

THE CONTROLLED SCHOOLS' SUPPORT COUNCIL

CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC) marks a seventh year of operation as a voice on behalf of the controlled sector. Controlled schools continue to experience unique challenges as a result of being the only sector managed by the Education Authority (EA), and we welcomed the recognition given to this in the Independent Review of Education published in December. In the past year, the organisation has focused on prioritising the need for the controlled sector to be effectively and equitably managed as recommended by the authors of the Review.

As the sectoral support body for controlled schools, CSSC represents 49% of all schools in Northern Ireland, including nursery schools, special schools, primary schools, secondary schools, grammar schools, integrated schools and Irish-medium schools. Any inequity in support for controlled schools impacts on the education and life chances of nearly 50% of children being educated in Northern Ireland. CSSC officers have worked to support the need for better outcomes for all pupils through the provision of high-quality education.

Engaging and collaborating with partners has been critical to the organisation's recent advocacy work towards action on the inequity as well as the focus on over a decade of underfunding and the impact that has.

CSSC officers continue to empower controlled schools in serving their communities, listening to the needs of school leaders, whilst highlighting the diversity and inclusivity of the sector. The organisation has highlighted the need to promote trust and respect by nurturing a collective ethos, reflective of the sector's values and culture.

Council members, Emma Corry and Gillian Dunlop, resigned in 2023 and I'd like to thank them on behalf of all of us for their commitment and support. I'd like to thank all the Council members and staff for their commitment to CSSC and the work they do to ensure controlled school leaders are supported to deliver high quality education to over 148,000 pupils in controlled schools.



Mark Orr KC

Chairperson

Date: 19/9/24

THE CONTROLLED SCHOOLS' SUPPORT COUNCIL

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Last year I expressed concern over the limited action following the publication of the Landscape Review of the Education Authority (EA) which highlighted the inequity resulting from its conflicted role as managing authority for controlled schools but service provider for all. Since then, the Independent Review of Education report – Investing in a Better Future (December 2023), has clearly stated and agreed with the concerns CSSC and others have been raising regarding the unique challenges being faced by controlled schools.

I now have some optimism that action is being taken to address these concerns. The Minister of Education has stated that he hopes to make an announcement on the way controlled schools are managed this Autumn and I hope to discuss this further at our Annual General Meeting. We welcome the Minister's acknowledgement that current arrangements have served controlled schools poorly compared to other sectors, and his assurance that this is going to change.

CSSC will continue to share the concerns of controlled school leaders at all levels. The organisations' core role is to represent the interests of all controlled schools. We are working directly and collaboratively with EA and the Department of Education to move this work forward through the summer and into the next school year. There is a clear opportunity to promote substantive change to support controlled schools as they serve the children and young people in their communities.

Early in 2024 my officers and I met with over 100 controlled school leaders including Principals and Governors at the CSSC 'Your schools' future – controlling the decade' engagement events. We will build on these useful conversations about the future of controlled schools in their changing local communities with further engagement in 2024-25. As promised, a toolkit to assist schools in using the 2021 census data to understand better their local communities was developed as a consequence of these events and will be shared in Autumn 2024.

Over the last year CSSC continued to represent controlled schools at the highest levels of Government including with members of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Members of Parliament at the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee in Westminster highlighting the significant challenges being faced but also the success and quality of education provision across our schools.

It remains critical that we all work together as one sector with a united voice focused on addressing the common challenges we face together.



Mark Baker
Chief Executive

Date: 19/9/24

THE CONTROLLED SCHOOLS' SUPPORT COUNCIL

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The Trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the Charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

Strategic objectives and activities of CSSC in 2023-24

During 2022-23, CSSC updated the vision and strategic objectives for the organisation. These 7 strategic objectives are listed below and are reported on in full for 2023-24.

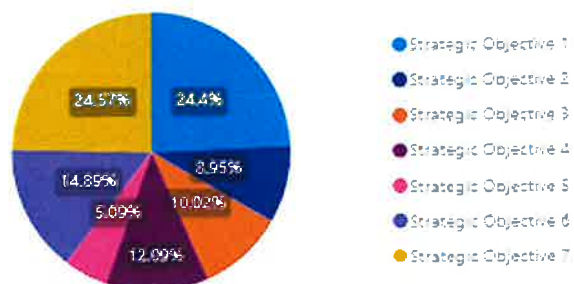
Moving forward in 2024-25, Council in June 2024 approved a strategy to prioritise working towards equitable support and management of controlled schools which will be addressed through the following objectives.

- The lack of efficient and effective support for controlled schools by their managing authority, the Education Authority (EA), and the need for the Landscape Review of the EA and the Independent Review of Education recommendations to be actioned as a matter of urgency.
- The misrepresentation and misunderstanding of the sector and the need for the sector and individual schools to clearly demonstrate their open to all ethos and their place in the local community.

CSSC's Strategic Objectives 2023-24

1. Support better outcomes for all pupils through provision of high-quality education.
2. Building understanding that the controlled sector is diverse and inclusive.
3. Promote the role controlled schools have in serving their communities.
4. Engage and collaborate with partners to ensure equitable support for the controlled sector.
5. Optimise opportunities to encourage effective governance in controlled schools.
6. Represent the sector effectively to ensure an enduring and valued role for controlled schools within a network of sustainable schools.
7. Promote trust and respect by nurturing a collective ethos, reflective of the controlled sector's values and culture.

How much support did CSSC provide over the year 2023-24 by each objective?



THE CONTROLLED SCHOOLS' SUPPORT COUNCIL

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1. Support better outcomes for all pupils through provision of high-quality education.

a. CSSC advocated in the best interests of children and young people through effective representation of the controlled sector's voice at a strategic level.

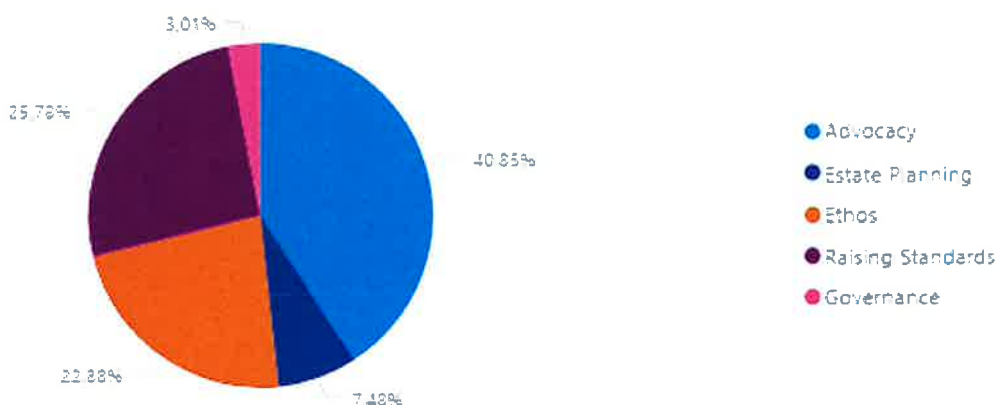
b. CSSC collaborated with EA and other partners to support the raising of educational standards, and improved learning outcomes in controlled schools.

c. CSSC worked to build the capacity of controlled school leadership through an ethos of professional reflection, effective teamwork and implementation of evidence informed practice.

Examples of this work included:

- Written evidence and oral evidence submitted to public consultations including the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee's (NIAC) Inquiry's into a) funding and delivery of public services and b) Integrated Education in Northern Ireland highlighting importance of inclusion, sharing and integration.
- CSSC representation at multi-disciplinary meetings to capture issues and pressures being faced.
- Engagement with controlled schools to request views to contribute to consultations for example on statutory guidance on reduction and management of restrictive practices in educational settings and Pre-School Education Amalgamation for Standardisation Pilot.
- Contributing at various levels to represent controlled schools for example by attending DE End to End review meetings for school improvement and SEND provision, DE Strategic Policy Forum, EDiS Programme Level Stakeholders Forum and Transformational Champion Network, DE Childcare Strategy Stakeholder Forum, EA Safeguarding Forum, Pre-School Education Group, SBNI Research Task and Finish Group, EA TIP Steering Group, and SEND Programme Reference Groups (please note this is not a comprehensive list).
- CSSC Erasmus+ programme completed with dissemination of learning and international best practice.
- CSSC/Stranmillis University 2023 College Award for Excellence in Educational Research presented, and the successful project was disseminated.
- CSSC Sharing of Effective Practice Strategy and Implementation Plan developed, reviewed with Education and Training Inspectorate.

What percentage of support did CSSC provide by function?



THE CONTROLLED SCHOOLS' SUPPORT COUNCIL

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

2. Building understanding that the controlled sector is diverse and inclusive.

a. CSSC worked to address misrepresentation of the sector through advocacy and representation, promotion and raising awareness of its diverse and inclusive nature, so that it is recognised, understood and respected by schools, policy makers, key stakeholders, the media and communities.

b. CSSC supported and encouraged controlled schools to celebrate their identity, promote and showcase their schools as diverse, open to all faiths and none, reflective of, embedded in and connected to their communities.

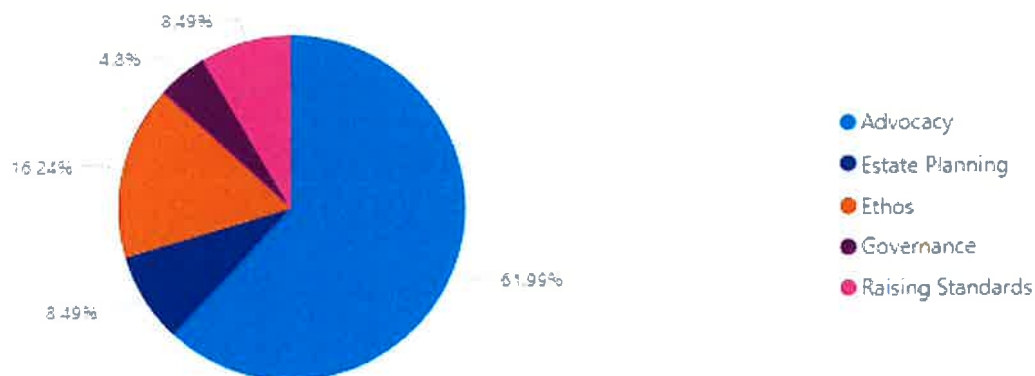
c. CSSC actively supported the fostering, enhancement and strengthening of an inclusive ethos and culture of diversity within controlled schools so that all our children and young people can reach their full potential.

d. CSSC encouraged, promoted and supported shared education partnerships to facilitate respect, diversity and community cohesion.

Examples of this work included:

- 10 CSSC Engagement Events entitled 'Your schools' future' controlling the decade' were part of a focused programme of work to help controlled schools better understand their local communities using publicly available data further enabling controlled schools in understanding how they are open to all. 88 controlled schools were represented at the events held across Northern Ireland with 110 attendees including 77 Principals and 33 Governors.
- Induction event seminar held so that first time Principals (and the Chairperson of their Board of Governors) understand the importance of the function, role and contribution of CSSC to their sector, and CSSC's key strategic objectives in relation to their schools including the need to reflect how their school is embedded in and connected to their community.
- CSSC provided support to schools in encouraging and promoting controlled schools' participation in shared education and provided assistance to those controlled schools in the process of transformation to controlled integrated status, promoting sustainable provision across the controlled sector.
- Marketing, Research and Communications Strategy developed with a focus on addressing the misconceptions of the sector and promoted the inclusivity and diversity of controlled schools including through the development of a suite of video content filmed within controlled schools.
- CSSC continue to engage with EA, NICIE and CnaG to ensure support for controlled schools is collaborative and efficient in utilisation of expertise and resources.

What percentage of support did CSSC provide by function?



THE CONTROLLED SCHOOLS' SUPPORT COUNCIL

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

3. Promote the role controlled schools have in serving their communities.

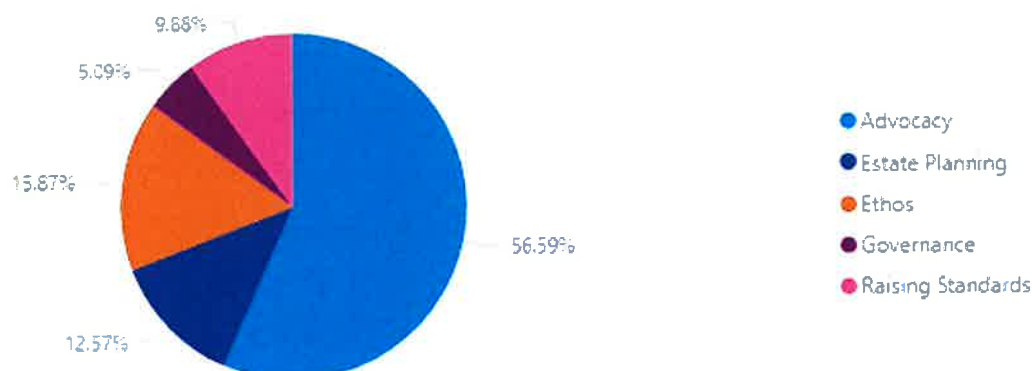
a. CSSC supported, championed and advocated for the positive engagement and collaboration that characterises this community partnership.

b. CSSC encouraged and supported the building of a community network of controlled schools to enable effective cohesion and sustainable collaboration, and provision of high-quality education, for the development and benefit of the controlled sector.

Examples of this work included:

- A key part of the CSSC Engagement Events 'Your schools' future - controlling the decade' was to further work with controlled schools to better understand their local community including to explain the data available to schools.
- Substantial planning and development followed to build a 'CSSC Community Profiling Toolkit' as a next step to enable controlled schools to better use NISRA data to understand their local community.
- A 'Collaborate, Disseminate and Celebrate' event was held at Belfast Model School for Girls sharing learning from the Erasmus Programme.

What percentage of support did CSSC provide by function?



4. Engage and collaborate with partners to ensure equitable support for the controlled sector.

a. CSSC advocated for a duty to consult with the organisation on strategic matters pertaining to the controlled sector, underpinned by legislation.

b. CSSC represented the interests of controlled schools by engaging with education partners on the implementation of the recommendations of the Landscape Review of EA and the Independent Review of Education.

c. CSSC worked to build new and existing partnerships to support the development of controlled schools and the sector.

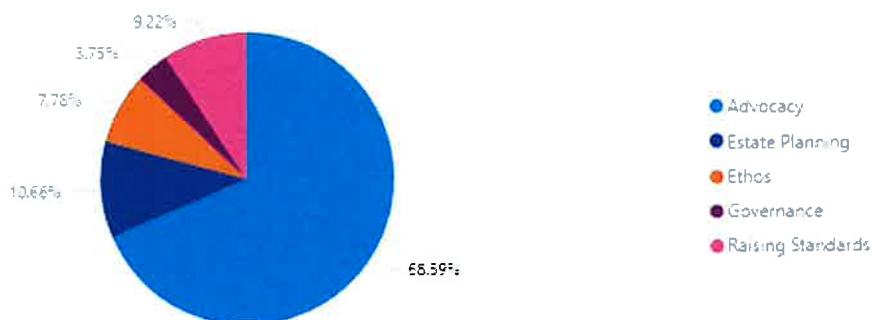
Examples of this work included:

- CSSC continued to share the concerns of controlled school leaders at all levels by working directly and collaboratively with EA and DE and other relevant stakeholders in the pursuit of effective and equitable support for controlled schools.
- CSSC continued to contribute to collaborative work such as the THRIVE strategic partnership to raise standards within the Newtownabbey area and to work in partnership with Ulster University, as part of the Taking Boys Seriously project which aims for greater understanding of effective interventions to improve outcomes for boys and young men.

THE CONTROLLED SCHOOLS' SUPPORT COUNCIL

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

What percentage of support did CSSC provide by function?



5. Optimise opportunities to encourage effective governance in controlled schools.

a. CSSC worked with DE, EA and the TRC to contribute to the reconstitution of Boards of Governors in controlled schools, and to maintain and support effective school governance.

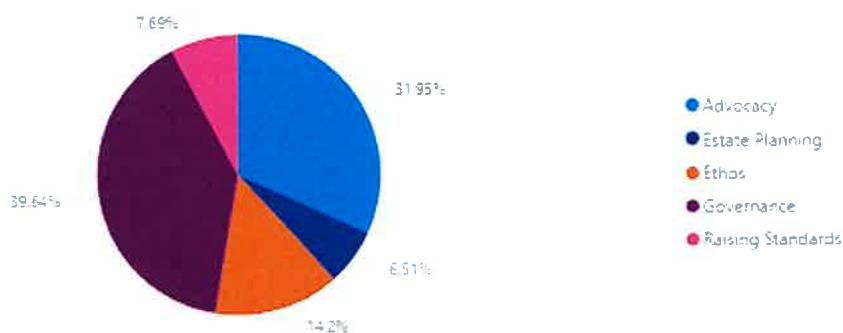
b. CSSC encouraged and facilitated the development of Governors in understanding the important role they play in supporting school leaders to embed an inclusive ethos within controlled schools, to support provision of high-quality education and enhance all aspects of school life.

c. CSSC raised awareness and promoted the importance of the role of school Governors in supporting controlled school leaders and as advocates for their school within their communities, and for the controlled sector.

Examples of this work included:

- Participation in planning and delivery of reconstitution of Boards of Governors throughout the year included agreement of CSSC representatives and attendance at EA Governor Application Meetings.
- CSSC commitment to the reconstitution process will continue in 2024-25.
- CSSC members attended Board of Governor meetings in controlled schools when invited to engage on specific issues of concern.
- CSSC support provided to enhance effectiveness of governance in controlled schools including promoting the importance of the role of school Governors in supporting school leaders, and as advocates for their school and the controlled sector, within their communities.
- Development and delivery of ongoing Governor development on ethos with governor development sessions focusing on ethos delivered within the year.
- Support given to school Governors in schools considering transformation to integrated status.

What percentage of support did CSSC provide by function?



THE CONTROLLED SCHOOLS' SUPPORT COUNCIL

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

6. Represent the sector effectively to ensure an enduring and valued role for controlled schools within a network of sustainable schools.

a. CSSC participated with educational partners in the area planning process to identify innovative, creative and shared solutions for sustainable education provision.

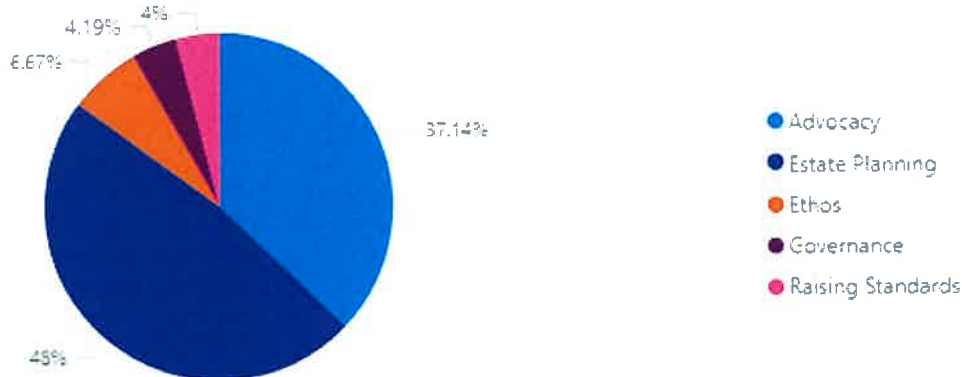
b. CSSC advocated for the needs, perspectives, ethos and long-term sustainability of the controlled sector within area planning structures, and through the area planning process, underpinned and supported by robust evidence-based analysis.

c. CSSC engaged with controlled schools participating in estate planning to provide quality support and to inform our representation of the controlled sector's views and needs, to maintain its valued position within a sustainable and equitable educational system.

Examples of this work included:

- 288 consultation engagements with 129 individual schools informed 33 responses to pre-publication and development consultations which had potential to impact on controlled schools.
- CSSC representation continued at area planning group meetings including Area Planning Steering Group (APSG), Area Planning Working Group (APWG), Area Planning Local Group (APLG), Pre-school Education Group (PEG), APWG Shared Education Sub-group, Integrated Education (IE) Steering Group, IE Working Group and IE Act Outcomes Based Accountability Workshops.

What percentage of support did CSSC provide by function?



7. Promote trust and respect by nurturing a collective ethos, reflective of the controlled sector's values and culture.

a. CSSC supported controlled schools to develop, affirm and evaluate whole school ethos, which acknowledges that which is common and shared within the sector, whilst recognising each schools' diversity and their own unique context.

b. CSSC promoted and encouraged the importance of embedding of ethos, in all aspects of school life, through developing vision and values, maintaining and reinforcing effective communication, and building of positive, collaborative whole-school community relationships.

Examples of this work included:

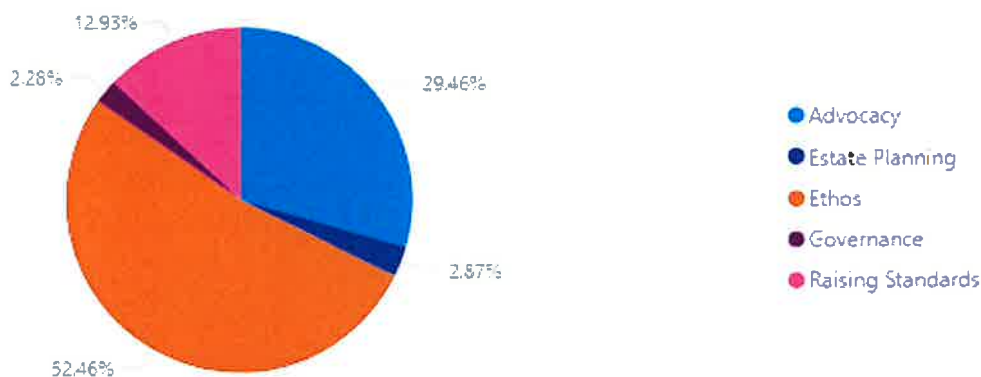
- CSSC provided support in ethos development, governance and leadership support for controlled schools, including controlled integrated and Irish-medium schools.

THE CONTROLLED SCHOOLS' SUPPORT COUNCIL

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

- Leadership support provided through CSSC's Ethos and Leadership programme including:
 - whole school ethos development
 - targeted leadership support for controlled schools in partnership with EA
 - targeted coaching support for senior leaders in controlled schools and provision of systemic team coaching support
 - school development of Trauma Informed Practice approach
 - CSSC contributed to the EA Induction Programmes for First Time Principals and Vice Principals in controlled schools.

What percentage of support did CSSC provide by function?



Financial review

The results for the year are set out on page 17 to the attached financial statements along with the total funds at the year end.

Going concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the Company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. Further details regarding the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in the accounting policies.

THE CONTROLLED SCHOOLS' SUPPORT COUNCIL

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Structure, governance and management

a. Key functions

The Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 made provision for the funding of sectoral bodies. On 14 October 2014, during the Education Bill: Second Stage debate, the Education Minister stated the functions of 'a new organisation to provide support for controlled schools'. Thus, the functions of CSSC are:

- providing a representational and advocacy role for controlled schools, including advice and support in responding to consultation exercises in respect of education policies, initiatives and schemes and in regard to relationships with DE, EA and other Departments working with schools within the sector to develop and maintain its collective ethos, including, where appropriate, a role in identifying, encouraging and nominating Governors and ensuring that ethos is part of employment considerations
- working with EA to raise educational standards
- participating in the planning of the schools' estate; assessing ongoing provision within the sector; participating in area-based planning co-ordinated by DE and EA, including membership of DE's area planning steering group; engaging, where appropriate, in strategic planning processes, including community planning
- building cooperation and engaging with other sectors on matters of mutual interest, including the promotion of tolerance and understanding. CSSC's Articles of Association enable Council to provide educational and other necessary support to individual controlled schools and to controlled schools as a whole. See below link (reference debate at 4pm).

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2014/10/14&docID=209460#561900>

b. Appointment of directors

The Board of Directors is constituted as follows.

- One Director elected by those members representing nursery schools attending the meeting at which the election takes place.
- One Director elected by those members representing special schools attending the meeting at which the election takes place.
- One Director elected by those members representing secondary schools attending the meeting at which the election takes place.
- One Director elected by those members representing grammar schools attending the meeting at which the election takes place.
- Two Directors elected by those representing primary schools attending the meeting at which the election takes place.
- Three representatives of Transferor Representatives' Council.
- Four Directors who have expertise of assistance to the charity, provided that no such Director shall be employed in the public sector but shall be supportive of the aims and objectives of the controlled sector.

Directors are elected and appointed for four years.

The Directors who served during the period were:

Mark Orr (KC) (Chairperson)
Andrew Brown (Dr) (Vice-Chairperson)
Peter Hamill (Dr)
Michael Carville
Catherine Chambers
Emma Corry (Resigned 16 November 2023)
Gillian Dunlop (Resigned 18 October 2023)
Paula Leitch
Rosalind McFeeters
Darren Mornin (Dr)
Heather Murray
John Anderson

THE CONTROLLED SCHOOLS' SUPPORT COUNCIL

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Kenneth Twyble	(Resigned 20 June 2024)
Marshall Kilgore	(Appointed 19 October 2023)
Grace Trimble	(Appointed 14 December 2023)

Resigned

Gillian Dunlop (with effect from 19 October 2023)
Emma Corry (with effect from 16 November 2023)

Elected

Grace Trimble (with effect from 14 December 2023)

Co-opted

Marshall Kilgore (with effect from 20 October 2023)

c. Director induction and training

The Company Secretary ensures that appropriate induction and training is given to all Board members.

d. Risk management and internal control

The Directors are responsible for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by the Council. The system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information, administrative procedures and a system of delegation and accountability.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee reviews the financial reports and provides assurance to Council on the budget setting process and appropriateness of expenditure ensuring CSSC remains within the Grant allocation. The Audit, Governance and Risk Committee reviews the risk register on a quarterly basis and provides assurance to Council that the CSSC risk management strategy has been implemented which is designed to minimise any potential risks identified.

e. CSSC governance arrangements

CSSC is grant funded by DE and an annual programme of work is undertaken to deliver on behalf of the controlled sector. This sits within CSSC's business plan which outlines priorities, objectives and resources for the year ahead. Quarterly reporting ensures that CSSC remains on target to deliver its objectives. Council met ten times per year, once every month from January – June and September to December. A range of issues has been considered by Council.

Education and Research Committee meets five times per year, usually the first Tuesday of every other month.

Members

Heather Murray (Chairperson)
John Anderson (Vice chairperson)
Andrew Brown (Dr)
Roz McFeeters
Emma Corry
Darren Mornin (Dr)
Gillian Dunlop

The Governance, Audit and Finance Committee met every other month.

Members

Michael Carville (Chairperson)
Catherine Chambers
Paula Leitch
Peter Hamill
Kenneth Twyble

THE CONTROLLED SCHOOLS' SUPPORT COUNCIL

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also the directors of the Company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law, the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP (FRS 102);
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards (FRS 102) have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Auditor

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that Harbinson Mulholland be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.


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Mark Orr

Trustee

Date: 