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Report for New Schools Establishment Group

Patronage for New Primary Schools for September 2017 & 2018

April 2017

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Foreword

Mr. Seamus McGuinness,
Chairperson,
New Schools Establishment Group.

Dear Mr. McGuinness,

In November 2015 the Minister for Education and Skills, Richard Bruton announced that four new primary schools are to be established in 2017 and 2018.

Applications were invited for the patronage of the four new primary schools due to commence operation in September 2017 and 2018. The closing date for receipt of applications from patron/prospective patron bodies was 6 January, 2017. The areas to be served by the four new schools are:

County	Area to be served	School size	Year Required
Cork	Ballincollig	Up to 8 classrooms	2017
Dublin	Pelletstown	Up to 16 classrooms	2017
Dublin	Dun Laoghaire	Up to 16 classrooms	2017
Dublin	Dublin South City Centre	Up to 24 classrooms	2018

The criteria to be considered for patronage of new schools are at Appendix A.

The New Schools Establishment Group, an independent advisory group, is tasked with advising the Minister on the patronage of the new schools following its consideration of a report prepared by the Department.

This is the report for the New Schools Establishment Group for the four new primary schools to be established in 2017 and 2018 where patronage has yet to be determined. The Report is submitted for the Group's consideration please.

Brian P Power
Principal Officer
Department of Education and Skills
April 2017

Recommendations - summary

An assessment of each individual application by area is attached to this report. A summary of the Department's recommendations contained in those assessment reports is as follows:

County	Area	Recommended Patron Body
Cork	Ballincollig	An Foras Pátrúnachta
Dublin	Pelletstown	Scoil Sinead
Dublin	Dun Laoghaire	Educate Together
Dublin	Dublin South City Centre	Educate Together

Basis for the Department's recommendations

Ballincollig

Applications were received from three patron/prospective patron bodies to operate this school – Educate Together, Cork Education and Training Board and An Foras Pátrúnachta, all proposing a multi-denominational ethos with An Foras Pátrúnachta proposing a school through the medium of Irish.

The models of multi-denominational provision proposed by all patrons would strengthen and expand diversity in the area to be served by the new school. While there is no Educate Together school in the area to be served by the new school, there is an Educate Together within approximately 7km. There is no Community National School in the area to be served with the nearest one being approximately 22km.

There is one Irish-medium school in the school planning area and a number in the adjoining school planning areas, but they are all under Catholic patronage. The nearest multi-denominational, co-educational Irish-medium primary school is approximately 14km distant.

The demand for An Foras Pátrúnachta's model of provision is strongest overall, exceeding that of the next closest patron, Educate Together. An Foras Pátrúnachta's demand is 51% of the total valid preferences.

The Department recommends that patronage for the new school should be awarded to An Foras Pátrúnachta.

Pelletstown

Applications were received from four patron bodies to operate this school – Educate Together, City of Dublin Education Training Board, An Foras Pátrúnachta and Scoil Sinead, all proposing a multi-denominational ethos with An Foras Pátrúnachta proposing a school through the medium of Irish.

The models of provision proposed by the applicants would widen diversity in the area to be served by the school.

The demand for the Scoil Sinead model of provision is strongest overall, exceeding that of the next closest patron, An Foras Pátrúnachta. Scoil Sinead's demand is 52% of the total valid preferences.

The Department recommends that patronage of the new school should be awarded to Scoil Sinead.

Dún Laoghaire

Applications were received from three patron bodies to operate this school – Educate Together, Dublin & Dún Laoghaire Education Training Board and An Foras Pátrúnachta, all proposing a multi-denominational ethos with An Foras Pátrúnachta proposing a school through the medium of Irish.

The models of provision proposed by the applicants would widen diversity and provide a model of provision that is not already in the feeder area.

The demand for the Educate Together model of provision is strongest overall, exceeding that of the next closest patron, An Foras Pátrúnachta. Educate Together's demand is 69% of the total valid preferences.

The Department recommends that patronage of the new school should be awarded to Educate Together.

Dublin South City Centre

Applications were received from four patron bodies to operate this school – Educate Together, City of Dublin Education Training Board, John Scottus and An Foras Pátrúnachta, all proposing a multi-denominational ethos with An Foras Pátrúnachta proposing a school through the medium of Irish.

The models of provision proposed by the applicants would widen diversity in the area to be served by the school.

The demand for the Educate Together model of provision is strongest overall, exceeding that of the next closest patron, An Foras Pátrúnachta. Educate Together's demand is 62% of the total valid preferences.

The Department recommends that patronage of the new school should be awarded to Educate Together.

Other information

New schools receive provisional recognition initially to safeguard the interests of pupils, parents and all interested parties in this regard. Details of the requirements to be satisfied by prospective school patrons are provided in Appendix A.

Appendix A

Arrangements for Patronage in the establishment of new Primary Schools due to open in September 2017 and September 2018

Need for new school

The following essential conditions apply to the establishment and approval of a new primary school to meet demographic need:

- The demographics of the area must support the need for the establishment of a new school (or where meeting demographic need 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.

New school process

The process will involve the following steps for a new primary school:

- 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 New 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.

Criteria considered in the patronage assessment process

The criteria considered in the patronage assessment process 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.

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 of children who will be due to start school within the next five years i.e. 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021 for the 2017 schools and 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 for the 2018 school and who indicate interest in having their children educated in their new school. These lists are to include the child's name, date of birth, address and their year of proposed entry to school. A template for submission of parental demand will be provided for this purpose, and all information must be presented in this format only.

Patronage commitments

Agreement to each of the following requirements must be specifically confirmed in writing by prospective school patrons:

- That the prospective patron is willing 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;
- That the prospective patron is willing to operate the school within the resourcing and policy parameters established by the Department of Education and Skills.

- That the prospective patron is willing to prioritise enrolment of children in the area for which the Department has identified the need for a school.
- That the prospective patron is willing to accept and open special education facilities;
- That the prospective patron is willing to have up to three streams subject to demand for the school;
- That the prospective patron is willing to enter into the appropriate standard lease agreement with the Department of Education and Skills;
- That the prospective patron is willing to be part of a campus development with other primary or second-level schools as identified by the Department;
- That the prospective patron is willing, where deemed necessary by the Department, to identify and source suitable interim accommodation within the parameters set by the Department.

Please note that failure to comply with the foregoing patronage commitments will result in an application being deemed invalid and invalid applications will not be assessed further as part of the process.

An applicant who is not already an existing school patron will need to ensure they have put certain requirements in place in advance of making an application for patronage under the new school process. In this regard, Appendix A outlines general information for prospective patrons on the requirements to be put in place.

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 also 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.

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, Lifeways Ireland/Steiner National Schools, and the John Scottus National School. A brief description of the school type of each patron currently in the Irish primary education sector 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.

Educate Together delivers an Ethical Education programme entitled “Learn Together”. This programme specifically addresses the Educate Together ethos.

Community National Schools - The Community National School (CNS) is a new model of primary school patronage which is being developed in a pilot mode 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.

Lifeways Ireland/Steiner National Schools – Based on the work of scientist and philosopher Rudolf Steiner this form of 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.

John Scottus National School – Founded in 1986 by a group of like-minded parents studying philosophy, the School’s ethos has a philosophical base. Self-discovery, Resilience and Universality are at the heart of a John Scottus Education. The School’s aim is to instill in pupils a robust inner-belief. This is for resilience of character, personal fulfillment and for the benefit of society at large. Central to the School’s ethos is the aspiration that each pupil will see themselves as unlimited, empowering them to discover their own unique talent. Furthermore the school endeavours to help each pupil to develop a robust and resilient

character through the process of self-discovery, and they will come to trust that 'good' exists in this world.

3. Gaelscoileanna

In common with all schools, 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.