

Mr. Richard Bruton, T.D.  
Minister for Education and Skills  
Department of Education and Skills  
Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1

27 October 2016

**Report of the New Schools Establishment Group on the Patronage of Post-Primary Schools  
Scheduled to Commence in September 2017 and 2018**

Dear Minister Bruton,

As members of the above named group, we are pleased to present you with our report on the patronage of new post-primary schools due to open in September 2017 and 2018.

Our role was outlined in a Ministerial announcement of June 27, 2011. That announcement also included the criteria and arrangements for the recognition of new schools and the role of the New Schools Establishment Group to advise the Minister on the patronage of new schools, following its consideration of an assessment report prepared by the Forward Planning Section of your Department.

On 26 April last, the Department invited prospective patrons to make applications for consideration of patronage of the nine new post-primary schools to be established in 2017 and 2018. The closing date for receipt of these applications was 8 June 2016.

The Forward Planning Section carried out an assessment of the applications received and on 21 October 2016 the initial draft assessments were forwarded to our Group for consideration. A meeting was convened on 25 October 2016 with the officials from Forward Planning Section. At this meeting discussions took place on the process of examining the submissions and arriving at assessments. In the course of further discussion we recommended that a number of amendments and clarifications be made to the assessments.

The Group has considered the revised assessments made with regard to the patronage of the new post-primary schools to be established in 2017 and 2018. The Group now confirms that the criteria as set out in 2011 by your Department were applied in a fair and transparent manner to the applications received. On that basis we are satisfied that the following

recommendations regarding patronage of the new schools are in accord with these requirements and criteria, and give due regard to the levels of parental demand demonstrated in the applications.

The Group is satisfied to make the following recommendations to you in relation to the patronage of the new schools to commence in September 2017 and 2018:

<b>County</b>	<b>Area to be Served</b>	<b>Recommended patron</b>
Dublin	Carpenterstown & Castleknock, Dublin 15	Edmund Rice Schools Trust
Dublin	Lucan, Co. Dublin	The NSEG recommend that, in the circumstances, the Department explore a partnership arrangement with Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board as patron and Scoil Sínead as Trustee Partner
Dublin	Malahide & Portmarnock, Co. Dublin	Educate Together
Dublin	Swords, Co. Dublin	Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board
Laois	Portlaoise, Co. Laois	Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board, with An Foras Pátrúnachta as Trustee Partner
Limerick	Limerick City & Environs (South-West)	Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board
Limerick	Limerick City & Environs (East)	Educate Together
Dublin	Dublin South City Centre	Educate Together
Dublin	Firhouse, Dublin 24	Educate Together

The Group welcomes the improvement in the process, whereby in addition to parents having an opportunity to express their preferences for their preferred patron body, that they also have an opportunity to express their preference for their child to be educated through the medium of Irish or of English. This brings greater visibility to consideration of the level of demonstrated demand for education through the medium of Irish.

In this context, the Group is satisfied to make the following recommendations to you in relation to the medium of instruction of the new schools:

<b>County</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Recommended Medium of Instruction</b>
Dublin	Carpenterstown & Castleknock, Dublin 15	English-medium with Aonad Lán-Gaeilge either in this new school or another appropriate post-primary school
Dublin	Lucan, Co. Dublin	English-medium

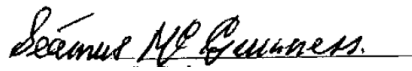
Dublin	Malahide & Portmarnock, Co. Dublin	English-medium
Dublin	Swords, Co. Dublin	English-medium
Laois	Portlaoise, Co. Laois	English-medium with Aonad Lán-Gaeilge
Limerick	Limerick City & Environs (South-West)	English-medium
Limerick	Limerick City & Environs (East)	English-medium
Dublin	Dublin South City Centre	English-medium
Dublin	Firhouse, Dublin 24	English-medium

In relation to the assessment reports on the post-primary schools to cater for Swords and for Limerick, the Group is aware of potential breaches of the code of conduct, which states that “while the limitation of the influence of patrons is recognised, nevertheless, it is expected that patrons will encourage schools and other groups affiliated to them to abide by the spirit of this code of conduct”. In this context and taking on board the Department’s comments in the assessment reports for these schools, the Group recommends that patron applicants should be aware of communications from schools under their patronage and from other groups affiliated to them in relation to potential breaches of the code of conduct and act in accordance with the spirit of the code.

As of 25<sup>th</sup> October 2016 when the NSEG members met, an applicant patron, Scoil Sinead, has applied for charitable status but has not yet received this. Given that Scoil Sinead is a new prospective patron body and that prospective patrons must meet a number of criteria, including that they have received charitable status, this would disqualify Scoil Sinead from being awarded patronage of a school under this process. However, the Group notes the very significant number of valid parental preferences submitted by Scoil Sinead as part of their application for the patronage of the post-primary school to serve the Lucan area. The patron body with the second highest number of parental preferences for the patronage of this school is Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board. In the circumstances, the Group considers that a partnership arrangement with Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board as patron and Scoil Sinead as a Trustee Partner (subject to charitable status being confirmed) may be the most appropriate solution in relation to the patronage of the new school to serve the Lucan area and the Group recommends that this is explored by the Department.

The Group notes that although clear guidance is given by the Department at the information meeting for prospective patrons and in the documentation made available from the Department’s website, successive patronage processes have shown that some patrons submit very considerable numbers of invalid parental preferences, which have to be individually identified and disaggregated from the valid preferences and which has a knock-on effect on the duration of the assessment process, adding unnecessarily to the work of the Department in assessing the applications and which is not to the benefit of any patron. The Group recommends that consideration is given to an examination of other options for a more effective and efficient means of disseminating information to parents and of collecting parental preferences.

The Group would like to thank the officials in Forward Planning Section for the assistance given throughout this process.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Séamus McGuinness", written over a horizontal line.

**Dr Séamus McGuinness**

**Chairperson**

**New Schools Establishment Group**