



Loreto Celebrating 200 Years Of Education in Ireland



Annual Report 2022

LORETO ANNUAL REPORT 2022

LORETO CELEBRATING 200 YEARS

1821-2021





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Welcome to the Annual Report 2022

In last year's Annual Report we recorded the valiant efforts of the Loreto school community to navigate the unprecedented challenge of the Covid pandemic. We recorded our appreciation of the creativity and commitment shown by the whole Loreto family: staff, students, families and supporters. We looked forward to better times with the arrival of vaccines and the prospect of a return to normality.

It is the case that the development of vaccines, continuing research into the nature of the virus and its treatment, and the insights developed by the population did bring about significant change, and for the better. But it was not a farewell to Covid. We began to appreciate that transition to an endemic status presents its own challenges, while the legacy of the more acute phase of the pandemic would be with us for many years to come.

So it was that the past year required a new type of resilience from our school communities, as they continued to cope with uncertainty, interruption and the stress of seeking to provide a positive experience of learning and development for students, while protecting their health

and that of staff. Many continued to experience the burden of illness and, sadly bereavement, by no means all of it attributable to Covid. As these pages demonstrate, our school communities flourished under pressure. Academic, cultural and sporting achievements were celebrated across the whole school network. Projects were initiated and brought to conclusion. Transitions of leadership were smoothly accomplished. In all of this, the experience of Covid and of the response to it were woven into the culture of reflection, analysis and prayer which continues to animate our schools.

The distinct Loreto ethos - expressed in the Mary Ward Compass which has come to be much more than a pious wish list - supported our Loreto family and was in turn enriched by that experience.

We salute all those who have contributed to this further chapter of the Loreto story. We thank our dedicated Boards of Management, Boards of Governors, School Leadership Teams, Teachers and all Staff who have mustered the energy and creativity to see their communities through another stressful year. We thank those who have stepped down from the service of Loreto during the past year. We remember with affection those who have passed to eternal life. We congratulate our students for their achievements, not least in the Leaving Certificate examinations,



and for their solidarity in supporting each other.

Special thanks are due to the staff of the Loreto Education Centre who continued to offer leadership and support to the whole school network. Through their availability, energy and professionalism they have realised in difficult circumstances the goal of nurturing and supporting the schools, for which the Trust was established by the Loreto Sisters.

Dermot McCarthy
Chairperson
Loreto Education Trust



Introduction

The 2021/2022 academic year is a special one in the calendar of Loreto Education. This year we celebrate the bicentenary of Frances Teresa Ball, who brought the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Ireland in 1821 and opened her first school in 1822.

Frances Ball was born on 6th January 1794, the youngest child of Dublin silk merchant John Ball and his wife Isabella. She was educated in the Bar Convent in York, part of the Institute founded in 1609 by Venerable Mary Ward. Following her schooling, Frances returned to York in 1814 to be formed as a Religious Sister. With two companions, she then returned to Dublin and for the next forty years established many schools in Ireland and further afield. In this bicentenary year in particular, we reflect on her legacy and we continue to build on the foundations she and her companions laid.



Teresa Ball was a pioneer in both religious life and education in Ireland. The Ireland of her day was just emerging from the

Penal laws. The schools she established provided new opportunities for young Catholic women and inaugurated a new liberal education focused on each student's personal growth and development. This Loreto tradition continues to this day. Our schools continue to provide an education that is rooted in Gospel values, responsive to the needs of our students and relevant to the needs and the demands of the world of today.

The challenges of the Covid 19 global pandemic have not abated this year. Our school communities, while resilient, continue to be affected. Nevertheless, in keeping with our tradition of reflecting on experience, perhaps the pandemic has reminded us of what really matters, that human life is sacred, that our world is vulnerable and the call to care for each other echoes even more strongly.

As we write this report the unjustifiable war being waged by Russia in Ukraine is on all our minds. It is impossible not to feel anger and distress for the innocent people caught up in the conflict. We pray that God's peace might prevail.

The report that follows will show the wonderful things that continue to happen in our schools due to the work of the Boards of Management, Boards of Governors, Principals, Deputy Principals, Senior Leadership Teams, Teachers, Staffs, Students and Parents. A great debt of gratitude is owed to the countless



people who, whether in a voluntary or professional capacity, constantly strive to call out the best in themselves and in the students in our care. A sincere thank you is due to each one.

The Trust Board

Appointments

Four Directors were reappointed to the Board in 2021.

- Mr Dermot McCarthy – Chairperson
- Ms Eileen Salmon
- Sr Maria Hyland
- Mr Brian Lenehan

Sr Brede Quirke was appointed to the Board in September 2021. She replaces Gerardine Mullen who was a Director of the Trust for the past seven years. Over that period of time Gerardine gave generous service. We are indebted to her for all that she has given to Loreto education and continues to do as Principal in Loreto Secondary School Letterkenny.

Annual General Meeting

The annual general meeting of the Loreto Education Trust took place on the 8th March 2021 through the Zoom platform, the seventeenth AGM since the Trust was incorporated in 2003. The Annual Report was sent to the Members and Directors

before the meeting and later sent to all our educational stakeholders as well as Loreto communities within the Province.

Sr Carmel Swords, on behalf of the Members, responded to the Report and her response can be found in the Appendices.

The Future of the Trust

A Joint Working Group of three Members, Sr Carmel Swords, Sr Helen O’Riordan Sr Elaine Troy, and three Directors, Mr Dermot McCarthy, Ms Sheila McManamy and Mr Conor Bowman has held several meetings throughout the year. In December 2021, a meeting was held by this group with the Chairpersons and Principals of all the schools at which it was announced that the trusteeship of the schools would be transferred to the Le Chéile Trust. This news was met with shock and dismay by many. Meetings with delegations of Principals and the Chairpersons have been ongoing.

Trust Board Meetings

The Trust Board met on six occasions since the last annual general meeting on the 8th March 2021. The operational wing of the Trust Board – the Management Team has met on five occasions.

Issues discussed and considered by the Trust Board Directors during the past year include:

- The challenges of Covid in our schools



- Appointments to Boards of Managements and Boards of Governors
- Admission Policies and approval of amendments to them
- Building Projects that are ongoing in St Michael's Navan, Fermoy and the Strule Shared Campus in Omagh
- Financial oversight of all our schools and how the auditing is done. Reviewing the audit
- Compliance with the Charities Governance Code
- Approval of relevant Policies for the Loreto Education Centre



The Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools (APTCS)

For many years Patrons and Trustees of Catholic schools have worked together to support and enhance their role in the life of the schools and in 2020 APTCS became a company limited by guarantee. The members of the Board are representatives of all Patrons and Trustees, the Catholic Education Partnership and the Secretariat of

Secondary Schools (JMB). The Loreto Education Trust has played a significant role in the establishment and ongoing development of this Association. Sr Ann O'Donoghue is a member of the Board of APTCS and reports on APTCS matters to all Trust Board meetings.

While the CEP represents the agreed position of Catholic post-primary education nationally with the State and other relevant education bodies, APTCS represents the role of Trustees within this partnership. For example, APTCS is the agreed contact for the establishment of new schools and property issues.



Collaboration, communication and offering services to the Trust bodies are key aspects of the work the APTCS. Since the appointment of a part-time CEO to the Association, the Board has been meeting more regularly and has established a number of sub-committees to address specific issues. A recent session offered training to Boards of Management on the theme of 'Living the Catholic ethos today' gives a flavour of their work.



Within the Association there is a diversity in terms of individual histories and founding intentions which is to be valued. However, all are united in the belief that the education of the whole person must include deep questions about the purpose and meaning of life and that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus guide the answers we offer.

As APTCS continues to work on its Mission and Vision, its new structure will enable it to ensure that all Trusts, whether small or large will have the support they need to continue their work promoting their individual characteristic spirit in the diverse tapestry that is Catholic education in Ireland today.

For more information on the work of the Association log onto www.aptcsl.ie

that Catholic education gives their children a foundational support to help in whole-person development, and building resilience in times of crisis. The Catholic ethos in our schools together with the vision of our founders gives meaning to the lives of all the students in our care.

Sr Ann O'Donoghue IBVM
Director.

The Catholic School at National Level

In 2019 the various bodies associated with Catholic education nationally commissioned the consulting firm Genesis to measure public attitudes towards the Catholic ethos, as seen in contemporary Irish society.

The survey showed that there is a high level of satisfaction among parents of children in Catholic schools. Catholic schools instil values rooted in respect, community and generosity. Teaching moral values and social inclusion are very much part of the Catholic ethos and are welcomed by parents. Parents affirmed



Director of Education and Leadership Report

Every year in March, I reflect back on the many events, meetings, conferences and people who have shaped and contributed to the Loreto family narrative. It is always so difficult to capture or convey what has happened in our schools, but the extraordinary nature of our lives since March 2021 adds to this challenge.



In relation to the pandemic, suffice to say that the schools were remarkable in negotiating the landscape that remained part of our lives until recently. Wave after wave and a new Omicron variant meant that our schools remained under restrictions from September 2021 to recent weeks. Only now will we begin to lift our unmasked faces to the light and usher our schools to something resembling normal life. At its peak, many

of our school communities were dealing with up to 20% of staff absent due to Omicron (either having the variant or being a close contact) and large cohorts of pupils absent at both primary and post-primary.

It is testament to our leadership teams, staff and students that schools continued to provide an educational experience recognised as a Loreto school. I want to commend the extraordinary resilience of our Loreto family. We will learn from this time and we will emerge stronger, wiser and more aware of our vulnerability.

Instead of dwelling on the challenges we lived through, I am going to offer some of the highlights of my work with schools this year.



In the 200th year of Loreto Education worldwide, inspired by Mother Teresa Ball, Loreto Kilkenny past pupil, Síofra Ní Chasaide and current pupil Sadhbh Ní Chasaide of Burnchurch were commissioned by the Trust to compose an Anthem that would commemorate and celebrate this momentous occasion. They rose to the challenge in spectacular



fashion by producing 'She', an emotive, moving and beautifully crafted Anthem. It was all the more memorable with the Loreto Secondary School, Kilkenny choir and orchestra adding voice and music to the centrepiece voices of Sadhbh and Síofra.

"She said we'll be repaid a hundred-fold

For all we give, and all we do

And if they speak then they can surely sing

If they can sing, they can do anything

Because she believes in me"

It speaks to belief in young people, it is an Anthem for its time, it is an extraordinary testament to the Loreto ethos and vision of education. It goes beyond the celebration to speak to a generation of young people who need us to believe in them! It speaks to generations of educators who are the beneficiaries of someone believing in them! Every day in every school in this country, our teachers, leaders, SNAs, caretakers, coaches, chaplains and secretaries 'believe' in a child or young person and that makes all the difference to the belief they have in themselves.



I wish to acknowledge Colm Keher, Principal, Loreto Secondary School, Kilkenny who ensured that this remarkable Anthem was brought to fruition and to the attention of the wider Loreto Community. I also wish to thank the leadership of the Music Department in Kilkenny- Trish, Jacinta and Tara.

The students are our future, they are the hope in the darkness, they can weave the dream that rises above the dark spaces in our world. Loreto students and staff will sing this uplifting Anthem long after the bicentennial year is over. Those voices will echo through the decades.

"And for centuries to come the truth would echo

Far and near, loud and clear

And a ray of hope would banish all the shadows

Can you see? Can't you just hear them sing?"

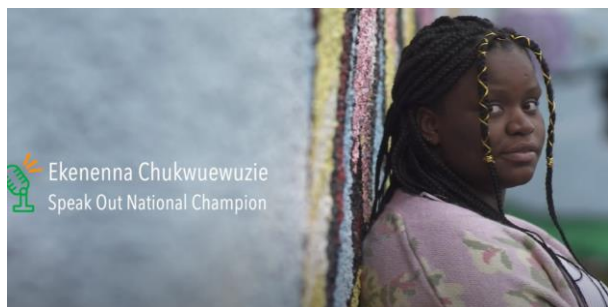
In a time when our youth have been suppressed in their learning, growth development and socialisation, we have Loreto schools brimming over with students who inspire, lead, role model and uphold the values of a Loreto education.

These young people are so impressive on every stage, field and arena that they almost exceed the expectations of their age and role. We only have to look at the contributions from Head Girls/Boys and Student Council Chairs to get a sense of



how wonderful these young people are in every aspect of school life.

One of the highlights for me was the Student Council Conferences where our student leaders spoke with passion, conviction and confidence about their roles and aspirations. Our student leaders have written their thoughts and ideas for this annual report. Their authentic words and commitment to Loreto is inspiring and offers us hope for the future of our country. Their reflections can be found in the Appendix.



A young woman who gave me reason to celebrate is Ekenenna Chukwuewuzie from Loreto College, Crumlin. Ekenenna was crowned National Champion in the Senior Grand Final of the 'Speak Out Ireland' public speaking competition with her provocative and inspirational speech and 'voice'. She poses challenging questions about our understanding of 'otherness', hearing the voices and opinions of young people, giving them a say in their world, their future. She is an exceptional talent and her Principal, Mary Ellen Murphy, her school community and

her family believe in the difference this young woman will make in the world. Thank you Ekenenna for representing young people in the Eduardo Project which I am involved in with Maynooth University. She is a member of a Youth Advisory Group to act in consultation on the design of educational resources to address 'othering' and inclusion in education. Ekenenna has made articulate, insightful and powerful contributions to this forum.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eT1wJ5qDM9w>

Another young woman who is playing her part in this advisory group, and is equally impressive, is Manny Chourhry from Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan, the former Head Girl who is currently studying Law. These are the voices we need to listen to and hear so that they can help shape a future that embraces their dreams, concerns and aspirations.

The January highlight came in the form of the BT Young Scientist competition where once again Loreto Secondary and Community Schools took awards in every category.





Laetitia Nouaha, Sidra Shahzad and Melissa Asare, Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan and Ross O'Boyle, Portmarnock Community School, Portmarnock.

Leadership Development

The lockdown restrictions meant that our post primary senior leaders couldn't meet in person for over 18 months. In October 2021 we held our Post Primary Principals' Conference. There was palpable joy pervading the gathering; delight in being able to meet, chat, laugh and share experiences in person. We were secluded in our own 'pod' for every aspect of the conference. It had the feeling of a reunion of old friends – smiling eyes behind masks, shared joys, liberated minds from the responsibility of school leadership for a few hours. We had the added joy of celebrating the retirement of three much loved colleagues; Gráinne O'Hanlon, former Principal Loreto Grammar School Omagh, Marése Bell, former Principal Loreto College Mullingar and Eithne Deeney, former Principal, Portmarnock Community School.

On the night of the gala dinner we heard emotional speeches acknowledging the extraordinary contribution that these three 'Loreto women' made to their school communities over a combined service of 45 years in Principalship!

How wonderful it was to celebrate these Loreto Principals and to share their journey to a place where they now take time for themselves, their families and their personal aspirations.



We were delighted to welcome Eoghan McDermott to our Principals' conference in November. Eoghan, Managing Director of the Communications Clinic, is a media and communications expert and is a personal coach and advisor to a number of Chief Executives of large corporates, both indigenous and multi-national.

Hosting an interview chat, Eoghan answered questions posed to him by our school leaders in a practical, insightful and context relevant way. We are most grateful to Eoghan for his time and shared wisdom when it came to discussing some challenging issues arising in our schools.

Rachel Doogue, of Rachel Doogue Coaching, facilitated a much needed and reflective session, with our Principals, on experiencing joy in their roles. Rachel and her team, Mary and Fiona, have worked



so closely with our school leaders and Chairs over the last two years. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to work with them.

Our Primary Leadership Conference this month was also a wonderful occasion of reunion and reconnection. Almost two years to the day, our Primary leadership community came back together to share the experiences, challenges and achievements of the last two years. Primary schools had their own unique Covid challenges but our Senior Leaders, Staff and Boards of Management rose to the challenge as always, going above and beyond to ensure the safety of their pupils and that the quality of teaching and learning was of the highest standard possible under the circumstances. I commend them for their unfailing optimism, resilience and energy.



We bid a very fond farewell to Denise Griffin and Patricia O'Sullivan, former Principal and Deputy Principal of Loreto Junior Primary School, Crumlin, who retired in October 2021. Denise joined us for the Gala Dinner to hear an emotional acknowledgement by Angela Mitchell, Principal of Loreto Senior Primary, of Denise's enormous contribution to her school over many years. Patricia was acknowledged in absentia! We will miss them both and wish them every happiness and good health on their retirements.



At the conference we welcomed back Brian O'Doherty who is on secondment from St Patrick's Loreto Primary School, Bray to serve as IPPN President. The Loreto community is so proud of Brian's achievements and representation of the Primary Principals' voice at national level.



We wish him continued success and joy in his role in the months ahead. We thank him for taking the time out of a very busy schedule to share his experience, advice and reflections with his Loreto colleagues.



Middle Leaders

Our collaboration with Le Chéile, Jesuit and Spiritan Trusts continues in the provision of the hugely successful Middle Leadership Programme. Myself, Sr. Kathleen and Eliza Connolly work successfully alongside our colleagues in the other Trusts to offer opportunities for teachers to engage in leadership development and to carry out a leadership project guided and underpinned by the founding intention of their Trust. We have had some really inspiring projects over the years and this year is no exception. A full list of the projects can be found in the appendix.



This year we look forward to hearing Dr. Marie Griffin, Chairperson of the Catholic Education Partnership (CEP) who is our guest speaker on the final night of the Middle Leaders' Programme. She will address the comprehensive Genesis Research Report which aimed to get an up to date picture of public perceptions of the Catholic school 'brand' in modern Ireland.

APTCS

A new and engaging aspect to my work this year has been my involvement with APTCS. As a member of the APTCS Coordinating Committee we address matters pertaining to school governance, legislation, policy development, Catholic education and leadership among other key areas. There is a wonderful sense of community in how we work together, coupled by a cohesion brought about by our shared and distinct identities as Catholic Trusts.

As part of a team lead by CEO Dr. Eilis Humphreys, we have presented ethos training for Boards of Management and a session for over a hundred Principals and Deputies on 'Leading through the Catholic Lens'.

CEP and APTCS are finding their place at the national education table and will



undoubtedly be voices that we will hear much from in the years ahead.

Acknowledging our extended team

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank those teachers who work for and on behalf of the Loreto Education Trust in a number of roles across the Loreto School Community.



September 2021 saw the appointment of Nancy Ferris, Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan, as Loreto Network Sports Coordinator. Nancy has undertaken trojan work over recent months in organising sporting events across our network of schools including, for the first time, a 1st year Loreto GAA competition. The competition has been established to coincide with our Teresa Ball centenary celebrations. October saw the return of the Loreto Camino where students, staff and the extended community took to walking the Loreto Virtual Camino De Santiago with participants walking (or running!) the 771.4km individually or as part of a team. My thanks also to Joanne Brock and Stephen Cahill who continue to support the Sports Coordinator

role with oversight of the inter-school hockey and basketball activities.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Adam Douglas (Loreto Secondary School, Bray), our previous Sports Coordinator, whose term ended in May 2021. Adam's enthusiasm for the role was second to none and this was borne out in all that he did for the role over this tenure.

The academic year 2021/2022 also saw the appointment of Máiread McNally, Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan to the role of Wellbeing Coordinator. Student and staff wellbeing has always being to the core of the Loreto values and ethos, however, now more than ever we need to maintain our focus on this important aspect of school life. To date, two wellbeing events have taken place. The first was an audience with Dr Harry Barry entitled 'Panic Attacks and Phobias'. Harry has almost 40 years' experience as a medical doctor with most of that spent as a full time GP. He has a long-standing interest in mental health. In addition to our senior leaders, the invitation to attend was also extended to Year Heads/Programme Coordinators, SEN/AEN Coordinators, Wellbeing Coordinators, Sports Coordinators, Guidance Counsellors and Chaplains and other care team members. The second event saw a wellbeing webinar with Shane Martin. Shane is a psychologist dedicated to helping people protect their mental



health and enhance the quality of their lives. Within the webinar Shane explored, with our attendees, the psychological consequences of the pandemic and offer pathways to learning from the experience and foster hope within us. Schools continue to host wellbeing events and activities within their schools and Máiread has created a Loreto Network of staff responsible for wellbeing across the Primary and Post-Primary network with their meetings seeing a rich sharing of information.

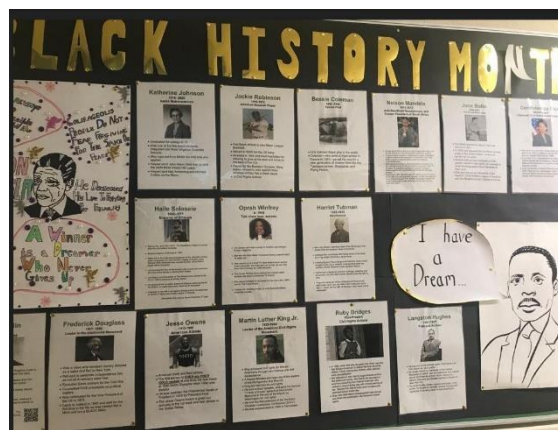


Both have settled so well into their additional roles and are having a hugely positive impact on the Loreto School Community.

Suzanne Lea, is our Loreto Network Debates Coordinator. Suzanne is a teacher in Loreto College, Foxrock and we are delighted to advise that despite a number of set-backs due to Covid-19, the Junior and Senior Inter-Loreto Debates are due to take place this month. Suzanne works tirelessly in the background organising the events including the recruitment and organisation

of our adjudicators. We wish all the participating teams well in their debating and thank Suzanne for all that she brings to the role.

Over the course of the last two years, we have set up a Loreto Guidance Counsellors' Network (LGCN) and it has proven to be a wonderful space to share good practice, discuss issues and challenges and support each other. I want to sincerely thank Hilda O'Malley (Loreto College, Foxrock) for her committed and authentic leadership this year, as LGCN Chairperson. She has ensured that this generous and supportive group continue to meet and benefit from the collective expertise within the Loreto community. Also, I want to acknowledge the wonderful presentations and expert inputs by the individual Guidance Counsellors which have added so much richness to our meetings. It has been my privilege to join you and witness the formation of such a professional, values based community of practice.



Finally, I would like to thank Sinéad Giblin, Loreto College, Foxrock, who is our Loreto



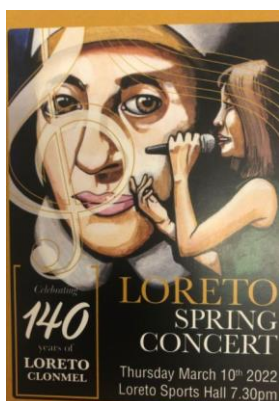
Student Council Coordinator. Sinead puts in a tremendous amount of work behind the scenes, very ably assisted by Máirín O'Toole, former teacher Loreto Secondary School, Bray, to host our Loreto Student Council Conference. This year saw separate events being hosted for the Primary Schools and Post Primary Schools with the events taking place online. A detailed report from Sinéad on the work of the Student Councils can be found further into this report.

Both Suzanne and Sinead have been in their roles for many years now and continue to have a hugely positive impact on the Loreto School Community.

School Celebrations

140th Anniversary Clonmel

Congratulations to Principal, Anne McGrath, Deputy Principal, Sarah Rice, Chairperson, Mary Ryan, the Clonmel Board of Management, staff and students on a marvellous 140th celebratory concert held this month. A fitting tribute in music, song and dance to an exceptional school community.



Appointments

Congratulations to all our newly appointed Leaders

- Maria Lynch, Acting Deputy Principal, Loreto Secondary School, Bray
- Sarah Rice, Acting Principal, Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel
- Michele Culliton, Acting Deputy Principal, Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel.
- Mary Kelleher, Deputy Principal, Loreto College, Crumlin.
- Elaine O'Dwyer, Acting Deputy Principal, Loreto Secondary School, Kilkenny.
- Bridie Smyth, Acting Deputy Principal, Loreto College, Mullingar.



- Kevin Shortall, Principal, St Aidan's Community School, Brookfield.
- Una Moloney, Deputy Principal, St Aidan's Community School, Brookfield.
- Helen Dargan, Principal, Portmarnock Community School.
- Elaine Moran, Deputy Principal, Portmarnock Community School.
- Niamh Morrogh, Acting Principal, St Patrick's Bray.
- Attracta Swords, Acting Principal, Loreto Senior Primary School, Crumlin.
- Fiona Finn, Acting Deputy Principal, Loreto Senior Primary School, Crumlin.
- Mary Galligan Acting Principal, Loreto Junior Primary School, Crumlin.
- Claire McGrane, Acting Deputy Principal, Loreto Junior Primary School, Crumlin.
- Nancy Ferris, Loreto Sports Coordinator
- Máiread McNally, Loreto Wellbeing Coordinator

Best wishes to former Loreto College, Crumlin Deputy Principal Matthew Whelan who relocated to Cork.

St Patrick's Bray – Brian O'Doherty on secondment to IPPN as President

Loreto Senior Primary School, Scoil Mhuire Ógh I – Angela Mitchell on career break to Notre Dame University

Retirements

St Aidan's Community School – Karen Quigley and Carol Keating retired as Principal and Deputy Principal respectively.

Portmarnock Community School – Eithne Deeney retired as Principal.

Loreto Junior Primary School, Scoil Mhuire Ógh II – Denise Griffin and Trish O'Sullivan retired as Principal and Deputy Principal respectively.

Remembrance

We remember with sadness those who have gone before us and in particular

Ms Bríd Carr, past pupil of Loreto Milford and teacher in Loreto Secondary School, Letterkenny who died in August 2021. Bríd was an esteemed colleague and excellent maths teacher. She is sorely missed by the whole school community after 37 years of dedicated service, a very popular teacher who went the extra mile for all her students.

Rafaella Sofia Costin, a second year student from Loreto Balbriggan, who died suddenly in December 2021. Her leaving us at such a young age has left a deep void and sadness in the lives of all those she touched within her class, year group and the entire school community.



We pray for all within the Loreto family who died during the past twelve months. May they all be rewarded for the good they have done and may they rest in peace.



Seminars

Transforming Meeting Training Programme

In early 2020, I worked with Rachel Doogue and Mary Pyne of Rachel Doogue Coaching inviting them to deliver a designed programme, Transforming Meetings™ to the Senior Leadership Teams in our schools. The programme commenced in May/June 2021 with the Principals of the Voluntary Secondary Schools undertaking the training over a period of three half days. The academic year 2021/2022 has seen the programme shared with the Deputy Principals and Chairs of the Voluntary Secondary Schools, and the Principals and Deputy

Principals of the Primary Schools. At this time, a follow up session has been provided to the Principals of the Secondary schools with a further session scheduled for their Deputy Principals in April 2022.



Transforming Meetings™ is a programme for school leaders to get the very best thinking, action and results at meetings in schools whether they are online or face to face.

The programme, customized for Loreto Schools, aims to facilitate participants' learning and experience of the Transforming Meetings methodology to:

- Create an engaging and interactive virtual meeting environment.
- Develop meetings' behaviour that is collaborative and helps all voices to be heard
- Prepare transformative meeting agendas to operate in a very structured, yet highly participative and collaborative way, using the 10 components of the Transforming Meetings' methodology.
- Improve engagement before, during and after meetings using a range of



Transforming Meetings' techniques such as Thinking Pairs, Rounds, Dialogue and Open Discussions.

- Be more productive and inspired in meetings.
- Improve the quality of thinking and listening of those attending
- Encourage equality and diversity
- Create a psychologically safe environment for quality decisions to be made.
- Engage in respectful robust discussions and move more easily into and through conflict

Feedback from the participants has been extremely positive with comments received noting the importance of having this 'thinking time' and the skills development to lead more productive and inclusive meetings.

Student Council

The key objectives of the Student Council training days since their establishment have included:

- To support Student Council Liaison Teachers in their role
- To provide a forum for the sharing of good practice
- To provide input on specific topics
- To generate good ideas for Student Council Activities
- To facilitate a peer support network for Student Councils in Loreto schools

(Source: Loreto Voices Newsletter 2007)

Student Councils within Loreto schools have developed greatly year on year as underpinned by the Education Act (1998) and Looking at Our School Framework Document from the Inspectorate (2016). All second level councils in Loreto schools have developed since 2006 to ensure all year groups from 1st – 6th Year have council representatives.



In the last year, demand and need was such that two separate days were organised for students at primary and second level. In our most recent training days online, seventeen secondary schools and five primary schools took part.

Loreto schools were fortunate to have expertise within this area working within their schools and thus were able to share their professional experience with students and staff on our training days. The sharing of ideas from all of the schools has been a central part of the training day thus inspiring students and teachers to further develop their own councils.



Feedback from whole school inspection reports at our training days have commented on the dynamic and innovative input of Loreto student councils in their schools.

Students who have been representatives on councils have had unique opportunities to develop their leadership skills. A number of student council representatives have often gone on to become leaders in their schools, colleges and careers.

Key aspects of our most recent training days in November 2021 included:

- the functions of the student council
- the council's role as partners in education
- consulting with partners including Principal, deputy Principal, staff, parents association and board of management,
- the council's role in school policy formation and review
- listening to others' opinions and representing other students' views
- holding effective meetings

- working well as team members
- communicating with the whole school population
- enhancing school spirit
- sharing of ideas and good practice from other schools
- creating effective year plans
- addressing student liaison teachers' queries at teacher training sessions
- promoting the Loreto philosophy of education of inclusiveness in conjunction with the key principles of Truth, Justice, Freedom, Sincerity and Joy.



Following our training days, continuous help, support and advice is offered to liaison teachers through the Loreto Education Centre.

The continuity of support helps to motivate our councils to achieve their goals and to strive for the highest of standards from year to year. To achieve this, our councils submit reports of their work at the end of each year. And for the first time and in our



celebratory year of Frances Ball, it is planned that the councils will come together for a second seminar to share and celebrate their achievements. All of this, helps to firmly establish student voice at the centre of our Loreto communities.



On a personal note, as teachers who have been involved since the beginning in the presentation and training at the Loreto Network Days, we are so encouraged by the high levels of student participation and the respect given to student councils in our Loreto schools. Support from all of the education officers and administration staff has been central to the success of our Loreto student councils. We will continue to share best practice in order to build upon the strong tradition of encouraging the student voice in Loreto schools.

The Voice of the Student Council, Loreto Secondary School, St Michael's, Navan. Copy and paste the link below into a browser to see the full report.

<https://bit.ly/3KqFDa2>

The Voice of the Student Council Annual Report, May 2021, Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan. Copy and paste the link below into a browser to see the full report.

<https://bit.ly/3Mttra2>

Sinéad Giblin
Máirín O'Toole
Student Council Coordinators

Loreto Network Sports Coordinator

Loreto Sports Meeting

The year began with organising and hosting the annual Loreto Sports meeting on Tuesday 7th September.

Approximately thirty teachers and staff from Loreto schools attended. This year, the meeting was held online on zoom. It facilitated teachers from throughout Ireland attending. While face to face interactions were missed, it was a huge benefit to the online aspect that more teachers were able to attend from a wider geographical area. This is important to note going forward in planning future meetings.

Social Media

This year, a twitter page (@LoretoSport1) was set up to promote sporting events and achievements of Loreto students and schools. This proved very beneficial in



promoting events such as the Loreto 200 Virtual Camino, and added to a sense of community across Loreto schools, in celebrating all schools' sporting achievements.

Loreto 200 Virtual Camino

Preparations began in earnest for the Loreto Virtual Camino during September. This was the second year of running the Virtual Camino challenge. Initial research and contact with companies that host virtual events took place during July and August. The concept was discussed at the Sports Meeting in early September, and followed up by individual contact with schools. This year, the event was to be named the Loreto 200 Virtual Camino, and was to form part of the celebrations recognising two hundred years of Loreto Education in Ireland.



The official launch date for the Virtual Camino was Friday 8th October. Prior to this, interest was expressed from all Loreto secondary schools nationwide. A final tally included seventeen Loreto schools, in addition to the Loreto Education Trust, and over two thousand

students, staff, and members of the wider Loreto Community.

This year we managed to increase participation of schools from twelve to seventeen, and also managed more inclusivity across schools, with many staff teams taking part in addition to students. There were parent representatives in teams in three Loreto schools also.

It was a wholly inclusive event, in which participants walked and ran in teams, aiming to complete the Camino de Santiago route virtually. Again this year, an interactive app was used, so that all participants could see where their team was on the map, and that they could see the position of other teams also. This gave participants a sense of the Camino challenge, as they could visualise their progress along the route.

The Loreto 200 Virtual Camino brought a great sense of spirit and togetherness to the entire Loreto Community. It was a fabulous event to be part of as an entire community, and in which all could participate. The response after the event was overwhelmingly positive. Each participant received a wristband, which was in the colours of the montage of Teresa Ball, celebrating Loreto 200. Participants also received certificates and medals.

The use of twitter greatly enhanced the awareness of the Loreto 200 Virtual



Camino. For instance, a Loreto school in Adelaide, Australia was in touch after the event, as they had followed its progress on twitter, and were interested in running a similar campaign. We also had a good luck message from Sarah Torrins, Irish International hockey player and past Loreto St. Stephen's Green student via the Loreto Sport twitter page.

Included at the end of the report are photos of Loreto schools' Virtual Camino presentations.

Covid-19 and Resumption of Sports Events

At the beginning of the academic year, it was uncertain how events would play out, and if we would see a return to full sporting action. The Loreto Swimming Gala originally scheduled for October 2021, and again for January 2022 had to be postponed.

However, outdoor sports were able to resume (with slight impositions such as lack of changing facilities and mask-wearing on buses). Indoor sports were slower to return, with schools being cautious in their approach.

Nevertheless, over the course of the year we thankfully witnessed a return to many sporting events on the Loreto calendar. In September 2020, the Loreto Sailing event was held. All students and staff were very excited to see a return to sport, and it resulted with the largest attendance at the annual Sailing Regatta to date.

The Loreto Hockey and Loreto Basketball leagues also saw an enthusiastic return to action this year.

Further events are scheduled for later this year including the Loreto Swimming Gala and the Loreto Athletics (6th May).

A Loreto Camogie blitz and the Loreto Tennis competition are both due to be held in May.

A Loreto Gaelic Football blitz is due to be held for the first time this year. Seventeen Loreto schools have expressed interest in participating. Regional blitzes will take place at four venues spread out over Ireland, hosted by schools Cavan, Navan, Foxrock and Kilkenny. These blitzes are due to take place in March.

Loreto Sporting Achievements

Loreto students (present and past) have achieved overwhelming success this year.

Most notable successes from past students include:

- Leona Maguire (Golf; Solheim Cup winner on team Europe, first Irish woman to win on LPGA tour; past student of Loreto Cavan)



- Rachael Blackmore (Horse Racing; Cheltenham leading jockey, Aintree Grand National winning jockey; past student of Loreto Clonmel. RTE Sports Person of the Year. BBC Sports Person of the Year. Irish Times Sports Person of the Year).

Some successes from present students include:

Gaelic Football:

Loreto Cavan - 'Senior A' Ulster Champions

Loreto Cavan - 'Under 16 A' Ulster Champions

Loreto Omagh - 'Under 16-B' Ulster Champions

Camogie

Loreto Kilkenny - All Ireland 'Senior A' semi finalists, Leinster Champions

Loreto Kilkenny - All Ireland 'Under 16 A' finalists, Leinster Champions

Basketball

Loreto Kilkenny - All Ireland 'Senior A' finalists

Loreto Dalkey - All Ireland 'Senior A' schools' cup finalists

Hockey

Loreto Dalkey Leinster 'Senior A' finalists'

Loreto St. Stephen's Green 'Leinster A' Minor finalists

Sailing

Loreto Dalkey - team event winners, Loreto Sailing Regatta 2021

Loreto Crumlin students receiving their medals for the Loreto Virtual Camino

Loreto Swords students and staff receiving medals





Likely by [loretobalbriggan](#) and 103 others

loretoswords Today, as we celebrate Catholic Schools Week and Mary Ward Week, we took the opportunity to recognise the achievement of many students and teachers in our school in the Loreto 200 Virtual Camino. At the start of the year, several teams took part in the challenge to run or walk the 741km of the Camino de Santiago. Prizes were handed out to students across all year groups for this fantastic achievement. Huge well done to everyone who took part! 🙌🏼

Coverage in local newspapers in Fermoy on the Loreto Virtual Camino



Loreto Fermoy students and staff receiving their Camino certificates and wristbands



Loreto Balbriggan staff and students receiving their medals, wristbands and certificates



Loreto Mullingar students receiving their medals, certificates and wristbands

Loreto St. Stephen's Green receiving their wristbands and certificates



Nancy Ferris
Sports Coordinator

Loreto Guidance Counsellors Network

The provision of guidance in schools is a requirement of The Education Act (1998). Guidance in schools has been defined as ‘a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence that assist students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives.....’

Guidance Counsellors support students personal, social, educational and career development. We play an important role in facilitating decision-making and supporting student wellbeing. This aspect has come very much to the fore since the arrival of the global pandemic on our shores in March 2020. We are at the forefront of the issues concerning the teenagers in our care as we provide a safe space for them to express their feelings and worries. The role of the Guidance Counsellor is a unique one in the Irish education system and in most

schools there is at least one Guidance Counsellor.

As Guidance Counsellors working in Loreto schools, we are very privileged that Caroline Clarke had the vision to go about setting up a network of support and community of practice for Loreto Guidance Counsellors.

Set up in 2021 in the middle of the pandemic we have held five meetings to date and are organising our next one for April. At the first meeting we were fortunate to have a presentation from the Dr Carol Guildea of NCGE. As part of her presentation, Carol spoke about setting up a community of practice.

In the subsequent meetings, members of the network very kindly and generously agreed to make presentations on a wide variety of areas from ‘Effective Study Skills’; Guidance in the context of the revised Wellbeing Guidelines; Writing the Guidance Plan and Preparing for Guidance Inspections. The topics were selected on the basis of the interests of the members of the network.





We are fortunate to possess the knowledge, expertise, experience and a passion for our work within the Loreto network. We learn so much from each other in a culture of openness, honesty, lack of judgement. The meetings provide a safe space for discussion.

None of this would have been possible without Caroline's lead and the support of Eliza at the Loreto Education Centre and for that we are most grateful. In addition, to the meetings, a 'What's App' group was set up which affords us the possibility of reaching out to each other if there is an issue where a member would like an opinion on or advice on or to seek the experience of others.

Being a member of the group is a privilege as it allows us to share our knowledge, expertise and to learn from each other. We foster personal and professional development in a safe place. These meetings afford us the space for critical thinking, reflection, discussions, sharing ideas or resources, best practice. We support each other in our practice with good humour. At the end of the meeting, one leaves uplifted and motivated to proceed knowing one is not on one's own.

Hilda O'Malley
Guidance Counsellor Chairperson



Personal Wellness

Recognising the needs of Wellbeing Coordinators in Loreto schools and also the needs of the students in the schools, the role of Wellbeing Coordinator for the Network was established. As our schools begin to look like the places they were pre-pandemic, the scars of school closures, face masks and social distance are evident in terms of our young people's wellbeing.

The needs of our young people are great. Students' ability and confidence to interact with one another, their teachers and their friends has been hampered. Their ability to socialize has been restricted and they are navigating their way into a 'new normal.' Many are showing huge signs of resilience as they forge ahead but some are wounded. In order to respond to these challenges, the Loreto Wellbeing Balance Wheel was launched at the first meeting of the schools' Wellbeing Coordinators on 25th January 2022.



Take a moment to think about how much time you are giving to each of these areas of your life.

Are you spending too much time on one thing and not enough on another aspect of your life? Are you sometimes think that you should be doing but you do not have the time?

Imagine at the very centre on the wheel is zero and that the edge of each section is 10. Rate between time you are giving certain things and then think - Would I like to give that piece more time? Ask y a certain aspect more or less time improve my **wellbeing**?

You can colour in how much attention you give each aspect. This exercise is about trying to get so you time to **reflect** and help to improve your overall **wellbeing**.

At this initial meeting a number of ideas that could be used in schools were shared. These included:

- A Wellbeing Tree with a focus on the six indicators of wellbeing including- Responsible, Connected, Aware, Resilient, Active, Respected
- A Wellbeing Timetable where all wellbeing activities could be mapped within the school.
- Creating a student wellbeing committee
- Ideas for a Wellbeing Week
- Wellbeing assembly ideas for particular year groups.

The role of Wellbeing Coordinator is a new role in the majority of schools and the initial meeting was very positive. Teachers had the opportunity to introduce themselves and share an idea that has worked in their school around wellbeing. From this meeting it was decided that a sharing platform of resources would be

developed for all Wellbeing Coordinators in Loreto schools.

The wellbeing of teachers also needed to be considered as we move forward with our new normal. In response to this Shane Martin was invited to speak to all staff in Loreto schools. The topic of the talk was 'The Psychology of Renewal'. In this seminar, Shane explored the psychological consequences of the pandemic and offered pathways to learning from the experience. It fostered hope within us. He spoke about the need to regroup, the need to recommit and re-energise, focusing on our inner strengths. The feedback from attendees was extremely positive. One thing in particular that stands out from this talk was the quote 'Physical distance does not mean social distance' as we endeavour to reconnect socially with our friends and families.

As the role of Wellbeing Coordinator develops, it is hoped that the sharing platform for teachers will develop further for the benefit of students and staffs in our schools.

Máiread McNally
Wellbeing Coordinator



The end of one long journey...

As we approach the end of another challenging year, I wish to acknowledge the extraordinary work and commitment shown by our school teaching staff who, once again, infused the student experience with care, kindness and creativity. Thank you to our school administration staff, caretakers, Lead Worker Representatives, cleaning and catering personnel who kept the multiple cogs in the schools' wheel oiled and moving forward.



Our SNAs deserve a special mention because of the unique and central role they played over the last two years in the lives of our students. We are grateful for the extraordinary support they have given to our most vulnerable students.

We are indebted to the Chairpersons of the Boards of Management and Boards of Governors of our schools who give so generously of their time, expertise and skills. The fact that they hold this position as a voluntary leader deserves the fulsome gratitude of the Trust Board and the school communities. Without their commitment and loyalty in leading the work of the Boards of Management and Governors, our schools would not be able to function so effectively. On a professional level I have been blessed to share this journey with such fine, good humoured and wise Chairpersons.

School leaders are my colleagues and valued colleagues. They are the members of our network that I spend most time with individually and collectively. They are the leaders who inspire me and give meaning to my work. When I look back over the last two years and all the challenges we have encountered, my enduring and cherished memories are of the time spent with the Principals whom I meet regularly and speak with daily. Our Deputy Principals are exemplary leaders in terms of work ethic, commitment and loyalty to their schools. Only those who have journeyed with these senior leaders



know the extent of the challenges this pandemic has brought, but also the admirable way you rose to these challenge on a daily basis. I sincerely hope that the months ahead and the summer break will replenish your energy and spirit. It was my privilege to share this time with you and to have your trust, support and collegiality as gifts that have sustained me.

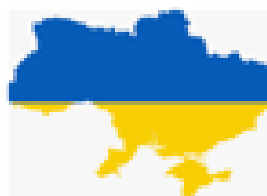


Thank you to Eliza and Melissa for their unfailing support of the work I do with our school communities. Their contributions are sometimes unseen but their value is unquantifiable.

As I write this report, we are witnessing the sad and horrific images and reports coming from a beleaguered Ukraine. Women and children refugees flood into neighbouring countries seeking shelter and safety. A child sits in an impoverished

bomb shelter in Mariupole and Polish women leave prams in a train station for fleeing Ukrainian mothers arriving with toddlers. These are images that bring us to tears and remind us that our humanity is the most precious gift we can give to each other.

The Loreto family is already mobilising to respond to this humanitarian crisis. We will continue to offer prayers and support to our sisters and brothers in Ukraine.





We are, on many levels, in a new chapter of our lives. This is a time of transition and reflection. It's a liminal space emotionally, psychologically, physically, institutionally, relationally.

Part of what we need to do now is rest, as we are able. To let ourselves fall apart, perhaps. Throughout the pandemic, it's been hard to fully articulate what was happening inside us and how that was ricocheting between us. Now, we are in a new moment, called to feel what we need to feel, to find words and new intelligence of practice in all the spaces we inhabit and work in and relate in. To acknowledge what we've survived, what we've lost, what we've begun to learn.

Padraig O Tuama



Caroline Clarke

Director of Education and Leadership
Loreto Education Trust Twitter Account

@ire_edu



Loreto Junior Primary. Crumlin

I am so grateful to be in Loreto because of all the amazing teachers and friends that I have. *Jack 8 years old*

I love going to room 15. *Daniel 8 years old*

I am proud to be a Loreto student because of all the kind students and teachers. *Harmonie 8 years old*

I am happy to be a Loreto student because every day makes me feel like I'm in a brand-new world. *Zuriel 8 years.*

I'm happy to be in a Loreto school because every day is always good. *Lily 7 years old*

I love all the friends and teachers I have in Loreto because they are all very kind. *Bradley 8 years old.*

I'm happy to be a Loreto student, I learn new things every day. *Evie 8 years old.*

I'm so happy to be in Loreto because everyone is nice and helpful. *Amelia 8 Years Old.*

I'm happy to be in Loreto because all my friends and teachers are helpful. *Keegan 8 years old.*

I have the best teacher in Loreto, because every day we do fun things and she always has new things to say. *Harmonie 8 yrs*

I am happy to be in Loreto because every day I learn something new and fun. *Jack 7 years old*



Faith Development Coordinator Report

Introduction

In 1821, Frances Teresa Ball returned to Dublin from York to begin Mary Ward's Institute in Ireland which she named Loreto. As we celebrate our bicentenary, this account of faith development is coloured by the themes of her life and vision, how they influence us and how we internalise their values by reflecting on and interpreting them, thus making them our own for the 21st century.

In a sense, her time is now: Teresa Ball's life encapsulated many of the experiences of our pandemic: uncertainty and separation from those she loved when she attended school in York, grief at the death of her beloved father and subsequently, the death of many of her young companions in Loreto who succumbed to tuberculosis. Similarly, many in our school community have lost loved ones during this time and all have experienced the lack of certainty which has accompanied the pandemic. The strong personal qualities and dispositions of vision, faith and courage, hope, love and resilience are also common to both times. Teresa Ball, in the 19th century was "making the path by walking it," having no preordained,

well-worn map of where to go, yet trusting her deep God-given intuitions. Just as we envisaged a new way of living, of teaching and learning in a time of pandemic without a blueprint, Teresa Ball exactly two hundred years ago began an extraordinary path by walking it: a life-story involving people, places, missions beyond her wildest dreams. We are part of that story in the twenty first century.

The following paragraphs give a sense of some of the activities and events under the canopy of Faith Development which have taken place this year.



Image of Teresa Ball for our Bicentenary Celebrations

Our image of Teresa Ball for our Bicentenary Celebrations has been formed by our schools all over Ireland. Resources on Teresa Ball were sent to the schools in 2019 and having studied them, students were invited to send in portraits of Teresa Ball and scenes from



her life by March 2020. Thank you to all the pupils who created such lovely artwork and to the teachers who encouraged them and sent the pictures to us. Special thanks to Lucy O'Mordha, Sr Moira MacManus, Jenny Edwards, Eliza Connolly, Amy O'Brien, Michelle McGill, Sarah Fynes and Pauline Norton who worked with me on this project. This work finally culminated in a beautiful mosaic of pictures composed by Amy O'Brien. In July, we got bicentenary banners (with this image and quotations from Teresa Ball) which were delivered to the schools in August and September.



Music and Spirituality: Celebrating our Internationality: The Loreto World Anthem

*How are we promoting a sense of belonging to
the world-wide Loreto education family?*

(Continuing the Journey: Loreto Links. 35)

The idea of composing a Loreto Anthem began in 2019 as we were thinking ahead to celebrations for Teresa Ball and 200 years of Loreto – our bicentenary due to

take place in two years' time. We had a conference for music teachers in September 2019 where our topics ranged from Music and Spirituality, Input and Reflection on the Mary Ward School' Compass to Music Technology, Traditional Music, Music and Theology, Samba and Liturgical Music.

One of these topics was "Composing a Loreto Anthem."

All schools, both primary and secondary, were invited to write an Anthem. We were so enthusiastic about the various possibilities in creating this piece and looked forward to what we might have as our Anthem in 2021.

A few months later, the pandemic struck and among the restrictions required for this extraordinary and challenging time was a complete prohibition on choral singing other than with members of one's own family or usual close contacts.

Schools became very innovative and creative in reimagining ways around this and many other facets of school life. We included the option of setting maxims of Teresa Ball to music as an alternative to a full-scale Anthem. Colm Keher considered possible ways his school community in Loreto Kilkenny could respond to the invitation to compose a Loreto Anthem and thus the beautiful Anthem, SHE was written by two students in Loreto, Kilkenny: Sadhbh and Síofra Ní Chasaide. All Loreto schools from Ireland were invited to take part in the chorus and they



sent their videos to Loreto Kilkenny where they were included in the recorded performance.

While this has been a Loreto Schools Ireland project led by Loreto Secondary School, Kilkenny, it has also involved an international collaboration of Loreto schools. On the video, you will see students from Loreto schools worldwide joining in the chorus. The international dimension of this project was highlighted at the launch of SHE: the Loreto World Anthem in December 2021 which was prefaced by an introduction and formal launch by Sr Noelle Corscadden, Institute Leader of Loreto worldwide.

See the video for further details of all those involved in the production of this beautiful piece.

[SHE Loreto World Anthem](#)

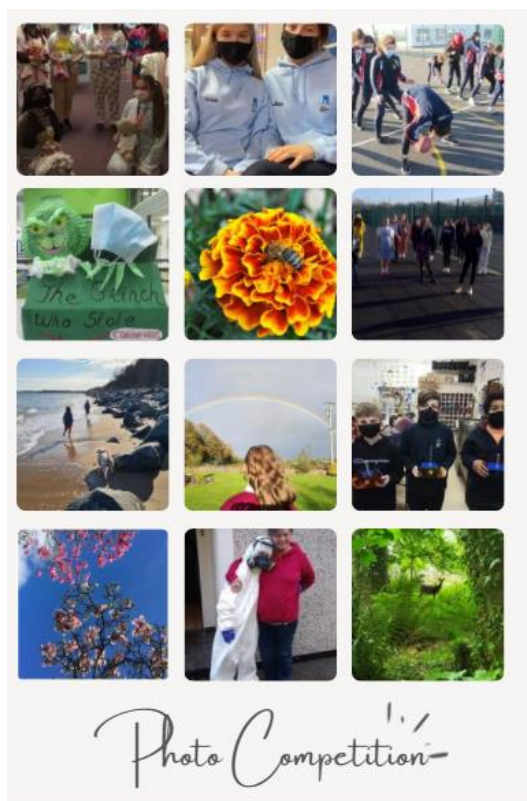
Musical Tribute to Teresa Ball and Loreto 200

We continue to interpret this charism, adapting what has been passed on to us,

In creative and innovative ways congruent to the times.

(Mary Ward Schools' Compass)

Many other creative projects celebrating Teresa Ball and our bicentenary year led by particular schools involved other Loreto schools in both Ireland and abroad. One such project was the stunningly beautiful musical tribute to Teresa Ball and Loreto 200 by Loreto Grammar School, Omagh. This celebration of our diversity "as a mirroring of the wonder of creation" (Mary Ward Schools' Compass) is a "joyous celebration of the world of music in Loreto schools worldwide; a portrayal of joy in action and image, and a musical tribute to Mother Teresa Ball." Our core value of Joy was the theme – significant at this time of pandemic as with Mary Ward and Teresa Ball, joy was not reserved for the easy times in life but also has the potential to powerfully thrive in adversity. At a time of great difficulty in Mary Ward's own life, her





response was “At this time (of tribulation), mirth is next to grace.”

Schools from Ireland were invited to send in photographs of joy from their school communities and our international schools were invited to send videos of traditional music expressing joy. The finale of the production was a specially composed traditional Irish piece written and performed by students from Loreto Grammar School, Omagh on the theme of Joy. The video may be accessed here:

[Musical Tribute to Mother Teresa Ball and Loreto Education 2022](#)

The dialogue of music and faith continues in a range of ways in our schools: in our engagement with music which enhances and deepens the experience of liturgy; in collaborative projects such as the Virtual Music Project for Holy Week involving hundreds of young singers, musicians and dancers from 7 Dioceses - Waterford and Lismore, Kildare, Dublin, Ferns, Kerry, Limerick, Ossory; in our resources on Music and Spirituality exploring this dialogue through a variety of musical genres.

She

She said we'll be repaid a hundred-fold
For all we give, and all we do
And if they speak then they can surely sing
If they can sing, they can do anything

Chorus

Because she believes in me
She would never let things be
Only she could always see
One day we would be free

Bridge

The daughter of a weaver,
But she wove her own dreams
Dreams of a new reality
Stitched together at the seams
So began the silent revolution
The one without a name
The one that changed the game
And things would never be the same

Chorus

Because she believes in me
She would never let things be
Only she could always see
One day we would be free

And for centuries to come the truth would echo
Far and near, loud and clear
And a ray of hope would banish all the shadows
Can you see? Can't you just hear them sing?

Conference for Chaplains

Our Conference for Chaplains in November, in addition to time for reflection, a presentation on Teresa Ball and time for forward planning, included much appreciated inputs from Eimear Roche and Sr Anne Farren on Healing and Hope in time of Anxiety and Ignatian/Loreto Spirituality in School respectively. This built on an earlier online



conference for chaplains in Loreto schools which included an excellent input by Fr Bryan Shortall on 'Caring for Self and others in Challenging Times.'

Ember Teams

*We continue to interpret this charism, adapting
what has been passed on to us,
in creative and innovative ways congruent to
the times.*

(Mary Ward Schools' Compass)



We were delighted to begin new Ember Teams in Loreto schools this year and to continue with those already established in our schools. Ember Ignite Teams are Faith Leadership Groups in schools whose membership is drawn from fifth year pupils. Many thanks to our Ember Teams who, in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic, creatively adapted their roles of service to contribute much to their schools in a spirit of faith, hope and love.

It was a joy to visit the schools for their training days in the first term. Thanks to the generosity and commitment of Principals, Teachers and Students, time

and space were given to these training days.

Since then, the Ember Teams have contributed much to the life of the school, organising celebrations for the bicentenary, sharing the story of Teresa Ball with their school community, leading morning prayer over the intercom, helping first years settle into their new environment, organising and developing the school prayer space, designing the religion notice board, preparing and taking part in Remembrance Services in November, organising celebrations for Advent, Christmas Hampers, preparations for Carol Services, participating in and contributing to the online reflection on Teresa Ball for Ember Teams in Loreto schools in Mary Ward Week, celebrating Catholic Schools' Week, planning and delivering with their teachers a retreat to Confirmation classes and more recently co-ordinating donations for Ukraine at this heart-breaking time.

This week, some of the Ember Teams participated in the international project where we collaborated with Loreto, Australia in reflecting on our shared heritage.

It has been a delight to meet the teachers and students involved in the programme and inspiring to listen to their plans and insights as they share their talents, vision and creativity for the good of their school communities.



Our Loreto Ember Teams collaborate closely with the Ember Teams in Dublin Diocese and include a particular focus on our Loreto ethos. This is expressed in their exploration of the Compass Document (Currently focussing on Cultivating Values Needed Now; Celebration of Diversity; Thinking and acting justly) and engaging in creative presentations of the Examen: Reflection on My Day through a variety of media. The engagement with Ember Teams from other schools was necessarily curtailed by Covid and we hope to resume our training days together for the next school year.

The dates planned for Ember Training in Ovoca Manor in 2022/23 are:

31 May – 2 June

30 August – 1 September

6 September – 8 September

Our Ember core group has planned a meeting for Ember teachers in April for an opportunity to evaluate, reflect on the programme, share activities, together with time to plan for graduation and the programme for next year.

Féile Rangeela: Celebrating Diversity: India-Ireland Project

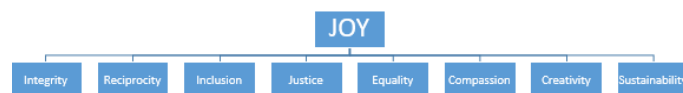
A Mary Ward school today embraces diversity as a mirroring of the wonder of Creation. Seeing the image of God in human diversity, we encourage the young to discover their interdependence so they each find their own dignity – “I am because you are” – and feel

truly affirmed and included. (cf KG pp 6-7; IBVM Call 5)

We continue developing this project formalised in 2020 with the partner organisations Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, Galway; Jesuit Order (India), 'Loyola Academy CBSE Senior Secondary School', Chennai, India and Loreto Education Trust. Having established leadership and project management teams, we worked on the first pilot exchange projects in 2021-2022.

The mission of the Féile-Rangeela project is to celebrate and promote a joyful mutual exchange of culture, race and religion, in the context of education.

The project ethos is shaped by defining values shared by the Jesuit, Loreto and Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology communities. At the heart of the ethos of the project is the core value of JOY, which is promoted and sustained by the companion values of integrity, reciprocity, inclusion, justice, equality, compassion, creativity and sustainability.



At present we are working on Project 2, a joint collaboration between Loyola Academy Secondary School, Chennai and Loreto College, St Stephen's Green. The goal is to design, deliver and evaluate an art project- celebrating JOY in day-to-day life and/or religious traditions and/or culture - with a showcase in April 2022.



Please see accompanying document:
Féile Rangeela: Celebrating Diversity:
India-Ireland Project for further details of
the project.



Mary Ward Week 2022

In Mary Ward Week this year, we continued to celebrate Teresa Ball who began the Irish branch of Mary Ward's Institute and named it Loreto. The following activities were organised with resources on the Teresa Ball Padlet in the corresponding sections. These included prayer services, music, art, archival material, pilgrimage routes (by Jenny Edwards), reflections on the Teresa Ball Camino, PowerPoints, Videos on Mary Ward and Teresa Ball (Sr Moira MacManus) and Student Engagement Discussion Questions on Teresa Ball (Lucy O'Mordha). Reflections on Mary Ward and Teresa Ball were posted on Twitter each morning during this week. Due to the challenges of the pandemic, the lectures were recorded and sent to each school to view in their own time.

Monday: The Loreto Anthem: She

Teresa Ball Bicentenary Image.

Tuesday: Videos: Mary Ward: Dangerous
Visionary

Frances and the Curious Voice
(Teresa Ball)

Ember Teams gathered online
to celebrate Teresa Ball

Wednesday: Primary Schools gathered
online to celebrate Teresa Ball

Podcast – Deirdre Raftery and
Ruth Ferris, Teresa Ball and
Loreto Education

Thursday: Elaine McDonald, The Legacy
of Mary Ward and Teresa Ball:
Bearers of a Dangerous Memory

Friday: In the Footsteps of Teresa Ball
Schools were invited to choose
one of the routes from the Teresa
Ball Pilgrimage Booklet and walk it
virtually.

Teresa Ball Schools' Group and Bicentenary Celebrations

*The "interchange of ideas and practices,
shared charism and history" "creates a sense
of belonging in the Loreto family in Ireland and
throughout the world."*

(Continuing the Journey, 26).



In September, a Teresa Ball Schools' Group was formed with representatives from all our schools and our communication has been chiefly over Zoom, email and WhatsApp. Projects such as those mentioned above were discussed and planned, the latest of which is a joint event with Loreto schools in Australia which was recorded on 28 February.

This video of a conversation between students and staff from both countries about our reflections on Mary Ward and Teresa Ball as well as our shared heritage and values, was facilitated expertly by Elaine McDonald who has researched Loreto education in depth.

In Australia, this video was viewed on Friday 4th March as part of their Mary Ward Connect week and it will be available on the Teresa Ball Padlet which has been set up for resources for the bicentenary:

<https://padlet.com/kfitzpatrick35/nmd50i0g7524udy5>

Password: TeresaBall2021

Many thanks to the eight participating Loreto schools, Kirribilli, Ballarat, Normanhurst, Marryatville, Balbriggan, Swords, Omagh and Kilkenny. We appreciated their wholehearted engagement in the conversation, the inspiring insights shared and their generosity in joining Zoom meetings at unsociable hours to facilitate our time

difference. We are delighted with the responses from both countries and are looking at this model for future gatherings. We are also planning further collaborations with Loreto, Australia including a virtual pilgrimage of Teresa Ball's Dublin guided by the excellent booklet on these routes which Jenny Edwards has designed.



Such projects that celebrate our internationality and diversity include the beautiful artwork on the Teresa Ball Way currently being created to mark the centenary in Loreto, St Michael's, Navan which expresses the rich and beautiful cultural diversity of our membership. Similarly, twinning partnerships which schools have set up such as Coleraine's link with Coorparoo, Australia, further deepen this understanding of unity in diversity in Loreto.

In addition to our joint online gatherings, schools are celebrating the bicentenary in a variety of ways including JPIC events, prayer services, screen plays, debates, art, sport and music.



Loreto Primary School, Grange Road, now the oldest Loreto school having been founded in 1823 (Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham founded in November 1822 closed in 1999) has created a beautiful book on the life of Teresa Ball. We are currently planning a prayer-book composed of prayers centred on our core values by pupils from primary schools led by Loreto Primary School, Dalkey.

It was lovely to attend the Loreto High School, Beaufort Mass and a rich programme of events on 4 November (the date chosen precisely because it was on 4 November 1822 that Teresa Ball come to Rathfarnham to begin a school at Loreto Abbey). This section gives just a flavour of the celebrations, and we hope that at the end of the year, we will have an online record of these events on the Teresa Ball Padlet.

Religious Education Focus Group

Siobhan O'Donoghue, Religious Education teacher in Wexford and currently working with Veritas is in the process of creating new resources for Senior Cycle Non-Exam Religion. She and her colleagues at Veritas are hoping that these resources will be engaging and relevant to students as well as being practical for the teacher.

I had a conversation with Siobhan about this exciting work and she shared the following with an invitation to anyone who is interested to join her focus group:

“We have already surveyed teachers around the country to assess what is needed in this area. We received lots of responses and are now in the process of creating a programme based on this feedback. We have lots of exciting plans and are really looking forward to developing this programme.

We would like to involve teachers and their students in the creation of this programme from the very beginning. I would like to assemble a group of interested and dedicated Religion teachers from a variety of schools, to be part of a focus group, working with me and the writing team to pilot resources with their students, give feedback on their effectiveness in the classroom and to offer input on the type of resources you feel would be beneficial in the Senior Cycle



Religion classroom. We will also be creating a number of videos featuring secondary school students and would love to work with your students on this. This is a great opportunity to meet with fellow RE teachers and to contribute to the creation of a meaningful RE programme.”

Those interested in being part of this worthwhile research, are invited to contact Siobhan O’ Donoghue at siobhan.odonoghue@veritas.ie It is hoped that the group will meet every 6/8 weeks via Zoom.



Conference for Religious Education Departments

Our next conference for RE Teachers and Chaplains will be in September and will include the following subjects:

- Junior Cycle Religious Education
- Film and Faith
- The Liturgical Year
- Ember Teams in Schools
- RE as a non-examination subject at Senior Cycle

- Prayer and Reflection with Students
- The Mary Ward Schools’ Compass: Building on Direction 1: Keeping our focus fixed.

A Mary Ward school today continues to take its bearings from Jesus, his gospel, and our charism, and to be guided by our JUST SOUL traditional values of Justice, Truth, Sincerity, Freedom, and Joy.

RE Departments are invited to suggest other areas they would like addressed at the Religious Education Conference, the Reflection Day, the Chaplains’ Conference or to be included on the RE Padlet.

Primary Schools' Teresa Ball Online Gathering

It was great to meet the primary staff and students online for our celebration in Mary Ward Week /Catholic Schools' Week. Our next online event in May /June will be an opportunity for schools to share an activity/event they had to mark the bicentenary.

Synodality

We were delighted to invite Sarah MacDonald to give an online presentation on The Loreto Family Engaging with Synodality. The Synodal Journey which the Church is on is perhaps the “most exciting moment since Vatican II and may lead to some far-reaching developments including a reordering the Church’s



internal way of proceeding for discussion and reflection - and a shaping of a new way for the Church to articulate its mission." This is a time when the role of women and women's contribution to the Church is beginning to come to the fore.

As a network, Loreto upholds Mary Ward's vision that "women, in time to come, will do much" and we considered how one way of marking the bicentenary could be to make a submission as a Loreto family to the Synodal process. This Synod Group could have the potential to subsequently form the basis of a Loreto Federation for Ireland? "We have the space we need for co-responsibility in creating and putting into place new processes and changes"- Pope Francis (Fratelli Tutti)

Science and Religion

Our primary schools attended an online CPD for teachers on the dialogue of faith and science in May 2021 which we organised in collaboration with the Spiritan Education Trust, Dublin Diocese Education Secretariat, and the Le Chéile Schools Trust. This input was delivered by the science-faith engagement project 'God and the Big Bang' from St John's College, Durham University.

Based on the premise that thinking about science and faith is key in faith formation and spiritual development, the course was informative and interactive, and designed to equip teachers to tackle challenging

areas of learning where science and faith appear to be at loggerheads.

Furthermore, consideration was given to how we can engage the whole school community in thinking about 'Big Questions' across the curriculum, encouraging social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. It echoed the core of Ignatian spirituality, "Finding God in all things" in its encouragement of pupils to search for God in any topic or situation. It also reflected aspects of the "Theology through the Arts" focus in its questions: "What is there to learn about God through art, music, sport, geography, science?"



Four Trusts: Middle Leaders' Programme and other Collaborations

Last year, the programme was modified to be more supportive of teachers in the challenging climate of pandemic and we included a new module on the theme of Christian Hope which was prefaced by a



presentation on the ethos of our school trusts. This year we continued with the online presentation of this course and topics ranged from Catholic Education in Contemporary Culture, Leadership and Management, Journey towards Self-Knowledge and Self-Awareness, Leading Teaching and Learning, Justice in Practice in a Faith School, to Leading in Times of Change. Each evening began with a time of prayer and reflection. Participating teachers are currently working in groups on their project work for this course and have chosen to research areas (such as 'Student Well-being,' 'Initiating and Developing an Eco-Program for whole school improvement,' 'Leading in a Digital Age,' and other areas of teaching and learning and school life through the prism of our ethos.) which will certainly benefit their school communities at this time and into the future. The final evening of the programme will be on 23rd March. Other collaborations with the various Trusts in the last year have included Online Prayer for key liturgical seasons, and "Science and Religion" CPD for primary school staff.

Credible Catholic

A Mary Ward school today continues to take its bearings from Jesus, his gospel, and our charism. (Mary Ward Schools' Compass).

On Wednesday 26 January, as part of Catholic Schools' Week, Bishop Brendan

Leahy, Chair of the Bishops' Council for Catechetics, launched Credible Catholic, a new religious education programme for non-examination senior Religious Education in Catholic Voluntary Secondary Schools in Ireland.

This programme aims to encourage dialogue, reflection, and critical reasoning, to "foster religious literacy, build community, and nurture faith, and in doing all of these things, to promote student wellbeing. It is an optional resource which will be very helpful to teachers of religious education. The programme speaks to, and is built around, very important questions young people of all beliefs (religious and non-religious) have about themselves, their world, God and others."

Credible Catholic is based on a programme created in the United States in 2018 and has been re-developed for the Irish context, as a result of consultation with RE teachers, faith development personnel and theological advisors in Ireland.

Catholic Schools' Week 2022

In conjunction with Mary Ward Week, we also celebrated the five daily themes of Catholic Schools Week: Living life to the full with God (Monday); Living life to the full together (Tuesday); Grandparents' day - Celebrating being together again (Wednesday); Living life in wonder and awe (Thursday); Living life and facing the future (Friday).



Liturgy, Prayer, and Reflection: A Faith that does Justice

Each one's spiritual life is expressed and deepened through prayer, ritual in the cycle of the liturgical year, and reflection on the profound link between faith and justice.

(Admission Policy: Characteristic Spirit).

Our school year has continued to be framed and punctuated by liturgies, school retreats and reflection. Many of these have been online but as we have emerged from the restrictions of the pandemic, we have attended liturgies in person with our schools. These gatherings have been celebrations of our heritage beginning with our worldwide Bicentenary Jubilee Celebration via webinar and our Prayer of Blessing for the New School Year in August. We have reflected on scripture together and followed the rhythm of the liturgical year. Our prayer has reflected our experience, the light and shade, from joy and gratitude to the deep sadness of loss and bereavement in our school communities. Our online prayer has been attended by the wider Loreto schools community, including Loreto Sisters, members of the Loreto Education Trust Board and Boards of Management. In some cases, the online prayer times have been prepared in collaboration with other groups such as the Education Secretariat, Dublin Diocese, the Spiritan and Le Chéile Trusts, The Chaplaincy Association and the Marino Institute of Education. We greatly appreciate our links with Sr Anne

Farren and the Loreto Schools Prayer Team and the contribution they make to our schools. This Prayer Team offers weeks of guided prayer to senior students in our schools as well as two excellent and well-received programmes:

- To the Heart of Who I am - for Transition Year Students
- Making Good Decisions -for 5th Year Students

As a Loreto family, our times for prayer and conversation have also provided opportunities for us to reflect on what aspects of our Loreto characteristic spirit have particularly sustained our resilience and deepened our faith, hope and love, and how the Covid pandemic may have finetuned our priorities. We have considered how we can more effectively “keep our focus fixed” by taking our “bearings from Jesus, his gospel, and our charism,” (Mary Ward Schools’ Compass) and deepening this space of prayer and reflection for both students and staff.

The profound link between faith and justice resonates powerfully and is expressed in our schools in a variety of ways including groups such as JPIC, Mission Possible, Ember Teams, St. Vincent De Paul and many others.



Resources

The role of Faith Development Officer includes making various resources available to the staffs in the schools. It has also been possible to attend relevant seminars and conferences and to liaise with or be part of appropriate groups.

- Induction for New Teachers: Opening Reflection; Introduction to Mary Ward and Teresa Ball; Reflections on Loreto Ethos.
- Conferences: Principals; Chairpersons: Opening Prayer; Reflections on Teresa Ball and two hundred years of Loreto.
- Presentations on Loreto Characteristic Spirit
- Supporting Pupils through Grief – Teachers' Webinar Birmingham St Mary's Hospice 28th April 2021.
- Resources on Directory for Catechesis (2020)
- Resources on Spirituality and Well-being
- Faith Seeking Understanding Course for Teachers
- Liturgy at a time of Pandemic
- Retreats for Confirmation Students
- Camino de Santiago – Prayers and Reflections on the Journey
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme

- Resources on Genesis Research into Catholic Education in Ireland
- Lecture by Deirdre Raftery on Teresa Ball hosted by Loreto, Australia: The Global Vision of Mother Teresa Ball IBVM: Education Without Borders.
- A Faith that does Justice
- Parents' Association
- Care of Creation: Laudato si.
- Loreto Archives
- Scripture Union
- Parents' Association
- Dublin Diocese Education Secretariat Membership of Core Ember Team
- Loreto RE Teachers' Core Group
- Membership of APTCS Ethos Sub committee

Conclusion

The work of faith development has been greatly enriched by collaboration with our Loreto education community and with the people and organizations referenced above in Ireland and in our world-wide Loreto family. These include catechetical and faith development teams, theology departments, spirituality and retreat groups, different education trusts as well as groups specifically concerned with art and faith, Catholic education in contemporary Ireland, interreligious dialogue, science and religion, and those



exploring the profound connection
between faith and justice.

The various projects for the Loreto
bicentenary have developed new links
with Loreto schools in other countries
through collaboration in music and shared
conversations on Mary Ward, Teresa Ball,
our Loreto ethos and heritage. We will
continue to develop these links and
relationships.

Above all, we will continue to build on
initiatives such as Healing and Hope in a
time of Pandemic as we move through
another stage of this extraordinary and
challenging time, in dialogue with school
personnel who, over the past two years,
have creatively imagined and embodied
new ways of teaching, learning, and taking
care of their school communities and
continue to do so with faith, vision, hard
work, goodness and generosity.

Sr Kathleen Fitzpatrick IBVM
Faith Development Co-ordinator



Office Manager and Finance Officer Report

For the year ended 31st August 2021 the Loreto Education Trust incurred an operating surplus of €44,000 compared to a deficit of €18,000 in the previous year. The surplus amount principally reflects savings made due to the impact of the pandemic.

The Trust generated a positive year of investment returns with a gain on investments of €945,000. We continued, during the financial year, to position our investment portfolio extremely conservatively.

For the coming year, Loreto Education Trust is budgeting for an operating deficit of €106,000. Licence fees will be maintained at unchanged levels while our costs continue to increase modestly.

Governance

During the early part of 2021, work continued on compliance with the Charities Governance Code and on submission of our Annual Report to the Regulator in June 2021, the Trust was in a position to declare compliance with the Code. Work continues to ensure ongoing compliance.

The Trust, as Patron, also has a governance role in relation to the schools. Under Article 15c of the Articles of Management for Catholic Secondary Schools, the Board of Management must prepare an annual budget and submit same to the Trustees. The schools are also required to submit a copy of their Year End Financial Statements/Accounts. The accounts will have been presented to the school's Board of Management for approval and signed by the Chairperson and another member of the Board. The financial information is reviewed in detail with any queries or concerns raised with the Board of Management.

The schools are also required to complete an Annual School Board of Management Report. The information required falls under a number of headings including education, ethos, leadership, governance, and finance. The details are reviewed within the Education Centre and a report on the responses for the academic year 2020/2021 was presented to the Loreto Education Trust Board. The schools are also requested to submit a Declaration in relation to the financial activity and position of the school.

The Education Centre seeks to continually support the schools and their Boards of Management in their governance and financial roles. Our intention is to continue to work with the Financial Support Services Unit (FFSU) in providing the

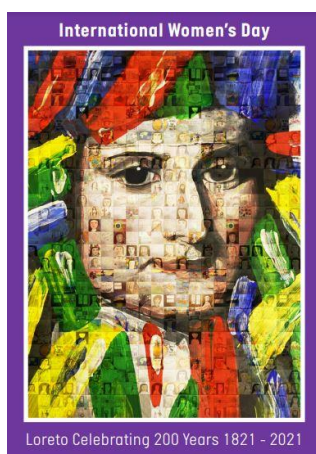


relevant training at our Principal and Chairpersons' Conferences.

As Office Manager and Finance Officer, with responsibility for Governance and Finance within the Education Centre, I will work to continue supporting the schools in financial management and compliance on a day-to-day basis, as required.

Melissa Steele

Office Manager and Finance Officer





Northern Ireland Report 2022

In writing the Northern Ireland report last year there was a degree of optimism regarding Covid-19 with the rollout of the vaccines. That optimism proved to be false as new variants emerged. Consequently, our schools have experienced another tumultuous year in their attempt to prioritise the education of their pupils. Once again, Principals, senior leadership teams and teachers are deserving of the highest praise for the manner in which they have continued to deal with this crisis, as are boards of governors, staff, pupils and parents.

To date in this academic year all schools have remained open. Although daily deaths, infections and hospitalisations remain of significant concern, there is a consensus that the peak of the Omicron infection wave has passed. It is perhaps worth saying that we have been here before.

At the time of writing, it is anticipated that public examinations in Northern Ireland will take place in the summer term.

Strule Shared Education Campus Omagh

Regarding the Strule Shared Education Campus, the Memorandum of Agreement was revised and signed off by all the Trustees including the Loreto Trustees in

late June/early July 2021. This followed a period of engagement between all the Trustees, Schools, and the Department of Education in which the Department acknowledged and responded to a number of common concerns.

On 21st September 2021 a meeting of the Managing Authorities Liaison Group (effectively the Trustees of the schools) recorded a renewed optimism and energy regarding the Strule Shared Education Campus. This reflected ministerial securement for the project, executive approval, funding securement and the signing of the revised Memorandum of Agreement. Priority is currently being given to advancing the Funding Model and the Apportionment Model (the proportion of funding each school will contribute to the shared areas). A review of the Governance and Management Company is taking place with Napier Solicitors Belfast representing the interest of the Catholic Schools.

In December 2021 Mr John Smith, Deputy Secretary at the Department of Education informed the Managing Authorities Liaison Group that the main works invitation to tender had been released. It is hoped that the main contract will be awarded in October 2022. The earliest anticipated date for the opening of the campus is September 2025. For more information and a comprehensive view of the site it is well worth visiting the following website: www.strule.org



Loreto Grammar School Omagh

In relation to Development Proposal No 459 regarding non-academic selection, Loreto Grammar School is now admitting 50% via the non-academic selection route. The Loreto Education Trust together with the school have kept all the educational stakeholders informed of the progress being made in this area.



The Transfer Test

The transfer test, suspended for the September 2021 intake of students, has been re-instated for the September 2022 intake and has precipitated renewed debate around academic selection once again.

To date the transfer test has been run by two separate private organizations, the Association for Quality Education (AQE) and the Post-Primary Transfer Consortium (PPTC). Following many attempts, agreement has been reached to form a single body called the Schools' Entrance Assessment Group (SEAG) which will

oversee a common test from November 2023 with the understanding that it will be used for transfer/entrance in September 2024.



Boards of Governors

The Boards of Governors of Loreto College Coleraine and Loreto Grammar School Omagh were reconstituted in December 2021.

We thank all those who, most generously, give of their time, wisdom and experience to voluntarily sit on Boards as Governors.

Administration Changes

In March 2021, Dr Mark Brown was appointed the new Permanent Secretary in Department of Education, replacing Mr Derek Baker. In June 2021, Mrs Michelle Mc Ilveen was appointed Minister for Education, replacing Mr Peter Weir.

Education Review

The Executive has begun the process of conducting an Independent Review of



Education in Northern Ireland, to be completed within eighteen months. It is anticipated that Trustees will engage in this review via the Catholic Schools Trustee Service.

The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools has begun an analysis of the changes brought about by the Post-Primary Review over the past ten to twelve years in their Multi-School Reorganization and Change Project. Trustees will be consulted and invited to input.

Finally, on 4th February the Northern Ireland Assembly collapsed adding another layer of uncertainty in the midst of already extremely challenging times.

Brian Lenehan
February 2022



Loreto Secondary School for Girls, Rumbek, South Sudan

In 2017, South Sudan was ranked as the world's most difficult nation for girls to receive an education.

Female children in South Sudan face extreme adversity in the pursuit of academic success.

Even a basic education is a right denied to many. Young girls and especially young women are less likely to enrol in school and more likely to drop out. Despite these challenges the young girls are the backbone of society in South Sudan: they cook, clean, care for younger children, get water, do the laundry, take care of family gardens and collect firewood. There is a deep desire for education in the midst of all this hardship.



Our schools in Ireland are familiar with the plight of the students in Rumbek. The outreach from our schools to Rumbek is extraordinary. The network of Loreto

schools in Ireland continue to fundraise and raise awareness of the injustice to young girls in Rumbek. We are a global village in terms of awareness and wanting to connect with those in Rumbek. Huge gratitude is owed to those who continue to keep Rumbek centre stage through school projects, fundraising and being the voice for girls in an unjust society.

We have incorporated the Loreto Rumbek Annual Report 2022 in the link below.

Copy and paste the link below into a browser to see the full report.

<https://bit.ly/35z1Hjr>





Property Adviser Report



Property Development Report

February 2022



SECONDARY SCHOOLS

School	Development	Funding
Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan	Wide range of school enhancement works and Covid adaptations. Summer works approval in process	€89,000 DES Funded
Loreto High School, Beaufort	Window replacement and other school enhancement works. Various Covid adaptations	School funded €35,000
Loreto Secondary School, Bray	Rebuild of the school under the ADAPT scheme Various Covid adaptations	DES Funded
Loreto College, Cavan	Major sewerage works Fire safety Heritage work	DES Funded €807,748
Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel	Various Covid adaptations	DES Funded €31,570
Loreto College, Crumlin	Major window replacements Covid adaptations	DES Funded €488,610
Loreto Abbey Secondary School, Dalkey	Refurbishment of art room, staff room and general facilities New portacabins	School funded €535,919



School	Development	Funding
Loreto Secondary School, Fermoy	The project for a major upgrade is at stage 2A, and hopefully will move to stage 2B soon. The project is part of the ADAPT Scheme and will be DES Funded. Summer works on Fire/Health/Safety to begin at Easter	€175,000 DES Funded
Loreto College, Foxrock	Minor works	School Funded
Loreto Secondary School, Kilkenny	Hockey pitch fencing Work on school acoustics	€19,815 €15,615 All school funded
Loreto Secondary School, Letterkenny	Two upgraded science labs and a new ASD unit approved Major maintenance on a dry rot situation	DES Funded Costs to be shared by the school and Divine Mercy Centre
Loreto College, Mullingar	Summer works approved for new windows	€174,953 DES Funded
Loreto Secondary School, St Michael's Navan.	Extension granted by DES. Stage one just complete	DES Funded
Loreto Grammar School, Omagh	Continued involvement in the Strule Shared Education Campus Various minor works projects in relation to refurbishment, fire/safely etc applied for	
Loreto College, St Stephen's Green	Ongoing roof repairs and major repointing at the front of the building	€797,729 School Funded
Loreto College, Swords	Four new portacabin classrooms and associated works Major roofing works Upgrade of facilities	DES Funded - €300,000 DES Funded - €50,000 School funded - €25,000



Loreto Secondary School, Wexford	Nothing to report under main developments etc. Property matters are handed by PPP (Public Private Partnership) and FM companies who report to NDFA	
PRIMARY SCHOOL		
School	Development	Funding
St Patricks Loreto Primary School, Bray	Temporary accommodation for two ASD units Installation of a new lift Summer works approved for new windows and doors	€236,803 (Pending) €89,548 €379,000 All DES Funded
Loreto Primary, Grange Road	Awaiting DES approval to knock the present building and begin enabling works for prefab while the new school is being built.	
Loreto Junior School, St Stephen's Green	Major roof replacement along with associated works Some window replacement/painting etc	€246,535 €14,438

All voluntary schools received Covid grants to help with various measures to deal with the pandemic.



Eddie Fynes
Property Adviser



Conclusion

The work of the Loreto Education Trust in sustaining our school communities is ongoing. This report has shown how the personnel at the Loreto Education Centre both enhance and support the wonderful activities in our schools. More importantly, they initiate so many events and programmes which give life and meaning to the community of Loreto schools in Ireland. It is this community of Principals, Chairpersons, Staff and Students which gives expression to, and maintains, our Loreto ethos and identity.

To Caroline Clarke, Director of Education and Leadership, Sr Kathleen Fitzpatrick Faith Development Coordinator, Melissa Steele, Office Manager, Eliza Connolly Administrative and Events Coordinator and Eddie Fynes, Property Adviser, we owe our sincere and heartfelt thanks for all they do to live our ethos and cultivate and support it in our schools.

When Teresa Ball was sending her sisters to start a new mission she instructed them:

‘Go and set the world alight with the fire of God’s love’.

Whether that flame was lit in 1822 or more recently, the schools today continue to fan that flame each day, to express that love in multitudinous ways. The details and specifics may have changed but each student continues to receive extraordinary care, academically, pastorally, physically, spiritually. If Teresa Ball were to visit today, she would be amazed at the size, structures and external environment of the schools but she would recognise the same ethos and tradition which continues to flourish and, no doubt, this would be a source of great joy for her.

Sr. Ann O’Donoghue IBVM

Secretary to the Loreto Education Trust

March 2022





Appendices

Loreto Education Trust

COMPANY MEMBERS

Carmel Swords IBVM

Barbara Murphy IBVM

Brigid Tunney IBVM

Anne O'Dwyer IBVM

Elaine Troy IBVM

Helen O'Riordan IBVM

Jane Bailey IBVM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Loreto Education Trust Board)

Dermot McCarthy

Conor Bowman

Martin Boyd

Jennifer Edwards

Maria Hyland IBVM

Brian Lenehan

Sheila McManamly

Gerardine Mullen (to June 2021)

Phil Murphy IBVM

Brede Quirke IBVM (from September 2021)

Bernadette Ryan

Eileen Salmon



OFFICERS

Ann O'Donoghue, IBVM – Director Loreto Education Centre and Company Secretary

Caroline Clarke – Director of Education and Leadership

Kathleen Fitzpatrick IBVM – Faith Development Co-ordinator

Edward Fynes – Schools Property Advisor

Melissa Steele – Office Manager and Finance Officer

SUPPORT PERSONNEL

Eliza Connolly – Administrator and Events Coordinator



Membership of Boards of Management

2021-2024

Schools	Teacher Nominees 2021-2024	Parent Nominees 2021-2024	Trustee Nominees 2021-2024
Beaufort	Aileen O'Sullivan Marie Sheridan	Peter Leonard Orla Nathan	Brendan McCauley (Chair) Ruth Ferris Elaine Mettler Mary Reilly
Clonmel	Michele Culliton Mark Kehir	Helen Brigdale John Kidd	Mary Ryan (Chair) Derry Kelly Tómas O'Gorman Anne Keating
Fermoy	Aoife Hennessey Gerard Murphy	Tim Donovan Julia Whelan	Elma Hayes (Chair) Patrick J Cosgrove Pat Granville Ann Meaney
Kilkenny	Chloe Bhreathnach Alison McCarthy	Catherine Peters Michael Shields	Tony Joyce (Chair) Kieran Boland Nicholas Cashin Liz O'Gorman



Letterkenny	Dearbháil Keys Teresa Devenny	Bella Mullen Niamh Vambeck	Christopher Darby (Chair) Bridget Lyons Susan Kenny Conor Crossan
Mullingar	Gráinne O'Kennedy Catherine Gallagher Nally	Monica Maxwell Paul Moore	Anne Lordan Shaw (Chair) Mary Farrell Martin Nally Pat Muldoon
Swords	Paula Fitzpatrick Linn Martin	Christina Costello Gerard O'Connor	Gerry Sinnott (Chair) Eddie Fynes Sr. Josephine Keegan Donal MacDiarmada

Vacancies filled in course of term of office in Loreto Post-Primary Schools

(Appointments for remainder of term of office)

Loreto Secondary School Bray

Anne Cullen in place of Mary Dignan (Teacher Nominee)

Loreto College Crumlin

Suzanne Graham in place of Ruth Ferris (Trustee Nominee)

Loreto College Foxrock

Geraldine Ryan appointed Chairperson (previously Acting Chair)

Bernard O'Boyle (Trustee Nominee)

Loreto Secondary School Wexford

Iris Johnston in place of Annette Cahalane (Parent Nominee)

Laura Pheasey in place of Siobhán O'Donoghue (Teacher Nominee)



Membership of Boards of Governors

2021 -2025

Schools	Teacher Representative	Parent Representative	Trustee Representatives	Department of Education NI Representatives
Loreto College Coleraine	Maria Flannelly	Daniel Henry	Susan Kelly Finbarr O'Harte Deirdre McBride Suzanne Breslin	Harry McDaid Donal Sayers Joe Diamond
Loreto Grammar School Omagh	Steven Hughes	Amanda Donnelly	Mary Murnaghan Brian Conway Gerry McCabe Frank Sweeney	Marion Doran Eimear Grugan



Loreto Schools Student Numbers

(1st January 2022)

POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS	STUDENTS
Balbriggan	1,288
Beaufort	632
Bray	718
Cavan	717
Clonmel	481
Coleraine	979
Crumlin Road	387
Dalkey	724
Fermoy	658
Foxrock	539
Kilkenny	1,028
Letterkenny	953
Mullingar	876
Navan	820
Omagh	894
53 St Stephen's Green	542
Swords	623
Wexford	872



PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Bray	742
Crumlin (Junior)	196
Dalkey	320
Grange Road	481
Loreto College, Junior School	210

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

St Aidan's Community School, Brookfield	400
Gorey Community School	1,621
Loreto Community School, Milford	818
Portmarnock Community School	921
Pobalscoil na Tríonóide, Youghal	1,007

SCHOOLS WITH HISTORICAL LINKS WITH LORETO:

Crumlin Senior Primary	217
Bunscoil Loreto, Gorey	657
Scoil Mhuire Gan Smal, Letterkenny	419
St Anne's, Navan	308

Total Number of Students (1 Jan 2022): 22,048



Middle Leaders Project Titles 2021-2022

Name of School	Middle Leaders Project Titles
Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan	Transition Year Induction Programme
Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan	Wellbeing and Leadership through Social Interaction
Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan	Transition Year Induction Programme
Loreto High School, Beaufort	Improving Teacher and Student Wellbeing through Positive Behaviour Management Systems
Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel	Positive Code of Behaviour Pilot
Loreto College, Coleraine	Developing Remote Learning through Google Classroom in Loreto College.
Loreto College, Coleraine	Initiating and Developing an Eco-Program for Whole School Improvement
Loreto Secondary School, Kilkenny	Student Wellbeing
Loreto Secondary School, Letterkenny	Introduce a Merit Award System
Loreto Secondary School, Letterkenny	Assessing and Reviewing Anti-Bullying Policies and Practices in our School
Loreto Grammar School, Omagh	The Impact of Interventions in Ensuring Every Student and Every Learning Experience Matters.
Loreto College, St Stephen's Green	Teaching and Learning (Differentiation/Inclusion)
Loreto Primary, Grange Road	Leading in a Digital Age/Wellbeing
Bunscoil Loreto Gorey	One Voice
Loreto Junior School, St Stephen's Green	Leading the School in the Introduction and Use of iPads
Portmarnock Community School.	Using Success Criteria to Increase Motivation and Encourage Students to Become More Self-Directed Learners



Student Voice

‘What it means to be a Loreto Student’



Loreto Secondary School. Balbriggan

Imagine a worldwide organisation that has an outstanding pedagogical tradition, rooted in the key values of Truth, Freedom, Joy, Justice, Sincerity and Truth. When you join the Loreto community as a student, this is what you join. We believe that Loreto schools are a community. To be a Loreto student, is to be a member of our community. A community we get to choose, one which seeks to elevate us and show us our potential and the endless possibilities once we have reached our full capabilities. There are Loreto schools all over the world, students from very diverse backgrounds who have lived a hundred completely opposite experiences, yet, all know the name, Mary Ward, all understand the values of the Loreto order. What it means to be a Loreto Student can mean many different things to the distinct cultures within which Loreto Schools are situated, but we are all united by the Loreto name and the respectability which that name holds.

One of the most defining characteristics of Loreto Students is community. We are provided with unity under the Loreto name. We can go to the other side of the world and still find someone who will respond with "women in time, will come to do much" when we evoke the name of Mary Ward. It is an experience which does not know borders.



Loreto students are a community, we support our sister schools, our fellow students, we know kindness and faith within our halls and this, we assure you is a universal understanding of Loreto schools.

Loreto students embody and uphold the values they are taught and the care they are shown. We strive to uplift our fellow Loreto siblings. As the saying goes, "It takes a village to raise a child." Loreto schools are our village, our community. It helps us to grow and forms us into the young people we are, Loreto schools shape those who will go on to shape the world.

Imagine a community where students' voices are heard democratically. Where children and teenagers are all given all the rights and responsibilities of democratic citizenship. Where the students truly practice rather than just read about the principles of free speech, free association, and freedom to choose all their activities those schools are: Loreto schools. Schools where girls form a sisterhood. A school that reminds every one; you are never aiming too high or dreaming too big after all; we are all stars so, the sky is not the limit. Above all a school that helps sisters and people with dreams to become women and adults with vision.

One thing to be said of Loreto schools is that they strive to push students to achieve their full potential. The experience of a student in a Loreto school is one in which they are enabled to strive for holistic excellence, and the sporting opportunities given to students is no exception. Enthusiasm is contagious in all sports, and students are able to achieve a perfect balance between the stress of their studies and having time to relax and be themselves in a comforting, encouraging environment. In Loreto, it does not matter if you have never played a sport before, it does not matter if sports are not your thing- all that matters is that you pour your heart and soul into the team, and the incredible team spirit makes participation an easy task for all students.

As well as the sporting encouragement that Loreto students receive, we are also provided with an enriching environment to be creative in. Both music and art hold undeniable importance within the walls of each and every Loreto school. Always proud to exhibit student's artwork along the corridors, hold concerts to display the musical talents of students and focus on elevating the creative skills of all students, Loreto schools honour imagination and ingenuity, finding it in each and every student. Fostering an environment that is constantly uplifting students to achieve their full potential in the arts, Loreto schools teach students to express themselves through their artistry and have the courage to chase their dreams in the creative fields.



Not only do Loreto schools encourage students to pursue their musical and artistic endeavours directly, they also teach Loreto students to inspire each other.

Upholding an atmosphere of consistent support and encouragement, Loreto students learn to draw inspiration from their classmates as well as how to inspire others in their lives through music and art. Being a Loreto student means far more than simply being enrolled in a Loreto school, it means being an artist, a musician, an inventor, a creator, an innovator, and most importantly, it means being an inspiration.

Much can be said about the efforts of the Loreto schools outside the academic world, but as students embark on their journey of knowledge from first year, they realise that Loreto provides students with incredibly engaging and enjoyable learning experiences. In a Loreto classroom, a passionate teacher inspires students in the subject, and it is these teachers that allow students to become the ground-breaking scientists, business women, political leaders and pioneers of knowledge in society in the future. The constant support offered to students throughout their struggles as they study a subject is also encouraging and aims to help each individual according to their needs. In a classroom of thirty students, each student feels cared for and feels heard during their struggles. Secondary school can indeed be a daunting experience for students as they embark upon a new, advanced phase of their learning journey, but in Loreto schools, students are able to take on any academic challenge head on because of the positive atmosphere provided.

Loreto students are not the strongest, not even the smartest or most beautiful girls in school. We are young women and people who are prepared for a challenge and to take on the most difficult task of representing a community of smart, funny, accomplished, passionate and beautiful young girls and people.

If "Women in time will come to do much" as our foundress Mary Ward says those women need to be brave and to show we are ready to conquer the world by storm and Loreto does just that. There are countless opportunities for leadership and personal growth. There is a bible verse 1 Timothy 4:12 that says "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity." Loreto makes us certain that this is true. We now recognise that our voices have weight in the world.

When Frances Teresa Ball set up the first Loreto school in Dublin in the nineteenth century, she and her companions, as members of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, were following in the footsteps of Mary Ward, their founder, who began her mission of educating women in 1609.



In Loreto school we try to make an integral part of our lives the characteristics which Mary Ward wanted for all her schools: Truth, Sincerity, Justice, Freedom and Joy. We pray that as a school community we may continue to live the Christian message through the example and the philosophy of Mary Ward.

Loreto schools values, engages and empowers young women for their global future. The five charisms of truth, freedom, justice, sincerity and joy summarise the vision of the Loreto Education. We are Catholic Schools with the expressed aim of living out the values of the Gospel. We are a Loreto school in the spirit of Mary Ward that believes strongly 'that women in time will come to do much.'

Loreto is something that binds us together away from academics and extracurricular. It gives us an identity far from the norm of sporty, smart, musical etc.

Offering students the kind of education that would make them "Be seekers of truth and doers of justice"

With Loreto we have learned that:

We are loved: Romans 5:8

We are chosen: 1 Peter 2:9

We are redeemed: Ephesians 1:7

We are favoured: Psalm 146:5

We are blessed Psalm 146:5

We have a purpose and an amazing destiny: Jeremiah 29:11.

*Written By: Kate Leahy, Mizna Shahid, Deborah Fidel, Aisling Comiskey
Head Girl Team in Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan*



Loreto High School. Beaufort

Being a Loreto student means fulfilling the Mary Ward Values of freedom, justice, sincerity, truth, and joy in everyday life. The Loreto ethos encourages us to be just, sincere and to love others. Here in Beaufort, we strive to ensure that every student feels fully accepted in our community, and reaches their full potential academically, personally, and spiritually. This is made possible due to the constant encouragement and support from our teachers and staff, who ensure that each individual student is heard, and aided in a manner best suited to them. The Beaufort Community reflects the positive atmosphere that can be created when Mary Ward's values are applied.

Being a Loreto Student involves achieving your full academic potential. With our wide, and constantly evolving range of subjects, each student can explore and discover areas that they are most suited to. Our highly diligent staff go above and beyond to enable us to reach our full academic potential, be it with the implementation of varied learning strategies, extra classes after school, or even with clubs which enable students further their learning of these subjects. Teresa Ball encouraged women "to go set the world on fire," and with constant academic aid and support provided by our Loreto Staff, we really feel like we can do just that.



By nurturing and facilitating our academic advancement, our Loreto Staff enable us to achieve our full academic potential

This is evidenced by one of our past students, Dr Lauren McKeown, previously described by her Leaving Cert class when she was in Loreto Beaufort as “most likely to work for NASA. And she achieved just that. Dr Lauren McKeown is currently a NASA scientist, studying icy planetary surface processes through remote-sensing and laboratory analogue work. A Loreto education nurtures curiosity and facilitates the exploration of one’s academic potential and sets the tone for further academic advancement in later life. Being a student at a Loreto School not only involves reaching your academic potential with the aid of the Loreto Staff, but it also involves the student learning great diligence, motivation, and a strong work ethic. By achieving their full academic potential, Loreto students can achieve positive, influential change in their later careers, implementing their learned values of freedom, justice, sincerity, truth, and joy as they actively engage with the world.

Being a Loreto Student involves achieving your full personal potential. We as students of this generation are incredibly fortunate to grow up in an age where being accepted as yourself is more common than not. We as Loreto Students do our level best to create an atmosphere that allows our peers to feel comfortable and accepted while at school. We are lucky here in Beaufort to have a strong LGBTQ presence in the school, with our Gender Sexuality Alliance (GSA) club who celebrate, educate, and inform our students and staff on LGBTQ topics and issues. Other clubs such as our Green Committee, Well-being Committee, JPIC, and SVP, to name but a few, enable our students to become educated and informed on contemporary issues in society today, and facilitate the planning of events and programmes within the school that bring about changes that help tackle these issues. The presence of sports clubs and teams such as Badminton, Athletics, Basketball, Hockey, Camogie, and Swimming in our school instil confidence, a positive view towards physical health, and a good team spirit amongst students. As Loreto students, we engage in an environment that aims to enable our personal development with a focus on the Mary Ward Values.

Finally, being a Loreto Student involves achieving your full spiritual potential. Through our Religion classes, annual class retreats, mindfulness seminars, and our in-house oratory, students can explore their spirituality and faith in a safe and inviting environment. Through reflection, Loreto students become at one with their spirituality. By reaching their full spiritual



potential, students become in tune with their inner peace, and thus are better equipped when engaging with the world, and can implement their learned values of freedom, justice, sincerity, truth, and joy as they partake in everyday life and realise their capacity for positive change in the world.

Written by: Alanna Norris, Beibhinn O'Higgins, Sathbh O'Higgins, Head Girls
Loreto High School, Beaufort.



Loreto College. Cavan

Our identity as Loreto students sets us apart from other schools. We strive to do our best, not only academically but in every facet of our lives. We have the ability to think and learn independently; a skill that will become vitally important to us after we leave school. Loreto students have a rich history of success and hard work, and we endeavor to continue this legacy. We are connected to our fellow Loreto students across the globe by our shared core values, as set in place by Mary Ward - joy, freedom, sincerity, truth and justice. – **Aoife Sheridan**

For me being a Loreto student means having courage as a woman to stand up for myself and my beliefs. It means that we stand together in celebration and triumphs but also in despair and consolation. Being a Loreto student means standing up for those who cannot and giving a voice to the people who don't have one. I will stand with my fellow Loreto students proudly and I know that I will always have a community and a home to come back to. – **Molly Mai O'Meara**

Being a Loreto student means escaping the ordinary and exposing your unique individuality. Loreto is a place of security, growth, support and care. Simply to put it, Loreto is like a family. One develops on an emotional and academic level within it. Evolving in various learning areas. One shows their abilities and strengths which are equally valued with other students. As Mary Ward once said, "show yourself as you are, and be what you show yourself". – **Yana Kalina**



For me, being a Loreto student gives me a sense of belonging to a wider community that I am delighted to be apart of. It provided me with an identity that I am proud of. It has given me friendships that I will have forever and has allowed me to become the person I am today. Being a Loreto student for the past 6 years has taught me values that I hope I can share with those I meet along the way and has instilled important moral standards that I am glad to have in my life. – [Ava Leddy](#)

Being a Loreto student means a lot of things to me. It entails having supportive people around to help you in every situation. It means having the willingness to learn from others around you not only academically but also socially. Being a Loreto student means treating others around you as you would like to be by showing respect. Holding a position as a Loreto student equips you be participative in class and display an interest in learning. A Loreto student is one that is enterprising, having the mind to come up with creative and innovative ideas. A Loreto student is goal driven, not only not only by their own personal goals but by the backing of those around them to be the best they can be after they graduate. – [Mary Akinlolu](#)



Loreto Secondary School. Clonmel.

This year as we celebrate 140 years of Loreto Clonmel, we would also like to recognise the contributions of the students, CARA Leaders and Head Girls since the founding of our school. Loreto students throughout the years have aspired to exemplify the deep-rooted values of Mary Ward in our school and create a welcoming and inclusive environment. Each year the values of Jou, truth, sincerity, freedom, and justice are characterised by the actions and endeavours of the Head Girls as they work diligently to bring the values of Mary Ward from her time to ours.

The CARA Leadership Program was introduced by Sr. Bridie who was Principal of this school from 1987-2011. Having identified the need for student leaders and a friendly support system for younger students, a group of around 15 sixth year students were selected each year to ease their adjustment to life in Loreto. Traditionally, an interview process was conducted by former teachers Mr Flynn, Mrs McGrath as well as Mrs Fogarty and a representative from Merck Sharp and Dohme. The selected students went on to complete a training course in Cork to provide them with the necessary skills and resources to carry out their roles effectively. The trademark bottle green blazers were quickly introduced to highlight this group amongst the wider student body. The CARA Leadership Team have remained a constant force within Loreto strengthening our local and school communities.

Each year the CARA Leaders organise various fundraisers to support many invaluable charities which we hold very close to our hearts. These fundraisers include a Christmas Raffle for SVP, the annual coin race for South Tipperary Hospice and various other organisations throughout the year.

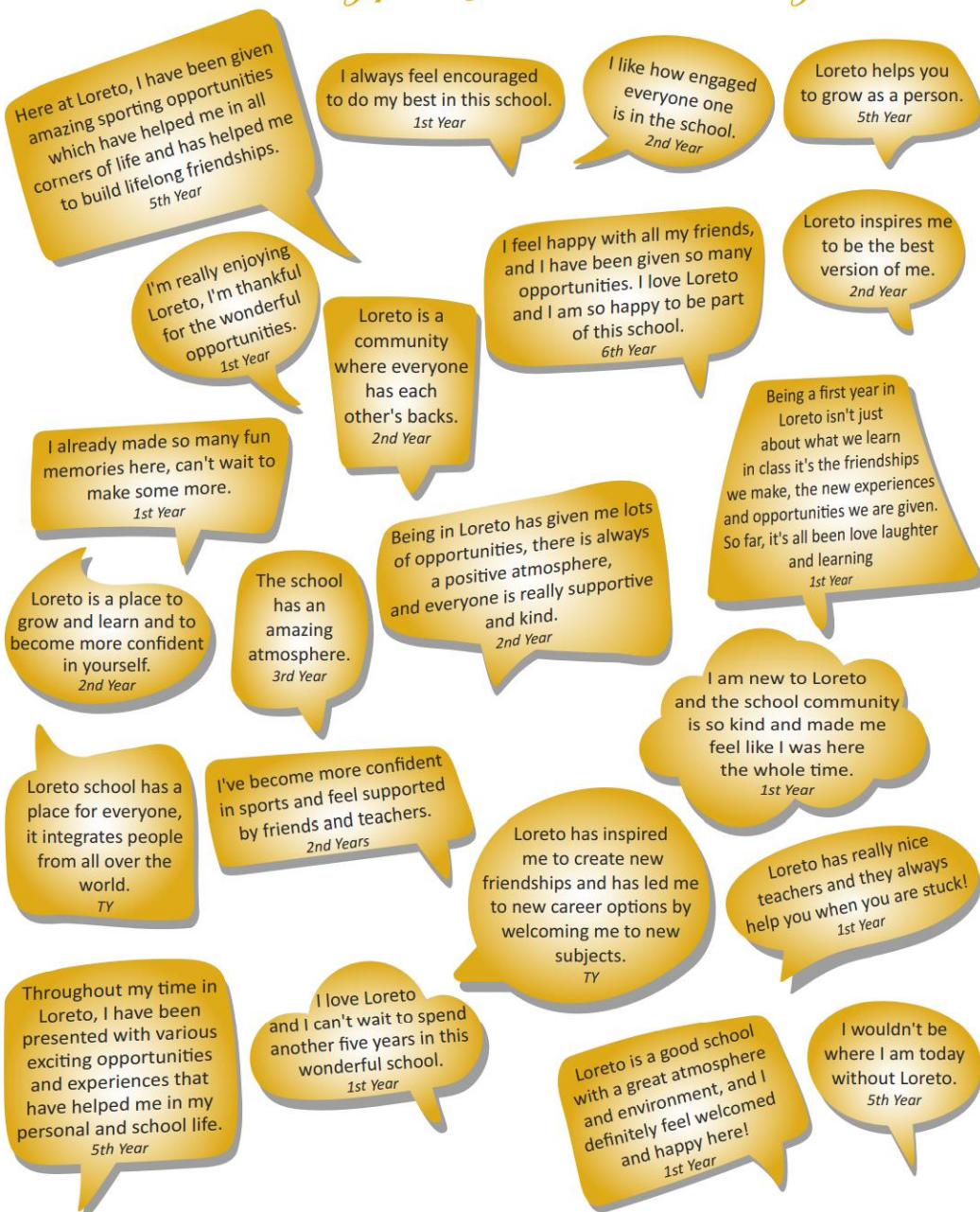


The role of Head Girl and Deputy Head Girl in Loreto Clonmel was introduced around the 1940's. They provide the much-needed link between staff and students, strengthening the voice of the student body. The Head Girls often act as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the student council. They represent the voice of all students at important school events such as opening year mass, open days for incoming students, Sounds of Spring Concert and sixth year graduation. The Head Girls just like every other Loreto Student embody the values of Mary Ward, whilst also living out the essential values in Loreto Clonmel of love, laughter, and learning.

Written By: Head Girl and Deputy Head Girl



What does being part of Loreto mean to you?





Loreto College, Crumlin

I'm sure we can all agree as Loreto students that we have been provided with the most fulfilling and enriching experience throughout our school years. Loreto College Crumlin and Loreto's all around the world welcome students of all faiths and of no faith at all. We're all united by the values of Mary Ward in which these values proudly nurtures everything we do at a Loreto School. The values of sincerity, freedom, justice, joy, truth, excellence and inter nationality have been intrinsic in our education. These values now have a pivotal role in our personal lives. Loreto College Crumlin has been a huge part of my social life. My teachers and friends have been a source of refuge in hard times; which we particularly have experienced recently. One of my fondest memories of Loreto is the collaboration with other Loreto schools in Ireland. Hosting events and visiting other Loreto schools helped to knit us together in the values of Mary Ward. Forever, I will carry with me the values of Mary Ward, and my wonderful memories will be with me always. Being a Loreto student means to be kind, inclusive and determined.

Sincerity is a value that I have developed as a Loreto student. Through growing my relationship with other Loreto students, I have learned to be happy in their successes. This is hard in a world where we are in constant competition, but the value of sincerity means we can grow to our personal best while also feeling the genuine support of our peers. Loreto students who value sincerity make our school a place where everyone can achieve. Freedom is a value which I know, as a Loreto Student, the importance of. As a Head student, I am constantly thinking of ways to improve the lives of others through freedom.



We have learned the value of freedom by being aware of current events in the world. As a Loreto school, our daily check-ins remind us of our privilege to have the freedom to be educated. As a Loreto student, I have come to learn the value of my education and the freedom that it provides for me both now, and in the future.

From my years as a Loreto student, Justice has become an important pillar in my life. As Loreto students, we continue to fight for justice in today's world. We pride ourselves on our donations to Loreto schools who are less fortunate than us. This pursuit of Justice has inspired me on a personal level and I now am motivated to act toward justice in my own life. Being a Loreto student has opened my eyes to the justice that is yet to be achieved in the world; and has given me the tools to act on it.

Joy is a word that accurately describes my years as a Loreto student. My teachers and peers have given me endless support and memories. As a Loreto student, I make sure to pass on joy to everyone I meet. Loreto College Crumlin always makes sure that our students experience joy every day. I have always felt comfortable as a Loreto student, thanks to the kindness and patience of all students and teachers.

Truth has been central in my life as a Loreto student. Every day I am reminded of the value of truth. I have come to appreciate this when my teachers are truthful with me. This means I can trust and further develop my relationships in school, as well as outside these four walls. As a head student, I want to be truthful with all of those I lead. The value of truth enables us all to become advocates for those who are voiceless. I am beyond grateful that throughout the past 5 years, I have learned the value of truth and can apply it to my current life and my life in the future.

The excellence that Loreto students are expected to achieve means a learning environment where all students feel valued. This has been particularly important in my life as a Loreto student. The excellence of my teachers and facilities in my school have undoubtedly led to my academic and personal growth. The value of excellence has inspired me to work toward a world of excellence for all.

As a Loreto student, we are proud to say we belong to a Loreto school community with respect for its values and for those who travelled the education journey with them. You'll find that throughout your life, you'll connect with students of other Loreto schools and be able to share the same values as one another - and as we always say "Once a Loreto girl, always a Loreto girl".

Written by: Keiffer Cortez, Head Girl, with a contribution from Siofra Kildee Doolin, Deputy Head Girl. Loreto College, Crumlin



Loreto Secondary School. Kilkenny

As I reflect on my six years here in Loreto Kilkenny, it's hard to even put into words what a Loreto education means to me. My time here has shaped me into the person I am today. To me, a Loreto education is about embodying both Christian values and the values of Mary Ward, understanding the far reaching nature of Loreto schools across the world, and becoming an educated young woman, ready to take on the world.

From the commencement of first year, we are told that the idea of a Loreto Education is derived from the vision of Mary Ward. She wished to pioneer a new role for women, to empower them through education, at a time when this was not considered to be important. Her inspiring story of determination despite adversity has left me with an overall feeling of respect and admiration for Mary Ward. Throughout my time in a Loreto school, her charisms of joy, sincerity, truth, justice and freedom can be felt every day. They can be felt through a simple smile on the corridor, striving for excellence in our extracurricular, sport, music and debating. We try to emulate her values through fundraising for charity or seeking equality and fairness in the world today. I believe the core values that a Loreto education instils, such as truth and justice, are needed now more than ever in this modern and complicated world. They are as relevant in 2022 as they were in 1609.



Throughout my time in Loreto, the Christian ethos in the school has made me into a young person of faith, of truth, and of sincerity. The connection to Catholic values is constantly reinforced to us, through religion class and school assemblies. We can see on our crest, something that all Loreto students share, **Cruci Dum Spiro Fido**, meaning "*In Jesus We Trust*". Through Loreto Education, we are taught these Christian values and learn that giving to others is a hugely important part of life. I have put this into action and have spent a lot of time volunteering with my peers and helping people less fortunate than myself. It's been both rewarding and eye opening. Being generous of time and spirit is something that I have learned from a Loreto education, and I hope to continue it when I leave here.

One aspect of a Loreto Education that I find to be highly significant is the sense of community it creates. Being part of the local Loreto community has provided me with countless opportunities of self-development. During my six years in Loreto Kilkenny, I've been privileged enough to be able to connect with other Loreto students across Ireland by attending Loreto Sports Competitions, debates and Student Council. Looking beyond Ireland, I've also been lucky enough to get to connect with Loreto students all over the world. From Australia to South Sudan, a Loreto education has provided me with a widened world view, and I've gotten to meet so many interesting people. As I reflect on my experience of a Loreto education, I realise that the sense of Loreto identity is strong between all of us. Despite being from different parts of the world, with totally different backgrounds, we all have a sense of shared experience through our Loreto Education because the same values are consistent through the schools worldwide.

I am now nearing the end of my secondary school journey here. My Loreto education has given me so much, academically and socially. I've been given opportunities to connect with Loreto schools all over the world. The values and vision that I have gained will stay with me for the rest of my life. I've made so many amazing memories and friends. I'll never forget my time here and all that a Loreto education has given me.

Written by: Lily McDonnell, Head Girl,
Loreto Secondary School, Kilkenny.



Loreto College, Mullingar

The values of Mary Ward have shaped our years as Loreto students. Her ideals of truth, freedom, justice, sincerity and joy are at the centre of our community. As the Head Girls of our school we hope that everyday we get to put the values of Mary Ward into practice. Being part of the Loreto Community is very important to us, in actual fact it is an honour. We are not just students, we are part of the community, our school community and the wider Loreto community across the world. The truth is that together, we are stronger. We try to be the personification of the values that Mary Ward set out 400 years ago when she believed in and fostered the idea of education for girls.

Our Leaving Cert class theme for this year is resilience. This theme encapsulates what has been essential throughout the last few years in particular. Throughout our years in Loreto, our sense of resilience has been continuously fostered and strengthened. Being a Loreto student means that our sense of belonging and connectivity is palpable. Loreto students learn how to cope with the challenges that life presents. As Loreto students, we know how to be strong in the face of adversity, and we are capable of being young women that need not lean on others, but that others can lean on. At the core of this resilience is the essence of the idealism of Mary Ward. Like her, we aspire to conquer difficulties we face, whether it be now or in the future, and to not just climb mountains but to move them. In the words of the Loreto founder, we know that "Women in time to come will do much".



Another of the core values of Mary Ward is sincerity and there is no doubt that sincerity is at the centre of our Loreto school. Our years in Loreto have been characterised by the kindness afforded to us by our teachers and our peers. In our years as part of a Loreto community, we have formed many beautiful friendships and met wonderful people who have helped us through difficult times, whether personal or academic. Being part of a Loreto community provides us with a fantastic support system in times of need, with friendship, comradeship and joy on a daily basis. The kind actions and words of those around us have shaped us into the people we are today. We have learned the importance of kindness and sincerity: we have learned to treat others as we ourselves would like to be treated and to be respectful of all around us, despite our differences. Being sincere in our actions and our words allows us to positively contribute to society and to our school community. It is clear to us that the ideals of Mary Ward are alive and well in Loreto Communities today, 200 years after their establishment by Mother Teresa Ball.

Furthermore, as Loreto students we have been given a life full of opportunities. We have the chance to be participants, be involved, and to learn new skills. We are eager to learn about the world around us and this questioning nature is embedded in us. Here at Loreto College, Mullingar there are many campaigns for the betterment of students, for example our “Switch Off to Turn On” for Safer Internet Day. As well as spearheading campaigns we also have the Student Council, Health Promoting Schools team and the St Vincent de Paul committee. These teams allow us to flourish in broadening our skills outside the classroom. We get to appreciate all that we have in our school and wider community as we help those who are less well off. In the Student Council we get a chance to voice our opinions and fight for the improvement of the wellbeing of students in a democratic setting. Often, students on the Student Council end up interested in debating and politics. Being a part of the Health Promoting Schools team gives students the opportunity to encourage a healthier lifestyle for all in our community. As Loreto students we are enticed to be healthier - both physically and mentally. While the academics are of utmost importance in our school, through the examples above we get the opportunity to become more broad-minded.

Perhaps the most notable aspect of being a Loreto student is the joy that this experience brings to each and every one of us. Whether it be a laugh in the locker room or an anecdote from a school trip, memories made in Loreto College are unforgettable and last a lifetime. The impenetrable bonds that we form keep us going in times of hardship and difficulty. This was seen more than ever during the Covid pandemic. Despite being apart, the Loreto community stayed together, stronger than ever. Like so many others, Loreto staff and



students were suddenly ambushed with the unfamiliar prospect of online teaching and learning. This strange new 'normal', despite being outside of our control, did not impact the joy that learning brings, perhaps even making us as a community more appreciative of how lucky we are to have this gift that many do not have. As the Head Girls of our school, our days are steeped in the happiness that this privilege brings. As a school community, the joy of Loreto is felt in every part of the school, both inside and outside of the classroom.

Our Loreto community is greater than just our school in Mullingar. We have links all across the world - in Rumbek, Europe, Australia, India, America - and we all share common ideals: the ideals of Mary Ward. Our values are represented by the crest that each school wears on their uniform. This crest, wherever it is in the world, links us all together. As Loreto students we wear this crest with pride and joy; we are proud to be part of the Loreto Community and we are grateful for all that it represents

Written by: Rozlynn Daly (Head Girl) Mary Nally and Niamh Dolan (Deputy Head Girls)
Loreto College, Mullingar



Loreto College. St Stephen's Green

The last few years have illustrated clearly that each of us experience very little of each other's lives. As a global population during Covid, we were united in our feelings of isolation. For young people, lockdown was an individual process and caused much suffering for so many of us. However, it was also a very formative time.

Personally, we each have learnt a lot while experiencing very little. In an academic sense, while we have lots in education we have gained in resilience.

Mary Ward was among one of the first women to believe that women had a right to play an active part in the apostolic life of the Catholic Church. Mary Ward was not quite a dissenter, but was certainly a non-conformer. She believed in freedom for her community from cloister, choir and habit, and ultimately, she rejected being ruled by men. The beliefs were rebellious to say the least.

She was steadfast in the face of immense adversity, and stood by her beliefs at all costs. The world would be a poorer place without her ideology.

However, ideology is merely ideology, in that it is empty if un-lived. It is thanks to Teresa Ball that the ideology of the I.B.V.M. is alive here in Ireland. The profound resilience of the founding mothers of the IBVM illustrated their conviction to the ideology of Mary Ward, and to their belief in the capability of women.

A term that has been passed around through our school asks (with an admitted level of derision) *What Would Mary Ward Do? Or W.W.M.W.D?* (In recent Covid years, answers have included "freeze.")



Today, society is far from perfect. Loreto too, like any other school, is not perfect, but there has always been room for student leadership and change. But it is my experience that a Loreto Education nurtures individual discernment and promotes expression. When we, Loreto students, challenge the current 21st century norms, we do so in the spirit of our founding mothers. A Loreto education empowers young people to speak our minds, and that is a training that will stay with us forever.

Written By: Kate McGowan, Head Girl.
Loreto College, St Stephen's Green.



Loreto College. Swords

Being a Loreto girl means being part of a great, admirable, and important legacy. This legacy has been created by strong and driven women who had a mutual goal of providing young women with an appropriate education. When Teresa Ball founded the Loreto schools in Ireland 200 years ago, she wanted to establish school communities where girls would get a full education and be instilled with the core Loreto values of truth, justice, freedom, joy, and sincerity. This is just the foundation of what it means to be a Loreto girl.

To be a Loreto girl means showing compassion towards those less fortunate than us. To be unselfish, charitable, and thoughtful. It means living out our Christian values and being inclusive and accepting of other faiths in our school community. It means being a sister and a friend to our fellow students and using our voice for important causes. It means showing leadership and initiative and most importantly, showing kindness to one another. This is how a Loreto girl lives out the charism, our legacy, in a truly meaningful way.

The theme for Catholic Schools' week 2022 is "living life to the full". This theme is very apt as we emerge from a pandemic and are now being encouraged to live our normal lives again. Mary Ward and Teresa Ball wanted us to live our life to the fullest through our education and with the guidance of God. Their amazing courage and resilience in very difficult times is every Loreto girl's inspiration. We know that as students, it can be easy to become overwhelmed by the stresses of life.



However, we must remind ourselves how fortunate we are to be part of such a wonderful, inspirational, and loving community and to follow the path of the strong women who have gone before us.

It is particularly special as a Loreto girl that we are part of an international sisterhood of over 150 schools worldwide. This is significant as it exposes us to diverse cultures and history, but we are united in the Loreto charism and values of this worldwide family. This makes us feel that we are part of something bigger than ourselves.

As head girls, we are constantly inspired by Teresa Ball and Mary Ward, and we are proud to incorporate their vision and values into our role. It is an honor to be a part of the Loreto community and to carry on the torch for Loreto girls to come, where women will continue a wonderful legacy and “do much.”

Written By: Head girl: Diana Salop and Deputy head girl: Olivia Kelly
Loreto College, Swords



Loreto Secondary School. Wexford

As head girls of Loreto Secondary School Wexford this our reflection of our Loreto experience. Over the last six years we have grown and developed from children to young, educated women through the Loreto community. We have learned our morals and respectful manner through the Mary Ward values of freedom, justice, truth, sincerity, and joy that were successfully implemented by Teresa Ball who founded the Loreto community in Ireland 200 years ago. These educational values have helped to gel our Loreto community closer together and has made the school an uplifting and happy place to be for the past six years. Although we have been students for the past six years, as Covid students we spent a good amount of time apart from this community. We participated in online classes like every other school in Ireland, but we also remained part of a wonderful association. Although we are celebrating 200 years of Loreto, a great job has been done to adapt the values of freedom, justice, truth, sincerity, and joy to modern times, while also maintaining their principles. Over the periods of school closures our school came closer together through the use of social media, technology and Covid friendly events. As head girls representing our school, we don't feel that Covid has dampened our Loreto experience but only made our connections stronger. The Mary Ward values have been more prominent in recent times. As we reflect, we acknowledge

The value of Freedom: we have the opportunity and liberty to represent our personalities and passions in life through different mediums that allow us to express ourselves. The value of Justice: we can help achieve justice in our world by educating ourselves and speaking up for those who have no voice.



It is important for us to stand up for those who do not have the opportunities for justice. In particular this year we remember the conflict going on in Ukraine and those suffering. As a community we have come together to raise funds for those in Ukraine. The value of truth: we believe that it is imperative to strive to be truthful and honest when confronted with difficult situations or choices. Don't be afraid to seek out answers to questions you feel are important and will contribute to your education. The value of sincerity: this is most important as we return back to some sort of normality. As a community we must remember to be compassionate and understanding as we reconnect with our large Loreto community. The value of Joy: "happiness lies in the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative effort". In the past 6 years we have experienced much joy through our opportunities to make new friends and memories. We have done our best to make these memories joyful. Everyone in our community has made this experience joyful for us: the staff, the students, the parents and those others in our Loreto community. We are extremely thankful for all the opportunities that have been presented to us. Representing our school as head girls has been nothing but a pleasure and it is wonderful to see the Loreto values being passed on through the younger years.

Written By: Katiebeth Gaynor and Chloe Fortune (Head Girls)
Loreto Secondary School, Wexford.



Loreto Community School. Milford

For the past 6 years I have walked the corridors of Loreto Community School Milford. As have many generations before me for whom Loreto is now a distant memory, I know that part of them still exists today through precious memorabilia within our school. They are present in the photos of past staff and students that hang on the walls, the jersey with Sr Columbanus' name on it that hangs outside the gym in her honour and the poem that encapsulates her and all she was and the multi coloured stained glass windows from the church of the past that now creates the most beautiful meditation room. All these elements are historical treasures that connect our past and present school community.

It was a different era back in 1966, our school started off with just 36 borders and 12 day pupils. As years past by the school went from strength to strength gaining more students one of which was my own Aunty Margaret. From speaking to her about her time in Loreto she had plenty of fond memories to share and in her own words she said:

'Loreto Milford in the 80's was a privilege to be part of. It was a place of proud sporting achievements, music and arts. It was known as the Convent back then as it was housed and managed by nuns or more fondly known as the blue brigade by students. Life as a first year started off with the fear of putting a foot wrong but with the guidance of Sr Columbanus keeping a close eye at the lockers we soon settled in. Of course we got up to our first year antics, one of which was known as the 'three legged' chair incident which was strategically placed for a teacher, however luckily for us no one was harmed in the process.



Of course we looked out for the borders for whom mealtime menu wasn't quite home cooking, so we often donated homemade scones and treats'

My aunt also recalled having the privilege of sitting beside the current Principal for a couple of classes, one of them being Home Ec. On one occasion a teacher gave them both a gentle reminder that their blouses were to be finished for the end of week fashion display. However with only the pattern cut out it was the quickest running of a sewing machine the school has ever seen!! Who would have thought!!

The stories were numerous from scrubbing black shoe polish off the floor to the terrifying sound to the Principal's ring, as well as a small hidden tuck shop under the stairs. She went on to reflect how proud they all were to wear the uniform with Loreto considered a place of high prestige and with each passing school year they were equipped with the tools necessary for the big world out there and whatever adventure lay ahead .

It's clear from stories of the past that the Loreto ethos of freedom, sincerity, justice and joy flowed through the halls of the school. Fast forward to the 21st century and I can with pride and confidence say that these characteristics have prevailed and now belong to a larger community of 800 students and 60 teachers. Some say that is an overwhelming number but I truly believe that every single staff member and student is the reason why it is so special to be a part of the community here at Loreto. As society has significantly changed in recent years our school has evolved into a multicultural environment that has welcomed people of all nationalities, abilities and beliefs. This has enabled all members of our school community to develop a higher level of awareness and understanding of the different ways people choose to live their life.

School was always a place I loved, where I could be my positive and hardworking self. I've developed as a person, building relationships with friends and teachers who have inspired me to grow and prosper. However our school is not just a place of educational purpose, it's where we transform from timid first years into students who find their voices, gain self-confidence and grow into ambitious, determined young adults, helping us to achieve our own personal aspirations in life no matter how big or small. We become who we are meant to be through endless opportunities to learn and grow. Which for me meant being a part of football teams with the pride of wearing the school jersey and lifting the cup in an Ulster final. As we progressed to the All-Irelands our dreams were endless. I've ventured through the city of Brussels and skiing down the slopes in Italy, learning about the culture, food and people



there. Partaking in school musicals where we spent endless hours practicing but it was all worth it for the big belly laughs shared, the thrill of having to change costumes so fast that we stripped while running off stage to the exhilarating feeling of singing at the top of your lungs.

Personally as a student I have gained so much from these experiences but most importantly they granted me a sense of belonging and purpose as well as an opportunity to do things not only for myself but for others too. Whether you're part of a class of 30, a year group of 120 or a school community of 800 at the end of the day no matter how many of us there are, we are all one together.

A guest in our school once said to me what a fascinating building our school was with its unique architecture, however he followed up with a statement saying 'it's really the people that make it', so on that thought not only will we celebrate Loreto Milford but we will also raise a glass to the people who have made it special along the way.

Written By: Senior Prefect, Kelsey McAteer
Loreto Community School, Milford.



Loreto Primary School, Dalkey

My time in Loreto

I have been in Loreto PS Dalkey for nearly eight years now. I joined half way through yr.infants and ever since, Loreto has taught me so much.

If I was finding a subject difficult they'd tell me to keep trying and would help me.

They taught me about Friendships and to all ways treat others as you would like them to treat you' (one golden rule). I've also made so many friendships here I hope that will last for a life time.

I shall be sad to leave this primary school in June but everything I've learnt will be with me all ways.



Bunscoil Loreto, Gorey

What it means to be a Loreto Student

Being a Loreto student is amazing. It means so many things to different students. I have been lucky enough to be in Bunscoil Loreto for the past seven years. I love being a Loreto Student because I am getting an excellent education. The teachers are fantastic and always encourage us to do our best. We all treat each other with respect.

Our School is a "School of Sanctuary". This is a title that we are all so proud of in Bunscoil Loreto. This means that our school is committed to being a safe and welcoming place for those seeking sanctuary. I think this initiative has raised awareness for lots of pupils in our school. I am very grateful that we are a School of Sanctuary.

As a Loreto Student it means we are not just part of our school community in Bunscoil Loreto but the wider Loreto Community. In 1609 Mary Ward founded the Loreto Sisters. All Loreto Schools share the same values of justice, freedom, sincerity, truth and joy. These are very important to all children in Loreto schools and we use them every day in our school. Every year as part of Catholic Schools Week, we celebrate the life of Mary Ward and Teresa Ball. We have a Loreto Anthem which is incredible and everyone in our school loves to sing it. The name of the song is called "She". It's a really inspiring song.



We are extremely lucky to have a very active Student Council in Bunscoil Loreto. In the past, all Loreto Students Councils have met in Dublin to share ideas and liaise with the other schools. This year due to the pandemic, we had a zoom conference meeting with Loreto Student Councils across the country. It was brilliant fun. Each Student Council shared various ideas and an insight into how they led their Student Council. We all really enjoyed the event and it was great to meet children from other Loreto Schools.

For me personally, a Loreto Student means being kind and respectful to everyone. The Loreto Community is a safe place that welcomes everyone. I love being a Loreto student and I am so thankful for all the opportunities they have given me.

Written By: Kayleigh Ryan and the Student Council in Bunscoil Loreto, Gorey.



Members' Response to Annual Report 2021

Throughout the entire world the impact of Covid has been relentless and deep. On the cover of this year's report we read: 'Rooted, responsive, relevant.' This sums up the reply made by all those associated with our schools and particularly by the personnel of the Loreto Education Centre. In all Irish schools and educational establishments, staff and students have been stretched and challenged as never before. The reports brims with the resilience, generosity and creativity of so many individuals, who were the architects of new initiatives, programmes and responses to the pandemic as it unfolded. Like their frontline colleagues in the health service, school personnel faced the crisis with energy and determination, seeking to ensure that teaching and learning continued in a meaningful way.

There was no road map. Yet, the overnight announcement, last March, of school closure was met head on by all associated with our schools. Their professionalism is beyond doubt. School leaders rose to the challenge and galvanized their staff members to focus on their students' needs. Caroline's account of the selflessness and giving of those in our schools shows how all staffs sought to bring continuity and stability to the home schooling embraced by students and their parents. It is fitting that, in the national psyche, the role of the educator is now more appreciated than ever.

Such a response was possible because, as is clear from the reading of the report, our schools are rooted in the ethos of our foundress Mary Ward, which is even more relevant in a time of crisis and stress. This rootedness was further deepened by the creative, enlightened support of Caroline, Kathleen and Ann assisted by Melissa and Eliza. Mary Ward, while imprisoned in the Anger convent said: 'We will pray and hope the best, and not be troubled at what we cannot mend, but confide in God.' As noted, conversations and personal wellness sessions ensured a vital measure of support for those at the frontline. The Middle Leaders' course addressed the difficulties of the pandemic in a concrete, relevant way. The spirituality of staff and students was nourished by various prayer initiatives and by reflection on how faith is affected by Covid and all its attendant difficulties. Many have



discovered anew what really matters and how adversity brings out the very best of the human spirit. So many in our schools have unearthed a personal courage that they were unaware of to date. As Pope Francis quoted in his latest book: 'Where the danger is, also grows the saving power.'

In the light of the decision to explore joining a collaborative trust, the open and frank meeting between the members and the directors this time last year was much appreciated. We are grateful to Conor, Dermot and Sheila for joining the sub-group which will help to progress matters in relation to the future of the Loreto Education Trust. Terms of reference for this group have been drawn up and agreed. In adhering to the government health guidelines, advancing the exploration slowly continues.

Each year brings farewells and we wish Kevin and Bernie all the best as they take a new step on their journey. Kevin made an outstanding contribution in his role as Finance Officer and will indeed be missed. We salute the dedication and commitment of all who work in the Loreto Education Centre during this unprecedented year.

The reflections from Principals and Deputies, which were included in the report, underline the centrality of Mary Ward's founding vision in our schools. As we move forward, all steps are underpinned and informed by this ethos. It seems fitting to end with one of the quotes from senior management: 'I feel that the Mary Ward Compass and the imperative to adapt to changes and be responsive in a changing world steers our schools through these times and reminds us that this is a responsibility we have at all times – in any global context.'