



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Statistical Bulletin

Enrolments September 2020 – Preliminary Results

This report may be accessed at:

<https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Data-on-Individual-Schools/Data-on-Individual-Schools.html>

For further information please contact by e-mail at:

Statistics@education.gov.ie

Enrolments September 2020 – Preliminary Results

This Statistical Bulletin presents first results on enrolments in mainstream primary and post-primary schools on 30th September 2020. The data is preliminary in nature, final data will be published in June 2021.

Primary: Total enrolments in mainstream primary schools stood at 553,003 in September 2020, a decrease of 6,362 pupils, or 1.14 per cent, on September 2019 (559,365). The number of girls fell by 3,014 pupils, from 273,620 to 270,606 and the number of boys fell by 3,348 from 285,745 to 282,397.

Figure 1 presents percentage of total enrolments by school ethos. Total enrolments in Catholic schools stood at 495,478 in September 2020, representing 89.6 per cent of all pupils, down from 90.0 per cent in 2019. Enrolments in multi-denominational schools stood at 39,658, accounting for 7.2 per cent of the total (up from 6.8% in 2019), while Church of Ireland schools had enrolments of 16,125 representing 2.9 per cent of all pupils. Other faiths accounted for 1,742 pupils, or 0.3 per cent.

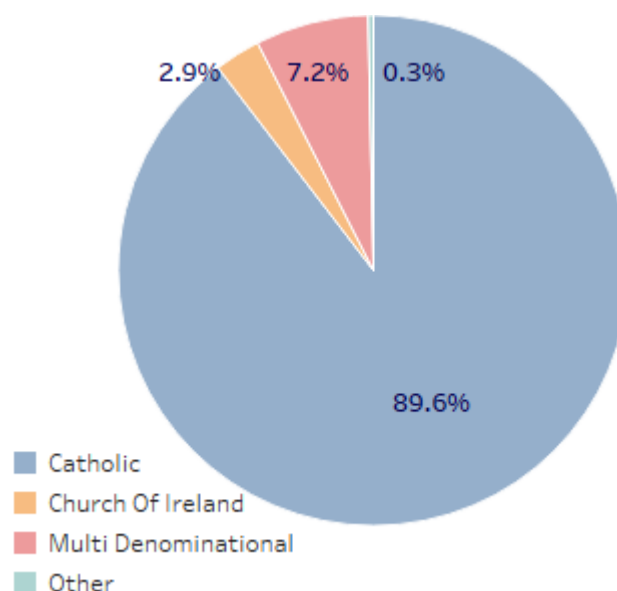


Figure 1. Enrolments in mainstream primary schools by school ethos, September 2020

Figure 2 presents the absolute and percentage change by ethos. The fastest growing category in both percentage and absolute terms was multi-denominational schools which increased by 4.0 per cent with an additional 1,541 pupils. This compares with Catholic schools which decreased by 1.5 per cent, or 7,737 fewer pupils. *Note: the category multi-denominational includes inter-denominational schools.*

Figure 2. Absolute and percentage change in enrolment in mainstream schools, by ethos, 2020&2019

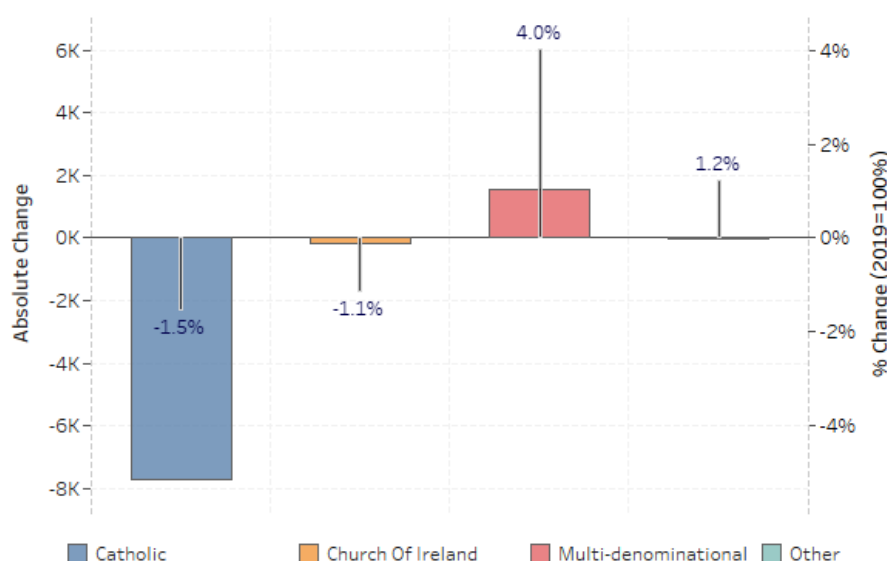


Table 1 presents schools by ethos from 2011 to 2020. Between 2018 and 2020 the number of schools with a Catholic ethos fell by 20, from 2,776 to 2,756 while those with a multi-denominational¹ ethos rose by 23, from 136 to 159. As is illustrated in Figure 3 this is part of a longer term trend, with the number of Catholic schools falling by 119 in the last ten years, while the number of multi-denominational schools has risen from 85 to 159, an increase of 87.1 per cent.

Table 1. Mainstream primary schools by ethos, 2011 – 2020

	Catholic	Church of Ireland	Multi-denominational ¹	Other	Total
2020	2,756	171	159	21	3,107 ²
2019	2,760	172	153	21	3,106
2018	2,776	173	136	21	3,106
2017	2,785	174	132	20	3,111
2016	2,794	175	126	20	3,115
2015	2,808	175	120	21	3,124
2014	2,829	175	113	20	3,137
2013	2,843	179	104	19	3,145
2012	2,857	179	97	19	3,152
2011	2,875	180	85	19	3,159

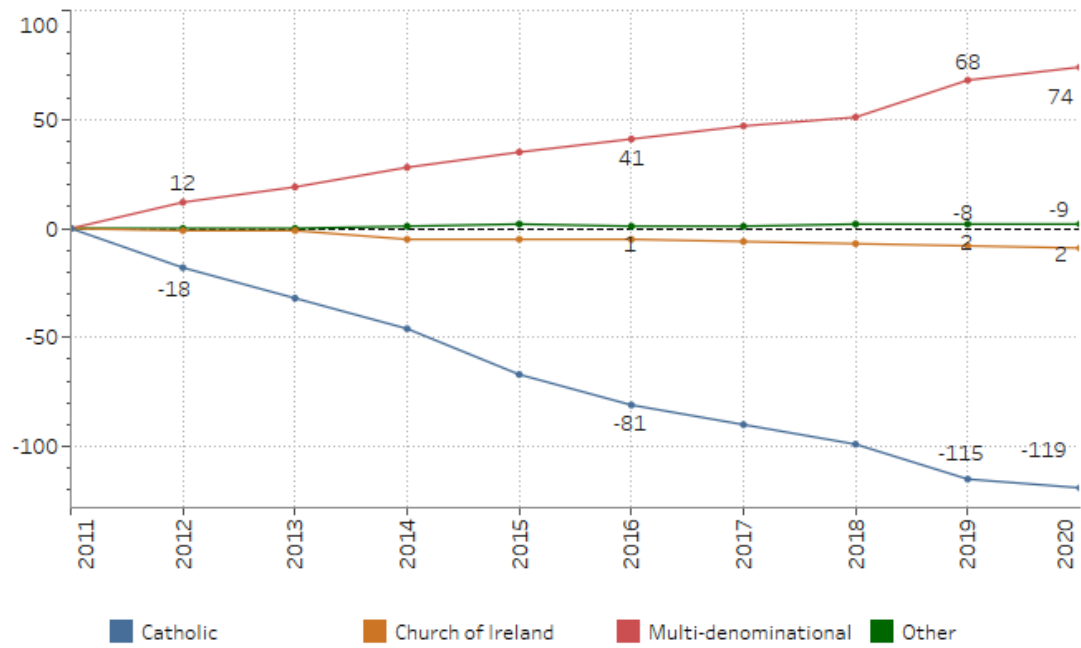
These clear trends in school ethos are a result of the closure of small schools with declining enrolments and the amalgamation of schools in close proximity to each other, as well as the opening of new multi-denominational schools in response to parental choice. All 25 new mainstream primary schools opened in the last 5 years have been multi-denominational in ethos, although they have been spread across a variety of patrons.

These trends in closures, amalgamations and openings have led to a gradual decline overall in the number of primary schools, with an average decrease of 8 Catholic schools per year². Despite these changes, Catholic schools still comprise the vast majority of mainstream primary schools, with 88.7 per cent of schools having a Catholic ethos in 2020.

¹ The category multi-denominational includes inter-denominational schools.

² There was a school's closure in November 2020, i.e., this school is included in the table above.

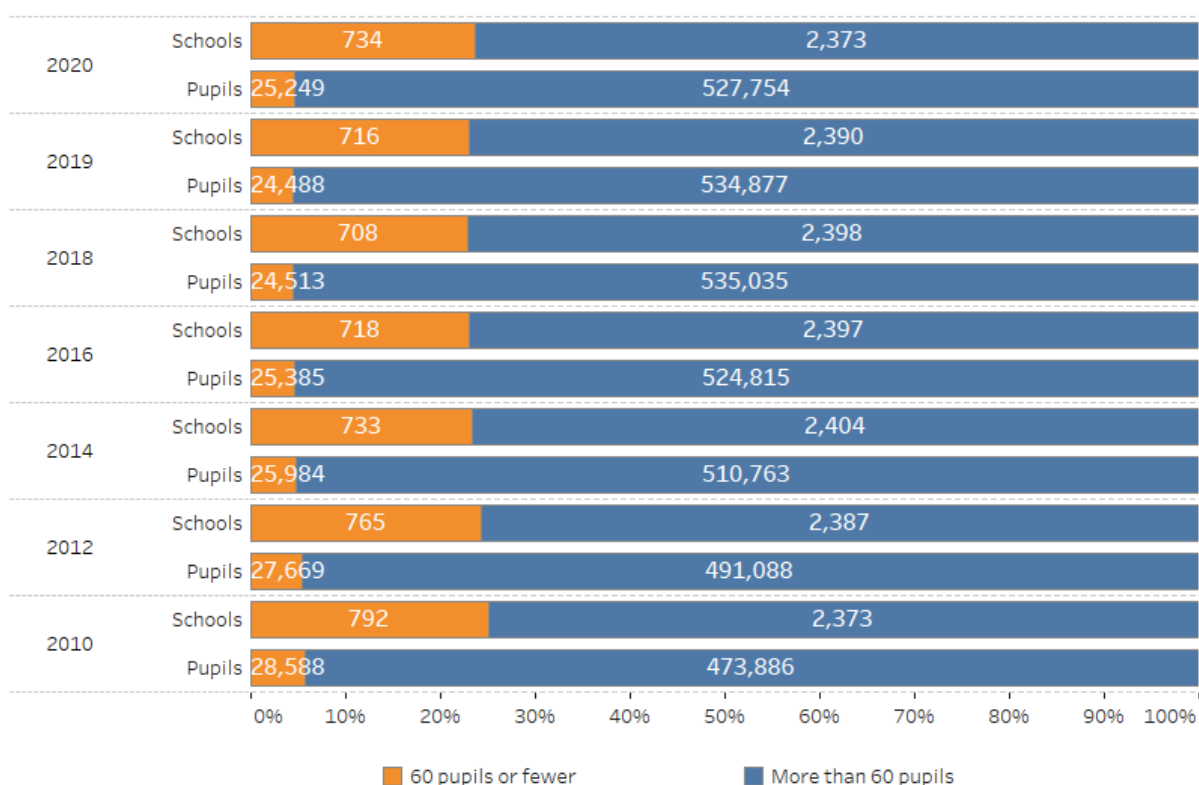
Figure 3. Changes in school numbers by ethos since 2011



Small schools

Despite these ongoing closures small schools remain a distinctive feature of the Irish education system, with 734 schools having 60 or fewer pupils enrolled for the 2020 academic year. This accounts for 23.6 per cent of all schools, yet represents just 4.6 per cent of total enrolments. Since 2010 the number of small primary schools has decreased by 7.3 per cent and the number of pupils attending these schools has decreased by 11.7 per cent.

Figure 4. Mainstream primary schools and pupils classified by size of school, 2010 -2020



The prevalence of small schools varies widely by region, with slightly more than half of schools in Leitrim, and slightly less than half in Mayo and Roscommon having 60 or fewer pupils, in contrast to South Dublin and Fingal who have 1 and 3 small schools, respectively, and Galway City which has no small schools. In no county do pupils in small schools make up more than 20 per cent of enrolments (Tab 2).

Overall, small schools are most common in the west of Ireland (Mayo, Roscommon and Galway), representing 41.2 per cent of schools (11.7% of enrolments), while they are least prevalent in the Dublin region, accounting for only 4.8 per cent of schools and 0.5 per cent of enrolments.

Table 2. Small mainstream primary schools and enrolments by administrative county, 2020

Administrative County	% Small Schools (1-60 pupils)	% Pupils in Small Schools
<i>Border Region</i>	<i>36.2%</i>	<i>10.6%</i>
Cavan County Council	24.0%	7.9%
Donegal County Council	42.0%	12.5%
Leitrim County Council	51.4%	17.8%
Monaghan County Council	25.8%	6.6%
Sligo County Council	36.4%	10.1%
<i>West Region</i>	<i>41.2%</i>	<i>11.7%</i>
Galway City Council	0.0%	0.0%
Galway County Council	36.5%	10.4%
Mayo County Council	49.7%	16.6%
Roscommon County Council	47.7%	17.5%
<i>Mid-West Region</i>	<i>28.2%</i>	<i>7.4%</i>
Clare County Council	40.9%	11.3%
Tipperary County Council	26.1%	8.4%
Limerick City & County Council	20.1%	4.4%
<i>South-East Region</i>	<i>16.3%</i>	<i>3.6%</i>
Carlow County Council	16.7%	3.4%
Kilkenny County Council	25.4%	6.9%
Waterford City & County Council	12.2%	2.4%
Wexford County Council	12.9%	2.7%
<i>South-West Region</i>	<i>26.3%</i>	<i>5.7%</i>
Cork City Council	3.8%	0.4%
Cork County Council	24.8%	5.3%
Kerry County Council	38.6%	11.6%
<i>Dublin Region</i>	<i>4.8%</i>	<i>0.5%</i>
Dublin City Council	7.2%	1.2%
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	6.0%	0.6%
Fingal County Council	3.1%	0.2%
South Dublin County Council	1.0%	0.1%
<i>Mid-East Region</i>	<i>9.5%</i>	<i>1.4%</i>
Kildare County Council	9.8%	1.3%
Louth County Council	4.3%	0.6%
Meath County Council	8.7%	1.4%
Wicklow County Council	14.6%	2.3%
<i>Midlands East Region</i>	<i>20.9%</i>	<i>4.7%</i>
Laois County Council	21.9%	4.6%
Longford County Council	35.1%	8.8%
Offaly County Council	12.3%	2.8%
Westmeath County Council	20.5%	4.5%
Whole Country	23.6%	4.6%

Post-primary: Total enrolments in post-primary schools stood at 379,183 at September 2020- an increase of 7,733 pupils, or 2.1% per cent, on September 2019 (371,450). The number of girls stood at 187,281 while the number of boys stood at 191,902.

Figure 5 presents percentage of total enrolments by school ethos. Catholic schools dominated with 189,846 pupils. There were 174,661 pupils in multi-denominational schools³ and 11,776 in Church of Ireland schools. Figure 6 shows the absolute and percentage change by ethos. Pupils in multi-denominational schools increased by 3.2 per cent (5,478 pupils) over the twelve months, which was ahead of the rise in Catholic schools which saw their numbers rise by 2,112 (1.1%). Church of Ireland schools saw an increase in enrolments, by 105 (0.9%).

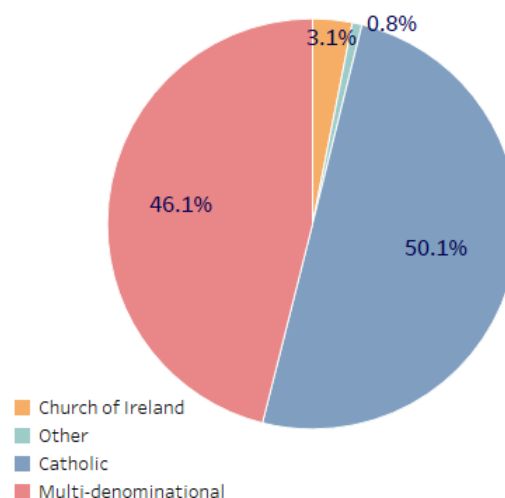
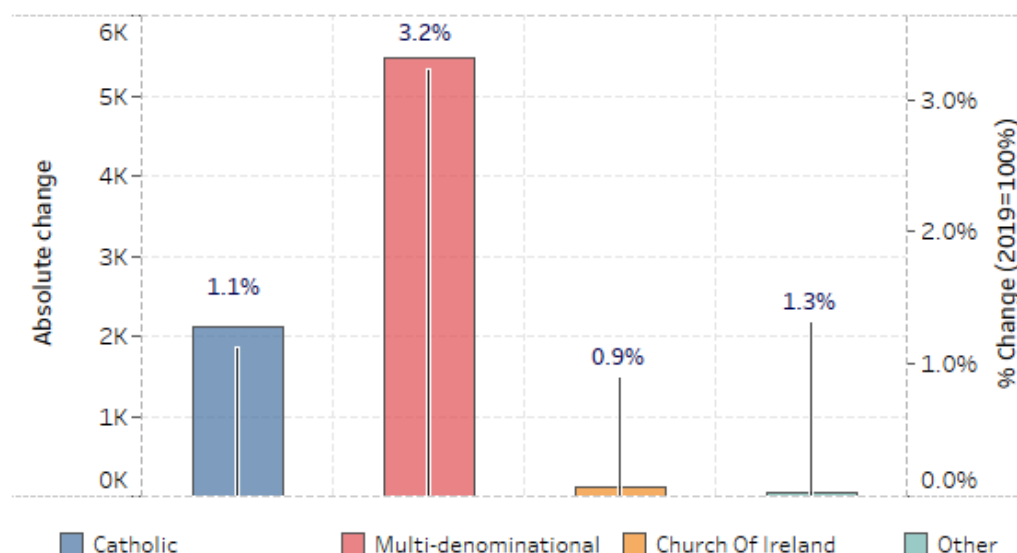


Figure 5. Enrolments in post-primary schools by school ethos, September 2020

Figure 6. Absolute and percentage change in enrolment in post-primary schools, by ethos, 2020 and 2019



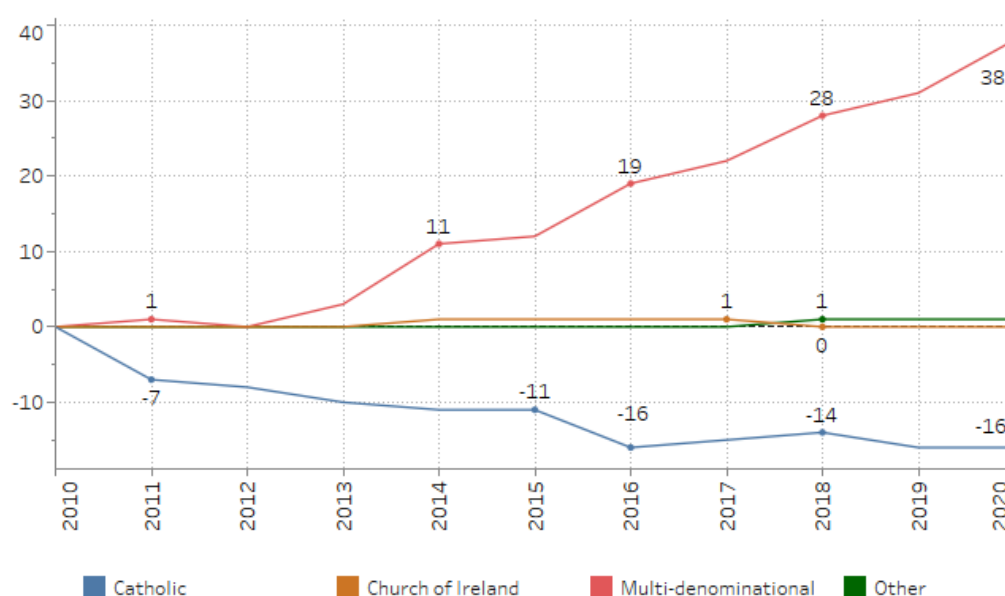
³ The majority of schools under the patronage of the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) were categorised as inter-denominational up to 2018. 181 schools have since changed their description to multi-denominational but for the purpose of this report inter-denominational are combined with multi-denominational schools. For a full list of schools by ethos see the list of individual schools on the Department's website.

The number of post-primary schools has been gradually rising for the last number of years, going from a low of 700 in 2013 to 730 in 2020. As can be seen in table 3, this growth has been led by multi-denominational schools, which have increased by 11.8 per cent in the last 10 years from 321 in 2010 to 359 in 2020. In the same period the number of Catholic schools has decreased by 4.4 per cent, from 360 to 344.

Table 3. Post-primary schools by ethos, 2010 – 2020

	Catholic	Church of Ireland	Multi-denominational ³	Other	Total
2020	344	22	359	5	730
2019	344	22	352	5	723
2018	346	22	349	5	722
2017	345	23	343	4	715
2016	344	23	340	4	711
2015	349	23	333	4	709
2014	349	23	332	4	708
2013	350	22	324	4	700
2012	352	22	321	4	699
2011	353	22	322	4	701
2010	360	22	321	4	707

Figure 7. Changes in post-primary school numbers by ethos, 2010-2020



Large schools

In addition to the number of schools increasing, the size of post-primary schools is also going up. As can be seen in figure 8, the number of large post-primary schools (800 students or more) and the number of pupils attending these schools has risen significantly in the last decade, with the number of large schools rising by 108.9 per cent from 56 to 117, and the number of pupils enrolled in these schools showing an increase of 111.9 per cent, from just under 53,300 to just under 112,900. This trend can be expected to continue for the next number of years, as post-primary enrolments continue to increase.

As with small schools at primary level, there is significant variation in where these schools are situated. As can be seen in table 4, there are 7 local authority areas where there are no large post-primary schools, 6 of which are in the Border and West regions. Whereas in the Mid-East region more than 45 per cent of pupils attend such schools, with the highest concentration found in Kildare and Meath where more than half of pupils (56.4% and 56.3%, respectively) are enrolled in large schools.

Figure 8. Post-primary schools and pupils classified by enrolment size, 2010 -2020

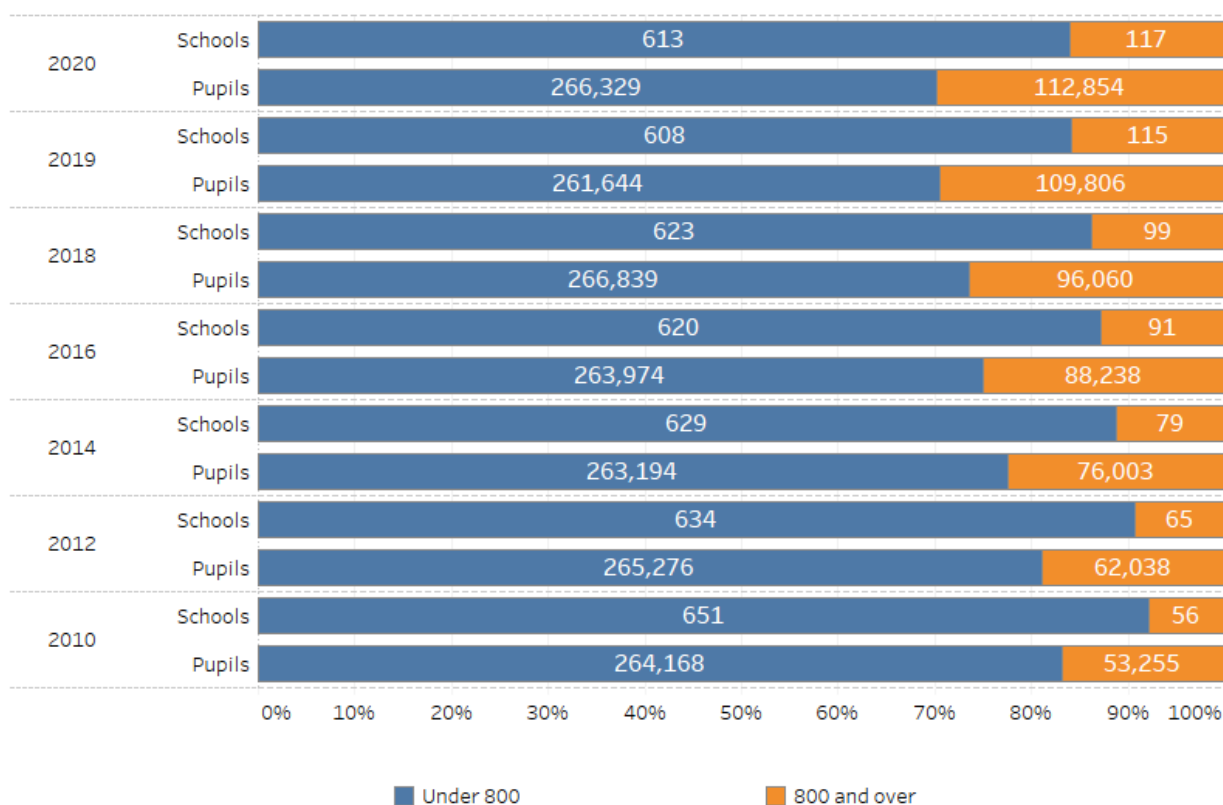


Table 4. Large post-primary schools and enrolments by administrative county, 2020

Administrative County	% Large Schools (800+ Pupils)	% Pupils in Large Schools
<i>Border Region</i>	<i>10.0%</i>	<i>20.0%</i>
Cavan County Council	0.0%	0.0%
Donegal County Council	22.2%	41.3%
Leitrim County Council	0.0%	0.0%
Monaghan County Council	0.0%	0.0%
Sligo County Council	7.7%	20.6%
<i>West Region</i>	<i>6.1%</i>	<i>13.7%</i>
Galway City Council	0.0%	0.0%
Galway County Council	13.5%	31.7%
Mayo County Council	0.0%	0.0%
Roscommon County Council	0.0%	0.0%
<i>Mid-West Region</i>	<i>7.9%</i>	<i>16.0%</i>
Clare County Council	11.1%	24.8%
Tipperary County Council	3.3%	6.3%
Limerick City and County Council	10.7%	19.7%
<i>South-East Region</i>	<i>21.2%</i>	<i>37.3%</i>
Carlow County Council	18.2%	29.1%
Kilkenny County Council	18.8%	35.9%
Waterford City and County Council	23.5%	41.8%
Wexford County Council	22.7%	38.6%
<i>South-West Region</i>	<i>12.6%</i>	<i>25.4%</i>
Cork City Council	3.6%	7.8%
Cork County Council	21.1%	36.5%
Kerry County Council	3.8%	11.6%
<i>Dublin Region</i>	<i>16.5%</i>	<i>31.3%</i>
Dublin City Council	3.9%	9.0%
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	15.2%	29.5%
Fingal County Council	34.2%	52.7%
South Dublin County Council	25.0%	38.5%
<i>Mid-East Region</i>	<i>31.9%</i>	<i>47.5%</i>
Kildare County Council	40.0%	56.4%
Louth County Council	33.3%	46.2%
Meath County Council	40.9%	56.3%
Wicklow County Council	12.5%	22.2%
<i>Midlands East Region</i>	<i>23.3%</i>	<i>36.1%</i>
Laois County Council	30.0%	43.5%
Longford County Council	0.0%	0.0%
Offaly County Council	18.2%	26.8%
Westmeath County Council	38.5%	55.1%
Whole Country	16.0%	29.8%

All schools

Table 5 shows the primary and post-primary enrolments by schools ethos for years 2019 and 2020, and percentage change on 2019. As can be seen, the largest increase in both sectors occurred in multi-denominational schools with rises of 4.0 per cent and 3.2 per cent in primary and post-primary, respectively. When combined multi-denominational schools increased by 3.4 per cent between 2019 and 2020.

Table 5. Primary and post-primary schools enrolments by school ethos, 2019 and 2020

	Ethos/Religion	2019	2020	Difference (2019=100%)
Primary	Catholic	503,215	495,478	-1.5
	Church of Ireland	16,312	16,125	-1.1
	Multi-denominational	38,117	39,658	4.0
	Other	1,721	1,742	1.2
Post-primary	Catholic	187,734	189,846	1.1
	Church of Ireland	11,671	11,776	0.9
	Multi-denominational	169,183	174,661	3.2
	Other	2,862	2,900	1.3
Primary & Post-primary	Catholic	690,949	685,324	-0.8
	Church of Ireland	27,983	27,901	-0.3
	Multi-denominational	207,300	214,319	3.4
	Other	4,583	4,642	1.3

Background Notes:

The source for this data is the Annual Census for 2020/2021, which is returned via the Primary/Post-Primary Online Database (POD/P-POD). The primary level data is reporting enrolments in mainstream schools only. Data is anchored on the census data of 30th September 2020. Note that only schools aided by the Department of Education and Skills are included in this report.

This data is provisional and was published in March 2021. Final data will be published in June 2021. The final data will replace the provisional data.

Queries should be sent to statistics@education.gov.ie or by phone at 01-889 2311.

The detailed Excel data tables for previous years can be downloaded here:

<https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Data-on-Individual-Schools/Data-on-Individual-Schools.html>