



## **National School Annual Census – report on optional questions asked 2010/2011**

**May 2011**

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## **Introduction**

A number of optional questions were included in the 2010/2011 National School Annual Census. These questions gave schools the opportunity to provide feedback to the Department, report any difficulties in completing the Census form and give suggestions for further improvements. Schools were also asked how long approximately it took to complete the Census form. It is not proposed to repeat these optional questions on an annual basis; however similar questions may be repeated in later years. The questions asked can be found in appendix 1.

A separate question was also included asking the schools to list any local or nicknames their school is known by. This question can be found in appendix 2.

## **Feedback**

Over half of all schools provided responses to the optional questions. We would like to take the opportunity to thank these schools for taking the time to provide this feedback. The feedback can be grouped as follows:

**Questions that were difficult to complete:** Primary Schools highlighted two questions in particular that were difficult to answer. These were:

1. the question on source of New Entrants
2. the question on the Nationality of Pupils

As a result of the comments received the instructions for the completion of the Census form will be enhanced. Consideration is being given to consolidation of some of the response options to the question on the source of New Entrants. Special schools did not highlight any question as being particularly difficult to answer.

**Suggestions for Improvements:** Some schools provided suggestions for clarifying a number of questions –

e.g. 1: It should be made clear that the Irish Exemption question refers only to new exemptions and that existing ones need not be re-entered.

e.g. 2: Should early intervention in learning support be included in the answer to the learning support question or not?

These comments will also be used to improve the instructions for the completion of the Census form.

**Other feedback:** Schools provided a number of positive comments and also a small number of negative comments. These included -

- I like this format and in particular the "error check". It allows me to do the form in stages so I don't get bogged down in figures!
- Self correction facility is a big improvement.

- We love the error sheet!
- Keep up the good work. We're lucky to have a job!!
- Electronic user form very user friendly. Thank you
  
- Pen and Paper from now on!!!
- Was faster on paper!!!

## **Response Burden**

The response rate to the question on how long it took to complete the Census form was 56% for Primary schools and 59% for Special schools. Based on these responses, the average length of time it took to complete the Primary School Annual Census and the Special School Annual Census are shown in table 1 below. On average Primary schools took 2 and a quarter hours to complete the Primary School Census form while Special schools took just over an hour to complete the Special School Census form.

**Table 1: Average length of time it took National Schools to complete the Census form**

	<b>Primary Schools</b>	<b>Special Schools</b>
Average length of time	134 minutes	64 minutes

Tables 2, 3 and 4 show further breakdowns of the average length of time taken to complete the Primary School Census form classified by other criteria. As expected, Primary schools with Special Class pupils or pupils being taught by a Resource Teacher for Travellers (RTT) took longer to complete the form as these schools have more questions to answer than schools without Special Class pupils/pupils taught by a RTT. Schools with a Walking Principal took, on average, over 2 hours longer to complete the Census form than schools without a Walking Principal. Schools with 50 or less pupils took on average under an hour to complete the Census form compared to over 2.5 hours for large schools.

**Table 2: Average length of time it took Primary Schools to complete the Census form classified by whether the school had Special Class Pupils/Pupils taught by an RTT or not**

	Primary Schools With Special Class Pupils/Pupils who were taught by an RTT	Primary Schools Without a Special Class Pupils/Pupils who were taught by an RTT	All Primary Schools
Average length of time	262 minutes	108 minutes	134 minutes

**Table 3: Average length of time it took to complete the Primary School Census form classified by whether the school had a Walking Principal or not**

	Primary Schools With a Walking/ Principal	Primary Schools Without a Walking Principal	All Primary Schools
Average length of time	220 minutes	82 minutes	134 minutes

**Table 4: Average length of time it took to complete the Primary School Census form classified by whether the school had over 50/50 or less pupils enrolled**

	Primary Schools with 50 or less pupils	Primary Schools with more than 50 pupils	All Primary Schools
Average length of time	59 minutes	156 minutes	134 minutes

### **Local or Nicknames**

A question was included on a once off basis in the 2010/2011 National School Census asking schools to identify any local or nicknames their school is known by. Over half (1,527) of all Primary Schools and 58 Special Schools provided at least one answer to this question. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) asked all persons in the 2011 Census of Population for the full name and address of their place of work, school or college. The CSO will use the information provided in response to the local or nickname question in the National School Census to assist in compiling important data on community and school journeys. Knowing the local names of schools will greatly assist the CSO in correctly identifying a particular school from the information provided on the Census of Population Form, where parents and staff will often refer to a school using a local name. *See appendix B for question asked.*

**Appendix A: Optional Questions included in the 2010/2011 National School Census**

**OPTIONAL QUESTIONS/FEEDBACK ON PRIMARY/SPECIAL SCHOOL ANNUAL CENSUS RETURN**

1	<b>How long approximately (in minutes) did it take to complete the form?</b> (The purpose of this question is to estimate response burden placed on schools)		<b>minutes</b>
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2	<b>Were any questions in this form particularly difficult to complete? If so please explain in the box below.</b>
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3	<b>Please provide any suggestions you may have for improvements to the National School Annual Census in the box below.</b>
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4	<b>Please provide any other comments on the National School Annual Census in the box below.</b>
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**Thank you for responding to these optional questions.**

**Appendix B: Question on Local or Nicknames of the School included in the 2010/2011 National School Census**

**LOCAL OR NICKNAMES THE SCHOOL IS KNOWN BY**

Please list any local or nicknames the school is known by (e.g. [the New School](#), [the School on the Hill](#)). As part of the Census of Population 2011, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) will be asking all persons for the full name and address of their place of work, school or college. The information provided will be used by the CSO to compile important data on commuting and school journeys. Knowing the local names of schools will greatly assist the CSO in correctly identifying a particular school from the information provided on the Census Form, where parents and staff will often refer to a school using a local name.

**Local or Nickname**

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	