

LECALE TRINITY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

NEW LASALLIAN CATHOLIC 11-19 CO-EDUCATIONAL
VOLUNTARY GRAMMAR SCHOOL, DOWNPATRICK

SEPTEMBER 2023

PROGRESS UPDATE

from the Interim Board of Governors

Introduction

In June, we sent you a Communiqué summarising the progress made over the previous six months. A lot has happened since then. When the Chair and Vice-Chair met parents at the end of June a recurring theme was the need for regular progress updates. Thus, the Principal Designate, the Interim Board of Governors and the Trustees are determined to keep all our stakeholders fully informed of progress until Lecale Trinity Grammar School opens in September 2024.

In this spirit of openness and collaboration, the Progress Updates will be available to all stakeholders in our community. They will be sent to the three post-primary schools and all Category A and B primary schools for distribution through their online platforms. Furthermore, we will share them with other key partners including the trade unions, the churches and local politicians. We sincerely hope that you will find them informative as we work tirelessly and collaboratively to create a centre of excellence rooted in a Lasallian value system.

1. Appointment of Principal Designate

The most exciting piece of news is that we have appointed a Principal Designate to lead Lecale Trinity Grammar School. Her name is **Dr Fionnuala Moore**. Dr Moore has over thirty years' experience in post-primary education as a Mathematics teacher, Head of Department, Vice Principal in two schools and is currently the Principal of St Patrick's High School in Keady. St Patrick's High School, a large, Lasallian school, is a successful, all-ability, co-educational 11-19, school. It also has specialist provision for learning. Dr Moore's outstanding leadership in Keady, over the last five years, has been characterised by positive, collaborative relationships with pupils, Governors, staff, parents, and a diverse range of stakeholders. She has actively built and sustained supportive relationships which have promoted quality learning and teaching and excellent pastoral care in a school grounded in a Lasallian value system.

Dr Moore was Vice-Principal of St Paul's Junior High School in Lurgan for twelve years until it was amalgamated successfully with two other schools and became St Ronan's College. Dr Moore was

Vice-Principal in St Ronan's College for three years and was also Acting Principal for four months. During this time, she was actively involved in the establishment of St Ronan's College, which is now one of the largest all-ability, grammar schools in Northern Ireland. In this key leadership role, Dr Moore successfully promoted a shared vision and culture which engaged the support of the whole school community.

Dr Moore is, in her own words, committed to the pursuit of excellence through the promotion of high quality learning and teaching in an inclusive climate, where learning is relevant and enjoyable. She also stressed that it will be her privilege to lead Lecale Trinity Grammar School as Principal, and to work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff, governors and the wider community to ensure that every young person achieves their full potential and holistic development in a school with a strong, child-centred, Catholic value system.



2. Admissions Criteria

Considerable time has been spent in September drafting admissions criteria in line with the amended Admissions Policy, agreed in June 2023. The process involved detailed consideration of the DE Circular entitled *The Procedure for Transfer from Primary to Post-Primary Education* as well as a review of criteria used in other large, all-ability schools. Draft criteria were tabled at the IBoG meeting on 21st September. Dr Moore and the Chair then met the Primary Principals of both Category A and B schools on 27th September to note their feedback. They also met with the Post-Primary Principals and noted their feedback. This helpful information will be shared with the Admissions Sub Committee on 9th October 2023. Having considered the views of both parties fully, updated criteria will be presented for approval at the full IBoG meeting on 19th October, 2023. This timeline will ensure that the criteria will be ready for the post-primary publication schedule.



3. Special and Additional Needs

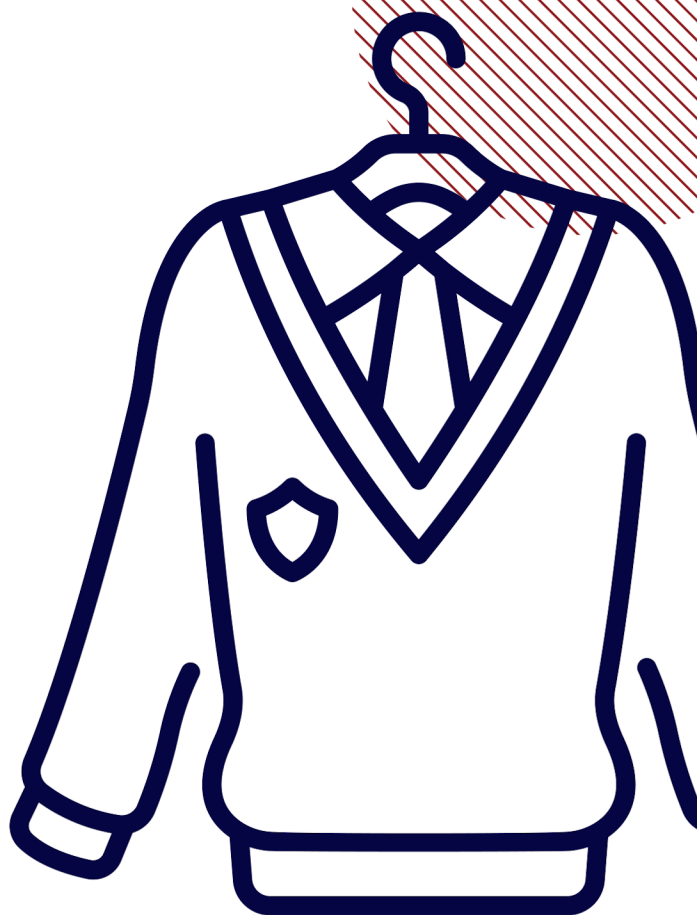


Dr Moore, the Chair and Senior Education Officer from CCMS met with EA representatives on 22nd September to discuss specialist provision in Lecale Trinity Grammar School. There has been a single item agenda meeting of the IBoG on 2nd October to seek approval for an increase in specialist provision, which in turn, will be considered in the next round of EA consultation starting on the 5th October 2023. A most helpful discussion on Special Needs provision also took place with the primary Principals at the meeting on 27th September 2023.

4. Uniform

The Ethos, Communication and Policy Committee met with Dr Moore on 14th September 2023 and discussed an action plan. Subsequent to this, Dr Moore, the Chair and a representative from the Ethos Communication and Policy Committee met the uniform suppliers on 27th September. They stressed that the process to date has placed a significant emphasis on incorporating the perspectives and feedback of the students, an approach that garnered unanimous approval from all stakeholders involved. The Committee feels that this inclusive process not only facilitates consensus but also plays a pivotal role in forging a united and constructive way forward.

Key matters discussed with the suppliers included fabric, colour and badge. Samples and colour swatches were made available by the suppliers. The importance of ensuring that the current economic climate is considered was a critical consideration stressed by all parties. It was agreed that the first immediate priority is to engage the pupils from all three schools in creating the badge and motto. There will also be consultation with parents, pupils and staff before finalising the uniform in November.



5. Finance



The Chair of the Finance Committee and an Independent HR Associate have had several meetings with key staff in the three schools and EA officials to discuss a variety of issues including the PPP contract and LMS related matters. Current priorities include the opening of a school bank account and internal trawl for the Bursar Designate post and Senior Executive Officer to provide support for the Principal Designate. The Business Case for funding the amalgamation was submitted to the Department of Education in August 2023. The Scheme of Management for Lecale Trinity Grammar School was discussed at the IBoG meeting on 21st September 2023.

6. Meetings with Parents

At the end of June, the Chair and Vice Chair met parental representatives from all three schools, separately. The recurring themes were the role of the IBoG, curriculum pathways, setting arrangements, accommodation, sporting opportunities on both sites, admissions policy and pastoral policies, as well as the need for regular communication. The benefits of creating a fully constituted Parent Forum, representing parents from the three schools, were highlighted. The parents from the three schools were in agreement that all they want for their children is that they are safe, successful and happy in the new school.



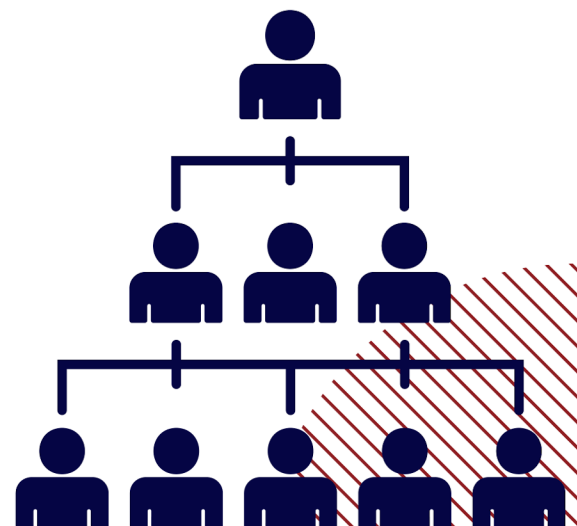
7. Meetings with the Trade Unions



In July, the Chair and the Independent HR Advisor met with support staff and teacher unions and EA officials. TUPE regulations that protect the rights of employees were tabled for discussion with the support staff unions. At their meeting on the 21st September 2023, the IBoG acknowledged and accepted the protections afforded under TUPE regulations to support staff. The teacher unions stressed the need for regular updates on progress and in particular the need to consult fully regarding the leadership structure in the new school.

8. Leadership Structure

The Staffing Committee met with Dr Moore and the Senior Education Officer on 19th September 2023 to compile the way forward in relation to the new leadership structure. They agreed a three-step process beginning with a review of models from both large, all-ability schools recognised as centres of excellence and the structure in the three current schools. In addition, recently published Quality Improvement materials will be studied carefully. The second step will be the creation of a draft leadership model which will be ready for consultation in November. During November it is also hoped to provide quality support for staff in the competence-based application and interview process. The first interviews for Vice Principal posts should take place before Christmas.



9. Concluding Remarks

We trust that you have found this update helpful and informative. As stated at the outset, you will receive an update on a regular basis. We reiterate that we have a unique opportunity to create an outstanding school in Downpatrick. We look forward to working with Dr Moore and the excellent staff and pupils in the three schools to ensure that Lecale Trinity Grammar School is a centre of excellence which meets the needs of all young people in our area.

Thank you for your support on our exciting, shared journey.



Interim Board of Governors

*Thank
You*