

Le Chéile Schools Trust

Strategic Plan

2019-2024



Introduction

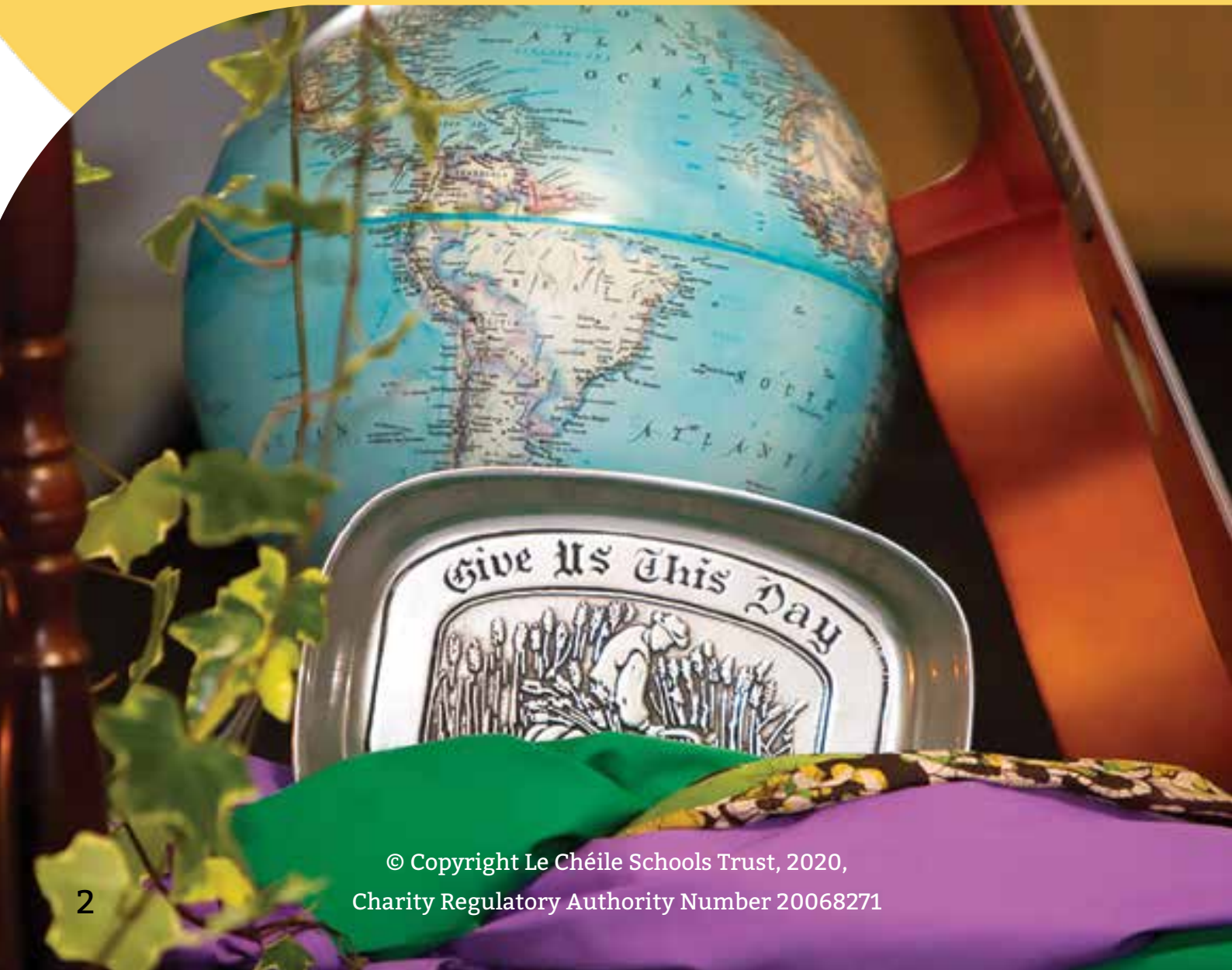
The Strategic Plan

Context

Objectives



Introduction





The Trust

The Le Chéile Schools Trust was set up by twelve religious congregations to fulfil the functions of trusteeship, initially in respect of 55 second-level schools.

The Trust was incorporated on 8 October 2008 and its Education Office commenced operation on 1 September 2009. Subsequently, three further congregations joined the Trust.

By 1 September 2019, Le Chéile was responsible for 63 second-level schools and 6 primary schools, with further expansion in train.

Le Chéile is supported and endowed by its sister trust, Síol Schools Trust CLG.



Strategic Plan

Purpose

This strategic plan is Le Chéile's third. Its purpose is to give direction to the work of the Trust over the period 2019-2024.

At a time of ongoing change and uncertainty, both in Irish education and in Irish society generally, to attempt to prepare a detailed action plan for a five-year span would be futile. Rather, the strategic plan presents a framework to guide the Le Chéile Education Office Team in preparing rolling operational plans. It also provides the Le Chéile Board of Directors with a reference point against which to monitor progress and to report to the members as appropriate.

It is a flexible working document that can readily accommodate emerging developments and changing circumstances.





Process

The preparation of the strategic plan involved a comprehensive consultation process with all parties in the Le Chéile community: leaders of the religious congregations; members of the Le Chéile Board of Directors, past and present; members of the Le Chéile Team; Chairpersons and members of school boards of management; school principals; teachers; pupils; and members of school parents' councils. The methods of consultation included: on-line questionnaires; focus groups; round-table discussion groups; one-to-one interviews; and written submissions. The consultation process was facilitated by Dr. Joe O'Connell, who analysed all the data gathered and presented his findings at the Annual General Meeting of the Trust in February 2019.

The strategic plan is based on the findings from the consultation process and on context factors relevant to the development of the Trust.



Context Factors

The main context factors that have influenced this strategic plan include:

- ☀ Government policy developments at national level with implications for education
- ☀ The proliferation in statutory and regulatory requirements that have implications for the governance and organisational development of the Trust
- ☀ The strategic plan for Catholic education prepared by the Catholic Education Service Committee to bring coherence to the Catholic education sector
- ☀ The policies and procedures of the Department of Education and Skills, including those relevant to awarding the patronage of new schools
- ☀ The need to take account of the multiplicity of national bodies with which schools interact
- ☀ The admission to the Trust of additional schools, including for the first time a number of primary schools
- ☀ The proposal to develop a Le Chéile Education Centre to house the Trust



Strategic Objectives

The strategic plan comprises four strategic objectives:

1. Ongoing promotion of the Le Chéile identity
2. Ethos support and development
3. Continuing support for effective governance
4. Organisational and procedural review and development.

These strategic objectives are interconnected, so that a given activity may serve to advance more than one objective. They are all linked by the Le Chéile Charter, which sets out the mission, vision, and heritage of the Trust:

1. The Charter is the foundational expression of the Le Chéile identity
2. The Charter underpins the Le Chéile ethos
3. A major purpose of good governance is to ensure that the Trust remains true to the values of the Charter
4. The activities of the organisation should be focused on the actualisation of the Charter, making it a lived reality.

Central to the Charter is the Trust's vision of education, which sees the school as facilitating and supporting students' search for truth and meaning, as nurturing their learning in all areas of their development—intellectual, emotional, social, moral and spiritual—and as pursuing excellence in education. A concern to foster students' growth in accordance with this vision is at the heart of the Le Chéile identity and the Le Chéile ethos.



Strategic Objective 1

Ongoing Promotion of the Le Chéile Identity

Le Chéile will:

- 1.1 Further develop its repertoire of methods of communication to enhance effectiveness and broaden reach
- 1.2 Develop a public relations strategy to promote Le Chéile as a patron body in its own right
- 1.3 Further develop structures at regional and national level to promote connectedness and a sense of belonging among Le Chéile schools
- 1.4 Provide an induction programme for schools joining Le Chéile
- 1.5 Continue to engage with the Department of Education and Skills and other relevant national bodies on behalf of Le Chéile schools, on both an individual and a collective basis
- 1.6 Play an active role in developments at national level in relation to achieving coherence in the Catholic education sector

- 1.7 In consultation with other Catholic Education Trusts and insofar as resources allow, apply to the Department of Education and Skills for the patronage of new schools to ensure that parents are offered the option of a Catholic school



Strategic Objective 2

Ethos Support and Development

Le Chéile will:

- 2.1 Continue to engage with stakeholders on the essential values underpinning the founding of Le Chéile with a view to promoting the living out of those values
- 2.2 Encourage schools to take ownership of the Le Chéile Charter and engage creatively with it at school level
- 2.3 Develop a succinct and accessible document articulating the core values of the Charter that can be referred to and reflected on by parents, students, school leaders and staff
- 2.4 Continue to develop a range of accessible resources in a variety of media to promote understanding of and reflection on the core values of the Charter among parents, students, school leaders and staffs
- 2.5 Ensure that the Charter retains its centrality in all appointments to senior leadership roles in Le Chéile schools
- 2.6 Provide training for school leaders and school staffs to deepen their understanding of what constitutes effective leadership in a faith-based school
- 2.7 Develop and implement a programme of ethos support for primary schools within the Trust in the context of Le Chéile's role vis à vis the patron



Strategic Objective 3

Continuing Support for Effective Governance

Le Chéile will:

- 3.1 Provide clarity in relation to the role and function of a patron body under the provisions of the Education Act 1998
- 3.2 Provide clarity in relation to the role and function of the trustees of a voluntary secondary school as specified in the Articles of Management for Catholic Secondary Schools
- 3.3 Provide clarity in relation to the role and function of the trustees of a community school as specified in the Guidelines on the Role of Trustees in Community Schools
- 3.4 Provide clarity in relation to the role and function of the trustee of a primary school as specified in the Department of Education and Skills Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2019-2023
- 3.5 Follow the guidelines of the Charities Regulator on good practice in governance and comply with the requirements of the Charities Governance Code
- 3.6 Support the governance role of the Board of Directors by further developing induction processes and the Directors' handbook and by arranging appropriate training where required
- 3.7 Further develop the subcommittee structure of the Le Chéile Board
- 3.8 Continue to support the governance role of school Boards of Management by providing training, clear protocols, guidance on key issues, and opportunities for networking while encouraging them to engage in relevant professional development and to promote school development

Strategic Objective 4

Organisational & Procedural Review & Development

Le Chéile will:

- 4.1 Recognising the extent of the workload borne by the Le Chéile Team, review the centrality of the range of their activities and plan growth in accordance with the capacity to meet new demands
- 4.2 Further develop review processes focused on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of activities
- 4.3 Update its data management systems
- 4.4 Engage in succession planning for future personnel throughout the organisation
- 4.5 Further develop self-reflection and evaluation tools for use by the Le Chéile Board and by school Boards of Management
- 4.6 In cooperation with other Trusts where appropriate, continue to provide training programmes for school leadership at all levels, senior, middle and aspiring
- 4.7 Cooperate with the Síol Schools Trust in the development of the Le Chéile Education Centre





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