadership of Principals, Deputy Principals,

Boards of Management and staff. It bodes well for the future to see schools being beacons of light and hope in the community.

We would like to thank the congregations for placing their trust in us to carry on their work and we look forward to continuing to work with them and with the schools to “develop the schools of the congregations in the service of their local communities, the state and the Church” (Le Chéile Charter p.2)

St. Joseph of Cluny

We are delighted to welcome two schools of the Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny into the Le Chéile Trust. These are St Joseph of Cluny Killiney, Co Dublin and Mount Sackville, Castleknock,



New Boards of Management

The Trustees appoint the Board of Management to manage the school and maintain the characteristic spirit of the school in accordance with the founding intention

Le Cheile welcomes new members of Boards of Management and wishes you every success for your term of office.

A special thank you to all Board members for their dedication and work on be-

half of the schools. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

We hope that new members who availed of the training days in November found them helpful and informative. The Le Chéile team looks forward to visiting all new Boards in the coming months.



LE CHÉILE TRUST

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The leadership instinct you are born with is the backbone. You develop the funny bone and the wishbone that go with it.
(Elaine Agather)

**“A Christian knows when it is time to speak of God and when it is better to say nothing and to let love alone speak.”
Benedict XVI**



Congratulations to Gortnor Abbey on their television appearance in the Regional Final of the All-Island Schools Choir Competition

What is a Catholic School?

“Taking Ownership of the Charter” report from Cluster Meetings

October 2009

The wide ranging but all too brief discussion around our understanding of the Catholic School and the Le Chéile Charter gave rise to a number of observations that reflected the different experiences of the schools and the influence of the congregational heritages. It was noted by several participants that the opportunity to have an open and informative discussion on these issues was in itself a positive step. Many experience difficulty in this regard because of a lack of confidence in talking about faith and Catholic identity

There was a shared belief that the Catholic school should be based on Gospel values and these are expressed in the following ways:

- Recognition of the unique worth of each person.
- The importance of building a community characterised by an atmosphere care and respect.
- Special attention to be given to the weakest or most vulnerable members.
- Care for the earth is a key element of our faith based educational vision

There is also a recognition that the changing cultural, political and religious context in Ireland brings new challenges to the idea of Catholic school. In our Le Chéile schools we have children of all faiths and none so there is hesitancy for some around the word “Catholic”. It conjures up ideas of narrow institutionalism and is overshadowed by the scandals of recent years that have highlighted dramatic failures in the care of the young. At the same time there is a keen awareness of the very positive contribution of the religious from all the congregations who, while operating out of a Catholic vision, were wholeheartedly committed to the children in their care and to helping them understand the riches of their faith tradition.

Some participants suggested that the word “Catholic” should be replaced with “Christian”. In this way the values aspect would be to the fore while not succumbing to any accusation of a sectarian approach to education. However others valued the importance of being Christian within the Roman Catholic tradition. The Christian anthropology underpinning the philosophy of education outlined in the Charter emerges from the theology of the Second Vatican Council. It was also noted that the celebration of the sacraments and presence of symbols and icons of this tradition help to give explicit expression to the implicit values.

Since we are a Catholic Schools Trust there was a desire expressed for help with understanding our identity both in terms of the educational philosophy at the heart of the charter and also with the particular task of Catholic Religious Education for our Catholic students.



A Prayer for Advent

Lord of darkness and light,
Enter our hidden lives
That we may find your light in the darkness
And your truth in the shadows.
Touch our hearts with the promise of your love
That we may bring to the waiting world
Your compassion for all who suffer
And your joy in all that you have made. Amen

Le Cheile Cluster Meetings

During October each of the five Le Cheile Clusters groups met. This was a great opportunity for Principals and Board of Management representatives to share their school news, especially their Le Cheile celebrations and discuss the Charter. The meetings also included communication protocols, key dates in the school year and planning for the selection of Board of Directors of the Le Cheile Trust.

The next Cluster meetings will be held in December. At this meeting each Cluster will nominate their representative to the Board of Directors. Therefore, full attendance is very important.

Cluster Meetings December

Dublin West: Dec 1st

The South: Dec 2nd

Dublin South: Dec 3rd

Dublin North: Dec 9th

The West: Dec 10th

Insurance

Insurance renewals have now been renewed. Thanks to the negotiations between Le Chéile and Allianz on behalf of the schools, most schools have enjoyed a considerable reduction in their premium again this year.



Summer Works

Reminder:

Closing date for application for funding of minor works under the Summer Works scheme is 27th November. Le Cheile will sign the application form as Trustees. On request, we will provide a letter of delegation to enable the Chairperson of the Board to sign but please send a copy of the completed application form, including estimated costs to the Le Cheile office before 1st December 2009. Remember, you can apply for water conservation funding along with one other project.

Le Chéile AGM and Conference February 2010

The first Le Cheile AGM will be held on the evening of Thursday 4th. This will be followed by our first Conference on Friday 5th February 2010.

While it is only the nominated members who attend the AGM it is hoped that others, including parents, teachers and students will join us for the conference. There will be keynote speakers as well as a series of workshops that will address topics of interest to all the participants.

The conference is an ideal opportunity for us to build the Le Chéile identity and we look forward to it becoming a key event in our calendar.

Wise Words from the Congregations

The motto Veritas (Truth) epitomizes the aim of Dominican schools and colleges—the pursuit of Trust in all its forms. It acknowledges the unique giftedness of each individual and their journey in discovering the truth about themselves, others, the universe they share and the Creator of all.

Dominican Heritage Statement Le Chéile Charter

The Le Chéile Prayer

In the power of the Spirit and in keeping with the traditions of our founding Congregations we pray that, for students and teachers alike; our schools may be places of learning and discovery, places of hope and joy, places of courage and confidence, places of gratitude and generosity, places of faith rooted in love. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord, Amen

(Suggested for use at assemblies, and staff or board meetings)

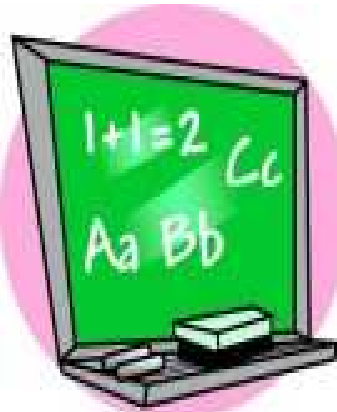
R. E. Conference St Angela's Sligo Jan15th

The title of the conference is "Integrating Academic and Personal Development in Post Primary Religious Education".

This important theme will be of interest to all who are involved in the teaching of RE and in whole school planning. More information on the conference is available at www.sangelas.nuigalway.ie

Interested in doing a Masters in Education?

The University of Notre Dame, in Indiana, USA through the Alliance for Catholic Education is offering a Masters programme to teachers in Ireland with 1-5 years teaching experience. It is open to teachers of all subjects and details about the programme and how to apply will be posted on the Le Chéile website before the end of November.



St Michael's Holy Faith Finglas celebrates 50 years.



Ailish Neville, Head Girl, Aisling Higgins Deputy Head Girl



Sr. Therese Kearney, who assisted Sr. Phillipa Brosnan R.I.P. in setting up the school in 1959 and Sheila Horkan, first lay member of staff.

St. Michael's Holy Faith Secondary School, Finglas, recently joined the Trusteeship of Le Chéile and celebrated its 50th anniversary.

The mass, to celebrate the school's anniversary and transfer into the Trust, was held in St. Canice's Church, Finglas. School staff and present students were joined by representatives from the Holy Faith Sisters and Le Chéile along with past staff and students, parents and local community representatives.

Sr. Evelyn Greene, Regional Leader of the Holy Faith Order, spoke about the Order; its years providing education in St. Michael's and hopes for the future as part of the Le Chéile Trust. A ceremony to mark the transfer followed where symbols representative of school life were passed from members of the St. Michael's Holy Faith community to Le Chéile.

Eilis Humphreys, Education Officer with Le Chéile, welcomed the school to the Trust and presented a commemorative plaque to mark the occasion. Mr. John Barry, Principal of St. Michael's Holy Faith, spoke of the contribution to education made by St. Michael's Holy Faith over the past 50 years, and the school's commitment to the new Trusteeship.



The Sisters of the Holy Faith opened St. Michael's as a secondary school in 1959 under the leadership of Sister Philipa Brosnan. The school had approximately 35 pupils in its first year and by the late 1980's over 790 students were registered on the roll. There are currently 500 pupils in the school with 75 members of staff. Afterwards, a celebration was held in the school's new sports hall. A great day was had by all.

The New Le Chéile Office: A Word from the Team

The setting up of the new Office got underway in early September as we formally began our new jobs as the executive officers of the Trust. Our premises are located in St Mary's in Donnybrook in Dublin. It was formerly a Carmelite house but is now used by the Conference of Religious of Ireland and a number of other Church based organizations. Each of the team members has an office and we also have a meeting room and a kitchenette. After some frustration around getting phone lines and internet connection we are delighted to be settling in well to our new surroundings.

The website has been updated and our intention is that it will play a vital part in our communication with the schools. As well as posting news events on it we hope to make important resources available through it.

We warmly welcome any suggestions from the schools on all aspects of our work and we invite you to forward your ideas to us here at the office.

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