

Report for New Schools Establishment Group

Patronage for New Primary Schools

For September 2012 and 2013

Background

On the 27th of June 2011 the Minister for Education and Skills announced that 20 new primary schools and 20 new post-primary schools are to be established in the next six years. He also announced details of new criteria and arrangements for the recognition of new primary and post-primary schools. At that time it was indicated that the next steps in the process of establishing the new primary schools would be:

- The Department would shortly inform patron bodies of the details of the first schools which are to be established
- The Patron bodies would be invited to make applications for consideration. Department officials will draft a report based on these applications to be considered by the New Schools Establishment Group and it will submit a report with recommendations for consideration of the Minister.

The closing date for receipt of applications for patronage of these new primary schools was the 7th of October 2011. Forward Planning Section has carried out an assessment of the applications received. This is the report for the New Schools Establishment Group based on the criteria announced by the Minister in June 2011 and contained in Appendix A.

Areas where New Schools are to be Established

County	Area	Year	Indicative School start-up sizes (Junior Infant intake)
Dublin South	Ballinteer	2012	1 or 2 Junior Infant classes
Dublin South	Stepaside	2012	1 or 2 Junior Infant classes
Dublin South	Tallaght (City West/ Fortunestown)	2012	3 or 4 Junior Infants classes
Kildare	Kildare Town	2012	1 or 2 Junior Infant classes
Cork	Mallow	2013	1 or 2 Junior Infant classes
Cork	Riverstown/Glanmire	2013	1 Junior Infant class
Cork	South Suburbs (Douglas/ Rochestown area)	2013	1 or 2 Junior Infant classes
Dublin Fingal	Carpenterstown	2013	1 or 2 Junior Infant classes
Dublin South	Stepaside	2013	1 or 2 Junior Infant classes
Dublin South	Lucan South	2013	1 or 2 Junior Infant classes
Dublin South	Firhouse/Oldbawn	2013	1 or 2 Junior Infant classes
Dublin South	Tallaght (West)	2013	1 or 2 Junior Infant classes
Galway	Galway City (Knocknacarra area)	2013	1 or 2 Junior Infant classes

Applications Received from Patrons/ Prospective Patrons

Applications for 2012

	Dublin			Kildare
<u>List of applicant Patrons</u>	Stepaside	Ballinteer	Tallaght (City West/Fortunestown)	Kildare Town
Educate Together	√	√	√	√
Co Dublin VEC		√	√	
Co Kildare VEC				√
An Foras Patrunachta	√	√	√	√
Redeemed Christian Church Of God			√	

Applications for 2013

	Cork			Dublin					Galway
<u>List of applicant Patrons</u>	Mallow	Riverstown/ Glanmire	South Suburbs Douglas/Rochestown	Carpenterstown	Stepaside	Lucan South	Firhouse/ Oldbawn	Tallaght West	Galway City ((Knocknacarra area))
Educate Together	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√
Co Cork VEC	√	√	√						
Co Dublin VEC						√	√	√	
City Of Galway VEC									√
An Foras Patrunachta			√	√	√		√	√	√
Lifeways Ireland									√
Redeemed Christian Church of God						√		√	

In assessing the applications for patronage of the new schools being established in 2012 and 2013 the Department was mindful of the fact that the VEC-proposed Community National School and the Educate Together proposed schools have many similar elements to their ethos and that they are therefore broadly in a similar space in relation to multi-denominational school provision, albeit with particular differences of approach in the area of faith formation.

The criteria established were used in assessing the applications in all cases. However, in two cases (in Mallow and in Kildare) it was very difficult to come to a view between the applications from VECs and Educate Together.

In assessing the applications, the Department was mindful that there tended to be a very similar level of demand demonstrated for the schools proposed by both of the patrons. On balance the Department recommended that, given the closeness of each of the applications in Mallow and Kildare, the evidence of demand in the first 2 years of the school being established could be used to differentiate between the applications. Therefore, on balance, the Department recommends the VEC as patron in Kildare and Educate Together as patron in Mallow. The advantage of this approach is that it allows one school for each patron in the circumstances.

Furthermore, in assessing applications in the greater Tallaght area, the Department looked at this region as a whole in regard to applications received and in regard to optimising parental choice and strengthening of diversity in the area as a whole.

Recommendations

An assessment of each individual area is attached to this report. Below is a summary of Forward Planning Section's recommendation for patronage in each area.

New Schools 2012

Ballinteer 2012 – Educate Together

Stepaside 2012 – Educate Together

Tallaght - City West / Fortunestown 2012 – 2 new schools - Educate Together and County Dublin VEC

Kildare Town 2012 – County Kildare VEC, and subject to confirmation of demand a second school should be opened in 2014 under the patronage of An Foras Pátrúnachta.

New Schools 2013

Tallaght West 2013 – County Dublin VEC

Firhouse / Oldbawn 2013 – An Foras Pátrúnachta and Educate Together

Stepaside 2013 – An Foras Pátrúnachta

Mallow 2013 – Educate Together

Riverstown / Glanmire – Defer opening a new school for one or two years and continue to monitor junior infant enrolments in the area.

Cork South Suburbs - Douglas/ Rochestown 2013 – Educate Together

Carpenterstown – Educate Together. Appoint the patron but keep the opening date of a new school under review pending geo-coding of the most up-to-date Child Benefit Data.

Lucan 2013 – County Dublin VEC

Galway - Knocknacarra Area 2013 – The school will be Irish medium. However, further clarification is required from An Foras Pátrúnachta and City of Galway VEC before a decision can be made on patronage.

Forward Planning Section
16th February 2012

Appendix A

New Arrangements for patronage of new schools

Primary

The following key elements will apply to the establishment of a new primary school:

- The demographics of the area must support the need for the establishment of a new school (or where meeting the demographics through the extension of existing schools would leave an unmet demand for diversity of patronage)
- If the demographics require the establishment of a school, then the process for the selection of the type of school should allow for different patrons/bodies to be considered as the patron of a new school.

Most new schools must have the capacity to accept at least one full class group of pupils at junior infant level and to increase capacity up to three full streams as needed subject to demographics and parental demand in the area.

The following requirements will have to be satisfied by prospective school patrons:

- Confirmation that the prospective patron is willing to accept and open special education facilities;
- Confirmation that the prospective patron is willing to have up to three streams subject to demand for the school;
- Confirmation that the prospective patron is willing to enter into the standard lease agreement with the Department of Education and Skills. Otherwise the prospective patron could provide their own school site;
- Confirmation of willingness to operate by the rules and regulations laid down in various Department of Education and Skills circulars and operating procedures and to follow the prescribed curriculum;
- Confirmation of willingness to operate the school within the resourcing and policy parameters established by the Department of Education and Skills
- Confirmation of willingness to be part of a campus development with other primary or second-level schools as identified by the Department;
- Confirmation of willingness to enrol children in the area for whom the Department has identified the need for a school.

The criteria to be considered in deciding on patronage are the following:

- The development already achieved by recently established schools of a particular patronage in the identified area and the potential for future growth of these schools;

- The extent or range of diversity of patronage offered across existing schools in the identified area, having regard to the views of parents;
- The proximity of schools of similar ethos to those proposed by the applicant patrons;
- How the proposed schools under the respective patrons would provide for extending or strengthening diversity of provision in each area, having regard to the views of parents;
- Parental demand for the school that a patron is willing to establish;
- The extent to which schools of similar patronage in the area have already expanded to at least three streams (subject to space on an existing site etc);
- In an area to be served by a single school, the extent to which the needs of all pupils in the area can be met by the school.

The process will involve the following steps at primary level:

- The Department will proactively identify the areas where significant additional school accommodation is required.
- Identification of locations of new schools and sizes of new schools by the Department
- In concluding as to whether a demographic need might be met through extension projects in local schools, the Department should not seek to extend accommodation in existing schools of a certain patronage, where there is a certain level of demand for patronage of a different type in that area.
- written applications from prospective patrons addressing all of the criteria
- consideration of the applications by Department officials and report drafted for consideration by the News Schools Establishment Group
- consideration by Group of report and endorsement by Group or identification of need for further analysis by Department and subsequent consideration by Group
- report from the Group submitted to the Minister for consideration
- decision by the Minister

Parental Preferences

Patron bodies proposing schools will be asked to provide evidence of parental demand. Patrons will be asked to sign up lists of parents who indicate interest in having their children educated in their new school. These lists are to be broken down by the age of the children, including year of proposed entry to school, and by where they are living, having regard for the area to be served by the school.

Appendix B

Summary of Current School Types in the Irish Primary Education Sector

Historically Irish schools catered for a relatively homogenous group of pupils and came under the patronage of a small number of religious groups. Since the 1970s a number of developments have taken place in response to a greater demand for diversity. Traditionally the ethos of most primary schools has been religious with over 90% being under the patronage of the Catholic Church. As the profile of the population has changed so has the patronage system changed with a subsequent increase in a diverse range of school types.

The history of the patronage system has meant that the educational philosophy of the patron, be it religious or linguistic, translates into a distinctive character of the education provided in the school. A variety of terms has been used to describe this distinctive character of a school:

- Ethos
- Characteristic spirit
- Mission
- Purpose
- Philosophy

The Department of Education and Skills currently classifies primary schools as denominational, inter-denominational and multi-denominational offering education through the medium of English or Irish (all Irish schools in Gaeltacht areas and all Irish schools outside of Gaeltacht areas). A description of each category and the main types of schools currently within each category is outlined below. In addition a description of Gaelscoileanna is outlined below.

1. Denominational schools

The majority of denominational schools are under the patronage of the Catholic Church. The other main denominational schools currently recognised by the Department are Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Methodist, Muslim, Jewish and Quaker schools.

As part of the current process an application for patronage has been received from the Redeemed Christian Church of God, which is a new denominational patron body.

Schools under the patronage of the main religious beliefs operate an ethos in accordance with the main principles of that particular religion/ belief system. In many cases this includes faith formation during the school day. In the context of the Education Act 1998, the Department of Education & Skills recognises the rights of the various church authorities to design curricula in religious education in primary schools and to supervise their teaching and implementation and the Act makes provision for the teaching of religious

education and religious instruction in these schools. Denominational schools support the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school.

2. **Multi-Denominational schools**

Religion may be taught as part of the school day or may be taught outside of the school day. The main types of multi-denominational schools currently recognised by the Department are Educate Together Schools, Community National Schools, Steiner National Schools, and the John Scottus National School. A brief description of the school type of each patron who has applied as part of this process is outlined below:

Educate Together National Schools – Educate Together define their ethos as multi-denominational, i.e. all children having equal rights of access to the school, and children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds being equally respected. The schools do not provide for any faith formation or religious observance during school hours but do facilitate faith formation on school premises outside of school hours.

Community National Schools - The Community National School (CNS) is a new model of primary school patronage which is being developed in a pilot model since late 2008 in which the State is directly involved in the provision of primary education.

The schools are multi-belief and welcome and respect children of all beliefs and none. They recognise and aim to accommodate the wishes of parents to have their children receive religious education and faith formation in the school setting within the school day. A multi-belief programme, called *Goodness Me! Goodness You!*, providing for the delivery of religious education and faith formation in the CNSs, is being developed on an action research basis over the course of the pilot.

Steiner National Schools – Based on the work of scientist and philosopher Rudolf Steiner the education began in 1919 with the founding of the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, Germany. Steiner Waldorf schools offer an academic and practical education which is multi-denominational and co-educational. Classes in religious doctrine are not part of the Steiner Waldorf curriculum and children of all religious backgrounds attend Steiner Waldorf schools.

3. **Gaelscoileanna**

Gaelscoileanna follow the standard curriculum as set by the Department of Education and Skills. Irish is the teaching language in the school and the language of communication between the teachers, the students, the parents and the board of management. The principal aim of Irish-medium schools is to provide excellence in education and the ethos of Irish-medium schools helps to keep Irish as a living language in the community.

In terms of ethos, a gaelscoil can be denominational, multi-denominational or inter-denominational depending on the local circumstances.

4. Special Schools

Special schools meet the educational needs of pupils whose needs could not be adequately catered for in ordinary primary schools.

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) was set up to improve the delivery of education services to persons with special educational needs arising from disabilities with particular emphasis on children. The Council was first established as an independent statutory body by order of the Minister for Education and Science in December 2003. NCSE's local service is delivered through a national network of Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs) who interact with parents and schools and liaise with the HSE in providing resources to support children with special educational needs.