



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Statistical Bulletin – July 2022

Overview of Education 2001 – 2021



Revised 04/08/2022

This report may be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/annual-statistical-reports/>

For further information please contact by e-mail at:

Statistics@education.gov.ie

Primary

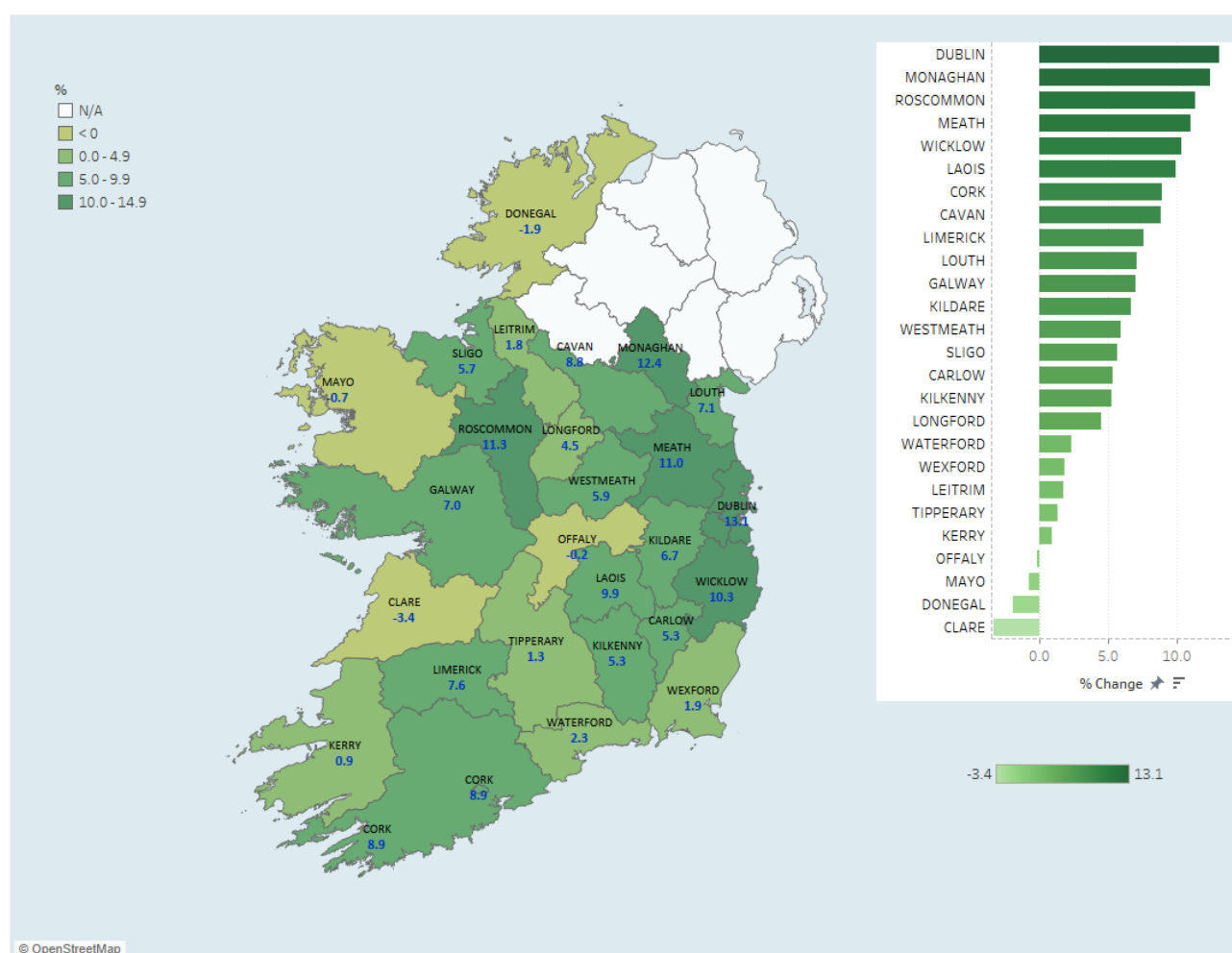
Total enrolments

Total enrolments in Primary schools in 2021 stood at 554,788, a fall of 6,623 on 2020 when the total was 561,411. Over the twenty year period 2001 to 2021 there was an increase of 113,723 (25.8%) in enrolments in primary schools (mainstream and special) and enrolments are projected to fall over the coming twelve years. Please note that enrolment data is fixed to the Census date of 30th September 2021 and accordingly enrolments of Ukrainian children are not included in these headline figures or the following analysis. Data on Ukrainian enrolments can be found in the appendix to this document. *Source:* [EDA42](#)

Change by administrative county

When the change in enrolments by administrative county over the past 10 years is examined, the data shows the largest proportional increases occurred within Dublin and the surrounding areas, with the highest in Dun Laoghaire – Rathdown at 19.9 per cent, followed by Fingal at 14.2 percent and Monaghan at 12.4 per cent. The smallest increase occurred in Kerry (0.9%) and Waterford City (0.7%), while Clare and Donegal were the areas that saw a largest decrease by 3.4 per cent and 1.9 per cent, respectively.

Map 1 Percentage change in enrolments in Primary schools, by county, 2011-2021



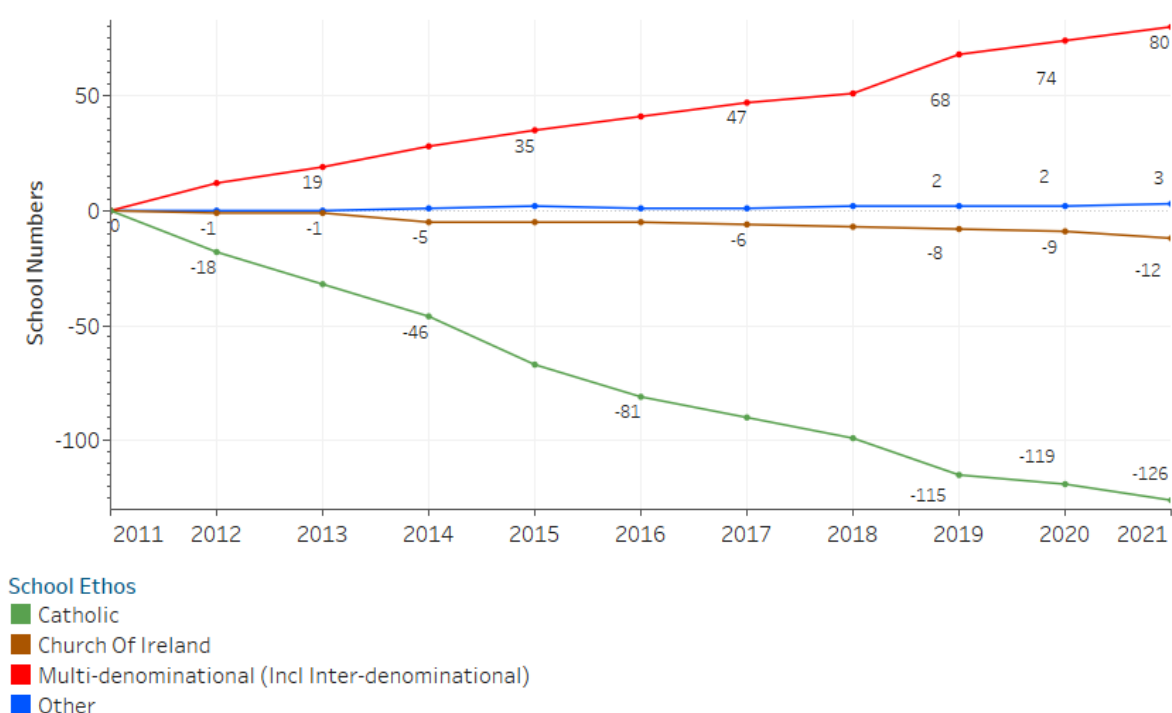
Source: [EDA57](#)

School ethos

The total number of mainstream primary schools has declined by 55 since 2011, from 3,159 in 2011 to 3,104 in 2021. However, as can be seen in Figure 1 below, the pattern is not uniform, with 126 Catholic schools and 12 Church of Ireland closing between 2011 and 2021, while the number of multi-denominational schools has increased by 80 in the same period. *Note: the category multi-denominational includes inter-denominational schools.*

These clear trends in school ethos are a result of the closure of schools with declining enrolments and the amalgamation of schools in close proximity to each other, as well as the opening of new multidenominational schools in response to parental choice. All 27 newly established mainstream primary schools opened in the last five years have been multi-denominational in ethos, spread over various patrons. Despite these changes, Catholic schools still comprise the vast majority of primary schools, with 88.6 per cent of schools having a Catholic ethos in 2021.

Figure 1 Cumulative change in mainstream school numbers by ethos, 2011-2021

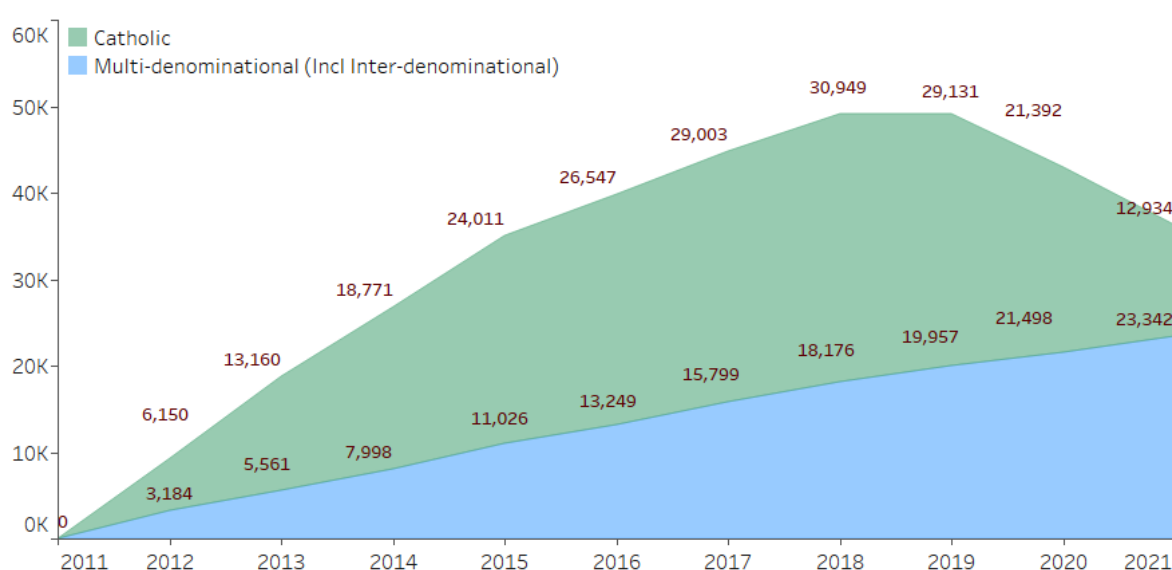


Source: [Data on Individual Schools](#)

Looking at enrolments by ethos, the total enrolments in Catholic schools fell by 8,458 between 2020 and 2021 (from 495,476 to 487,018), compared with a fall of 1,818 between 2018 and 2019, while enrolments in multi-denominational schools rose by 1,844 (from 39,658 to 41,502).

Figure 2 shows cumulative change in enrolments by ethos. The graph shows total enrolments falling as a result of falling Catholic enrolments, represented by the total area under the graph, while multi-denominational enrolments continue to rise, represented by the blue section of the graph.

Figure 2 Cumulative change in school enrolments by ethos, 2011-2021



Source: [Data on Individual Schools](#)

Irish classification

Looking at language of instruction, the number of English-medium primary schools has fallen by 62 over the ten years 2011 – 2021, while Irish-medium schools inside the Gaeltacht fell by four. Irish-medium schools outside the Gaeltacht increased by eleven (from 140 to 151). In terms of enrolments Irish-medium schools outside the Gaeltacht have seen an increase in enrolments of 6,532, representing a 21.3 per cent increase, while Irish-medium Gaeltacht schools have seen their enrolments fall by 473 (6.3%) over the last decade.

Table 1 Cumulative changes in school numbers and enrolments by Irish classification, 2011-2021

Schools				Enrolments			
Year	Non-Irish/Part-Irish schools	Irish schools within the Gaeltacht	Irish schools outside the Gaeltacht	Year	Non-Irish/Part-Irish schools	Irish schools within the Gaeltacht	Irish schools outside the Gaeltacht
2011	0	0	0	2011	0	0	0
2012	-6	-2	1	2012	8,518	-254	1,455
2013	-16	-2	4	2013	16,812	-234	2,946
2014	-24	-2	4	2014	23,827	-271	4,153
2015	-38	-2	5	2015	31,192	-233	5,313
2016	-47	-3	6	2016	35,280	-191	6,073
2017	-51	-4	7	2017	39,833	-143	6,523
2018	-55	-5	7	2018	43,475	-189	7,224
2019	-58	-3	8	2019	43,138	-108	7,297
2020	-56	-5	9	2020	37,362	-430	7,033
2021	-62	-4	11	2021	31,009	-473	6,532

Source: [Data on Individual Schools](#)

Class size

The change in average class size over the twenty-year period 2001-2021 is presented in Figure 3 and shows there has been little change since 2001. It reached its lowest point in 2021 at 22.8. The Pupil Teacher Ratio on the other hand has fallen consistently over the same period, from 18.4 in 2001 to 13.7 in 2021.

Figure 3 Pupil/Teacher ratio and average class size, 2001-2021



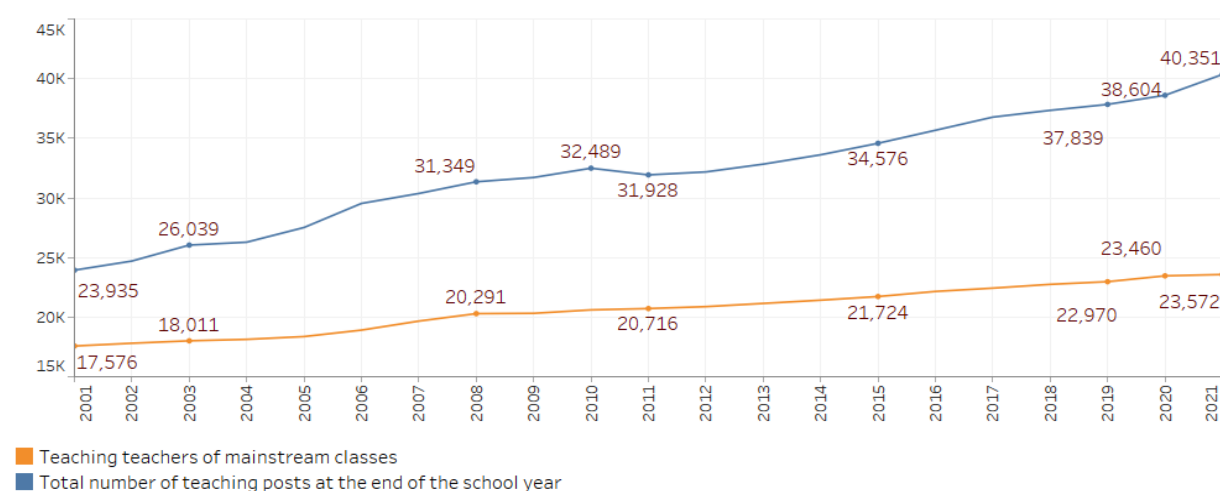
Source: [EDA44](#)

The difference between these two measures is explained by Figure 4, which shows that although the total number of teaching posts has almost doubled over the twenty-year period (from 23,935 to 40,351¹), the number of mainstream classroom teachers has risen by just 34.1 per cent (from 17,576 to 23,572) while the number of other teachers, i.e., special education teachers, English language support teachers, administrative principals, and Home

¹ The total of 40,351 includes 858 COVID-19 support teaching posts.

School Community Liaison (HCSL) teachers, as well as any other full-time teaching staff, has risen from 6,359 to 16,968.

Figure 4 Classroom teachers vs. teaching posts, 2001-2021

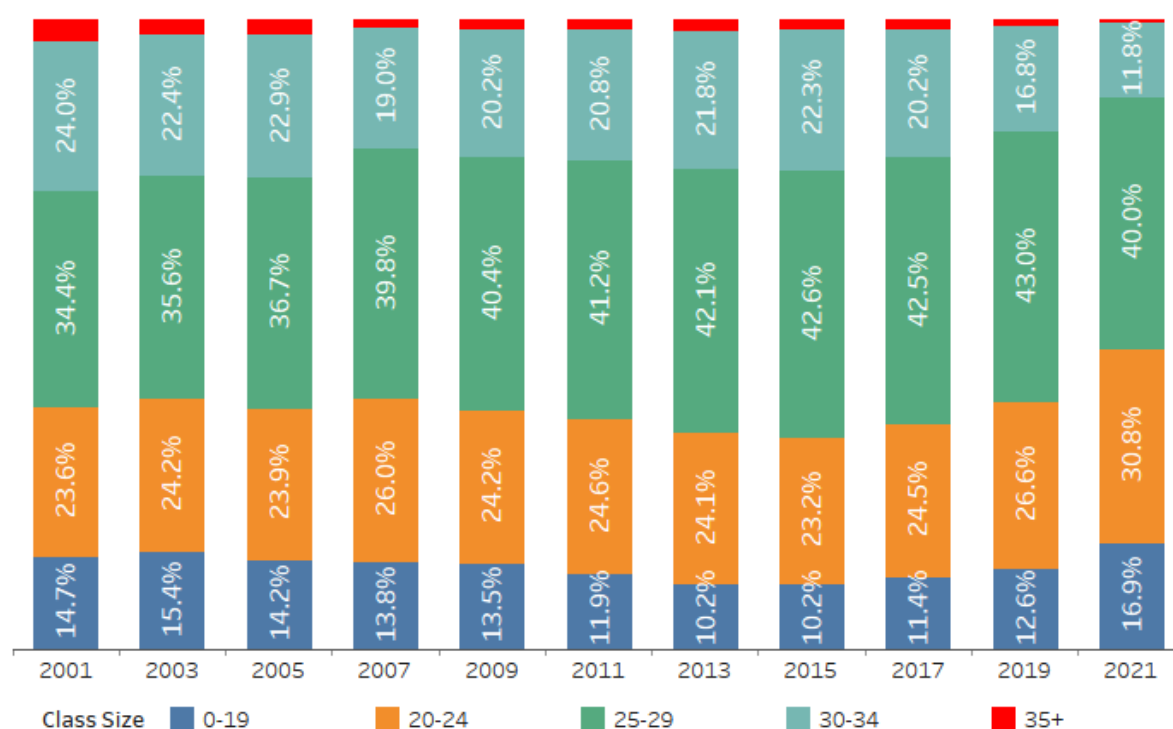


Source: [EDA44](#)

Large classes

While the overall average class size has varied little since 2001, the number of pupils in classes of 35 or more fell sharply between 2001 (13,844) and 2021 (2,748) while those in the next-largest category (30-34) stood at 63,356 in 2021, down from 120,665 in 2015.

Figure 5 Pupils by class size, 2001-2021



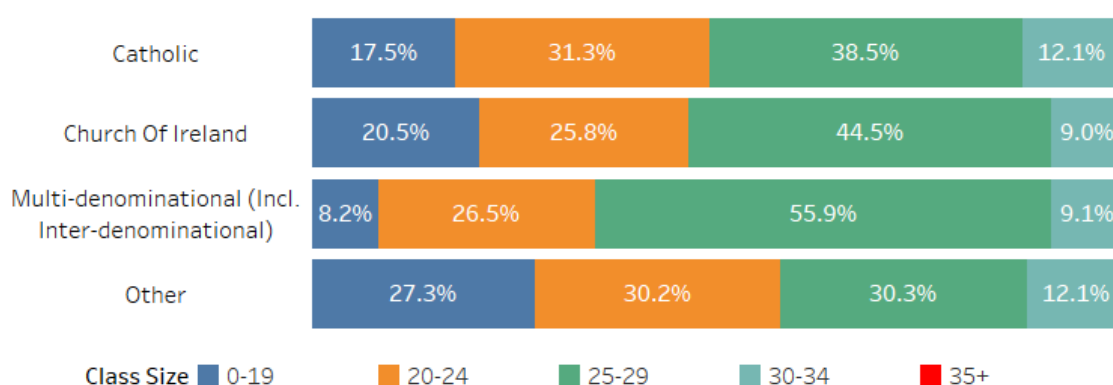
Source: [ED105](#)

Class size by type of school

Variation in class sizes can be seen when we look at schools by characteristics, such as Ethos, Irish Classification and DEIS Status.

When examined by Ethos, the data shows that 12.7 per cent of pupils in Catholic schools were in classes of 30 pupils or more, compared with just 9.3 per cent of those in in multi-denominational schools. However, the average class size in Catholic schools was 22.7, compared with 24.3 in multi-denominational schools. *Note: the category multi-denominational includes inter-denominational schools.*

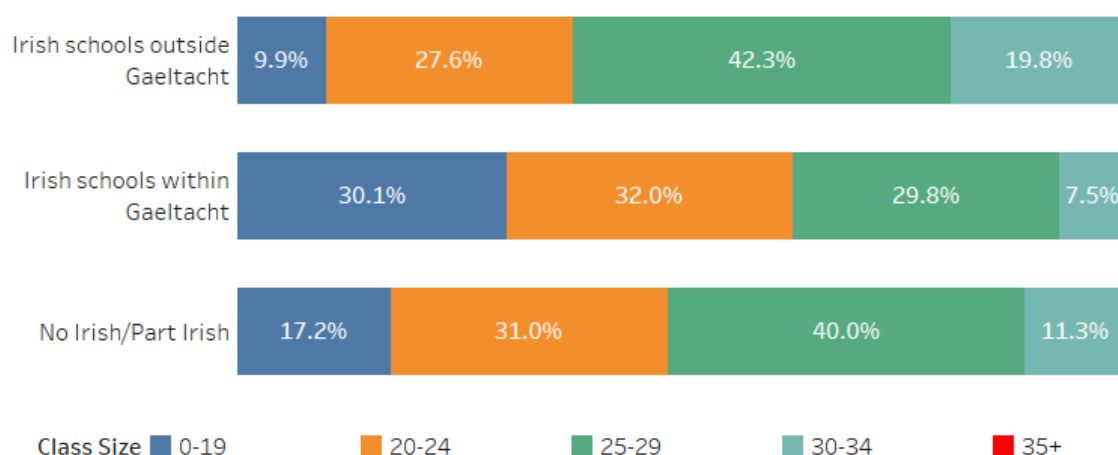
Figure 6 Pupils by class size and school ethos, 2021



Source: [Class Size Data 2021](#)

When looked at by Irish classification the data shows 20.2 per cent of pupils were in large classes (30+) in Irish-medium schools outside the Gaeltacht, compared with only 11.8 per cent in English or part-English-medium schools and 8.0 per cent in Irish-medium schools within the Gaeltacht.

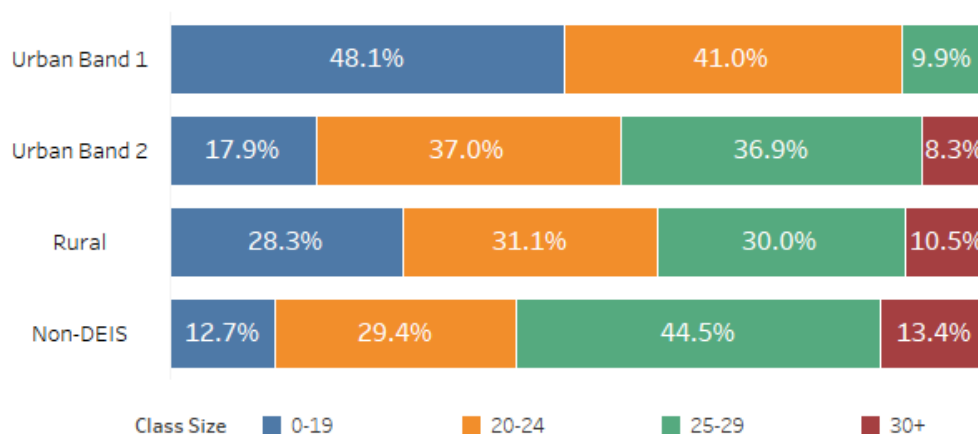
Figure 7 Pupils by class size and Irish Classification, 2021



Source: [Class Size Data 2021](#)

Finally, when examined by DEIS status, the data shows that DEIS Urban Band 1 schools, which have a separate staffing schedule to other school types, have by far the smallest classes with 89.1 per cent of pupils in classes of fewer than 25. Rural schools also have a high proportion of small classes, with more than half of pupils in classes of fewer than 25.

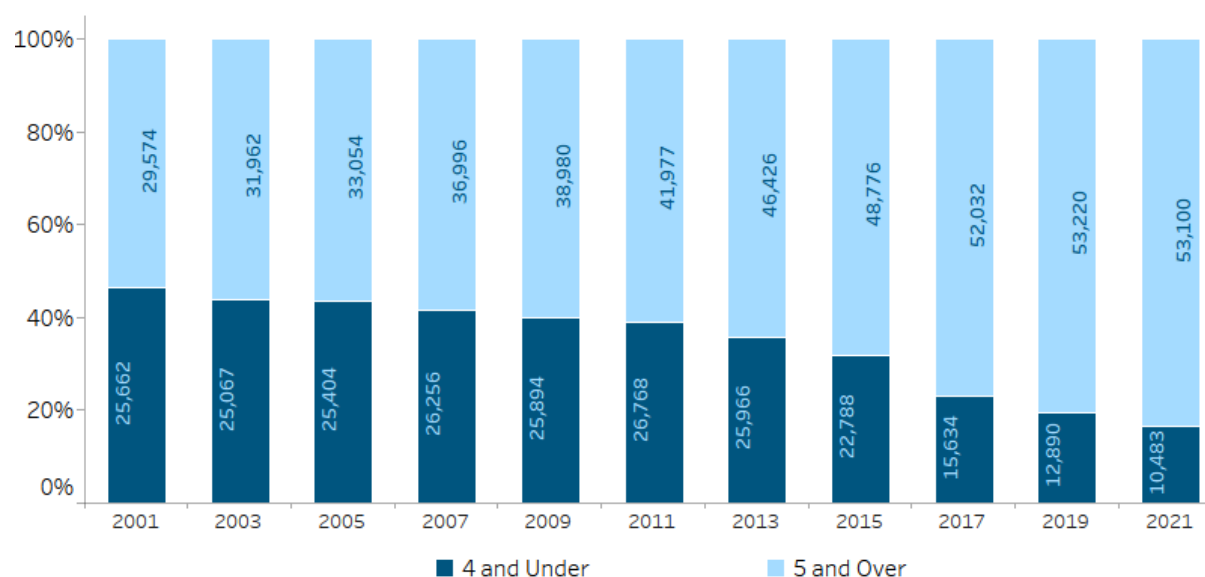
Figure 8 Pupils by class size and DEIS status, 2021



Source: [Class Size Data 2021](#)

Age of Junior Infants

Figure 9 Junior Infants under and over 4 years of age, at 1st January, 2001-2021



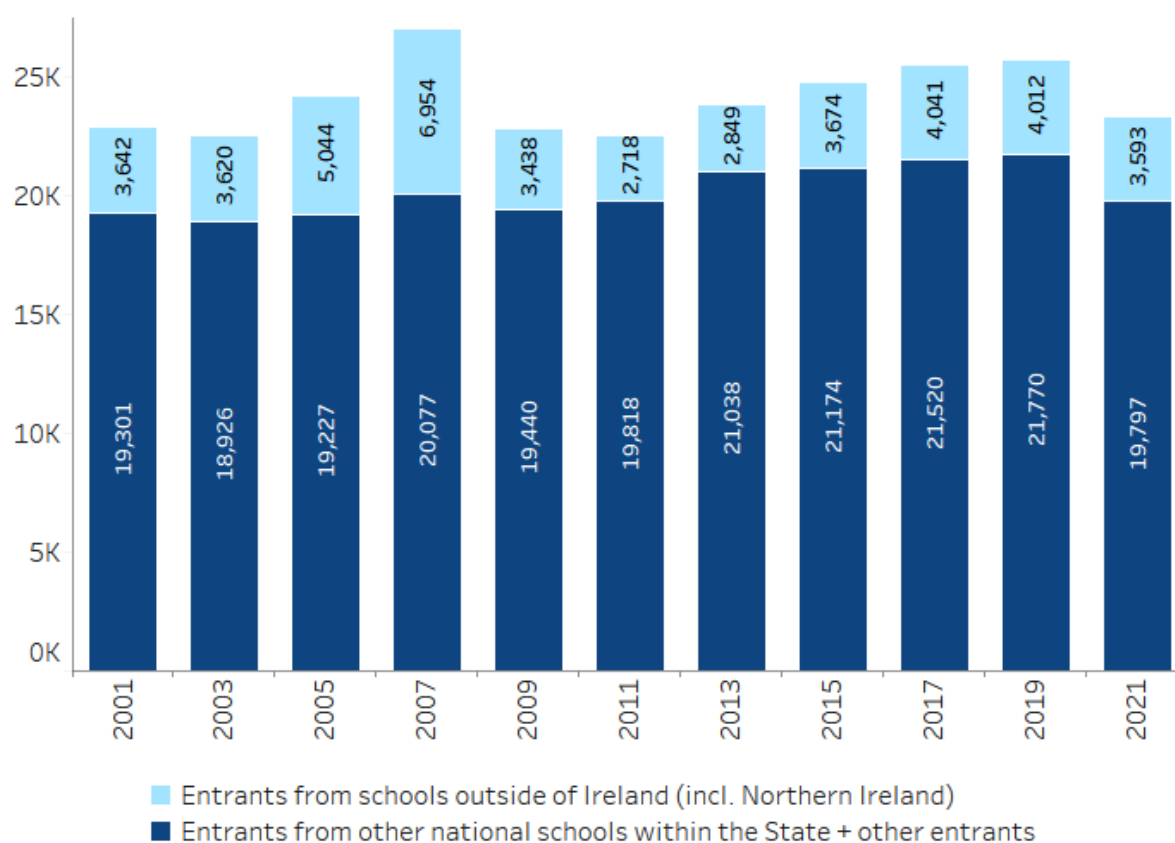
Source: [EDA42](#)

The age of junior infants has been steadily increasing for the past twenty years, although the trend has accelerated in recent times. This is most likely due to the introduction of the ECCE scheme in 2010, and its expansion to two years in 2016. Overall, the proportion of four year olds (and younger) in junior infants has fallen from 46.5 per cent in 2001 to 16.5 per cent in 2021.

Pupils changing school and entrants from abroad

Every year up to 25,000 pupils change primary school and enter into a grade other than junior or senior infants, having moved from another school in the State, or arrived from outside Ireland. In 2021 19,797 pupils changed school while a further 3,593 arrived from outside Ireland (excluding arrivals from Ukraine which are treated separately – see Appendix). The peak year for entrants from abroad was 2007, with almost 7,000 arrivals.

Figure 10 New entrants to 1st – 6th class by source, 2001-2021

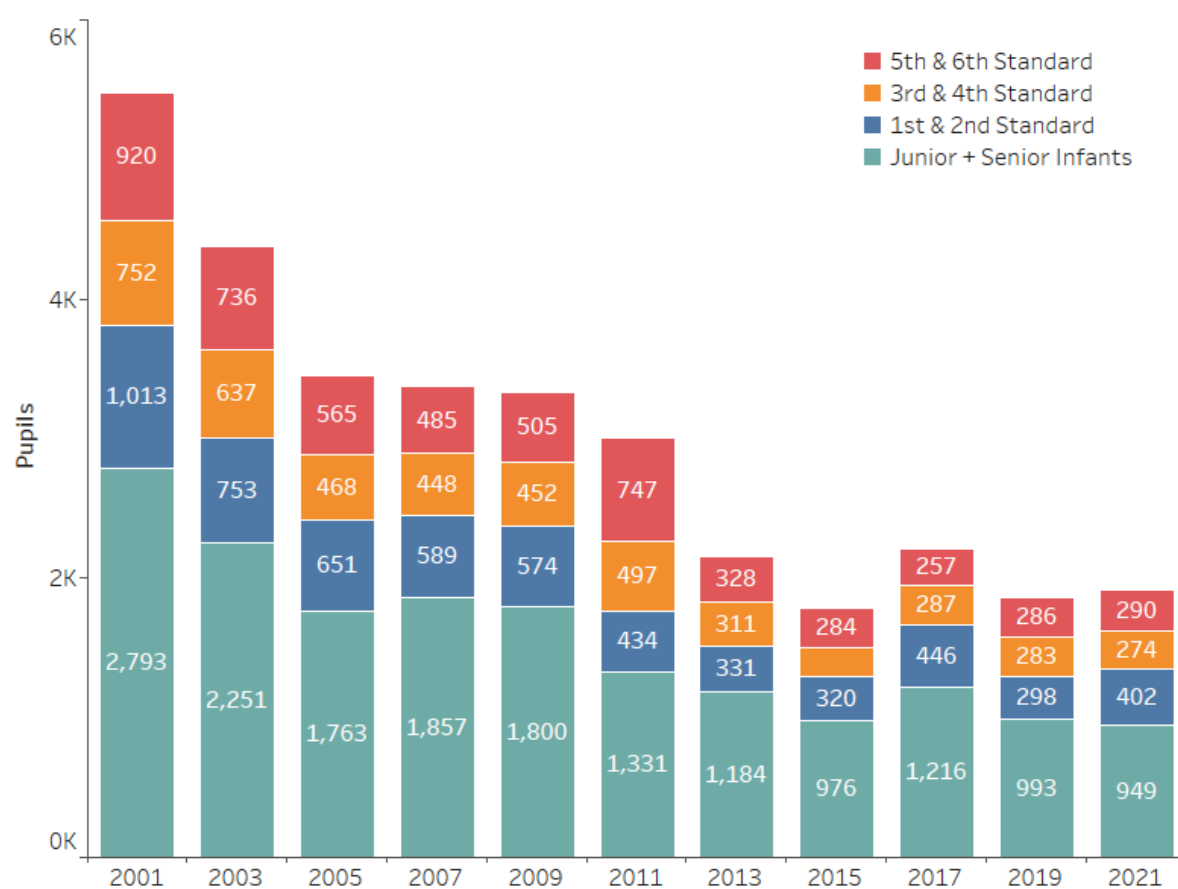


Source: [EDA52](#)

Repeating a year

The number of pupils who repeat a year in primary school is presented in Figure 11 and shows a dramatic fall since 2001, when almost 5,500 pupils repeated compared with just under 2,000 in 2021. As can be seen, pupils are most likely to repeat junior or senior infants compared to other grades.

Figure 11 Pupils retained in the same standard/grade, 2001-2021

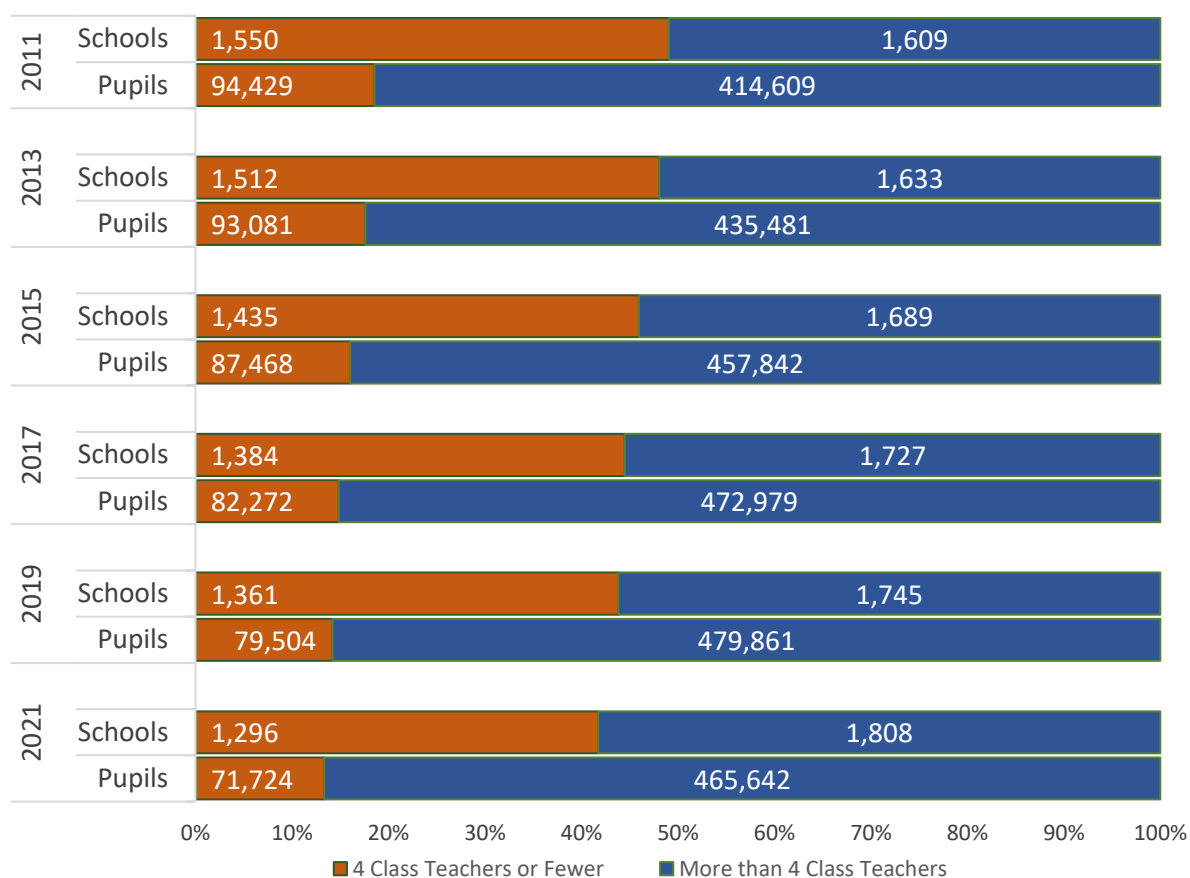


Source: [EDA52](#)

School size

Small schools – here defined as schools with 4 mainstream class teachers or fewer – comprise a large proportion of primary schools in Ireland. 41.8 per cent of all schools in the 2021 academic year had 4 mainstream classes or fewer, although only 13.3 per cent of pupils were enrolled in small schools. While the number of small schools has been declining in recent years they, nonetheless, remain very prominent, particularly in rural areas, as illustrated in Map 2 overleaf.

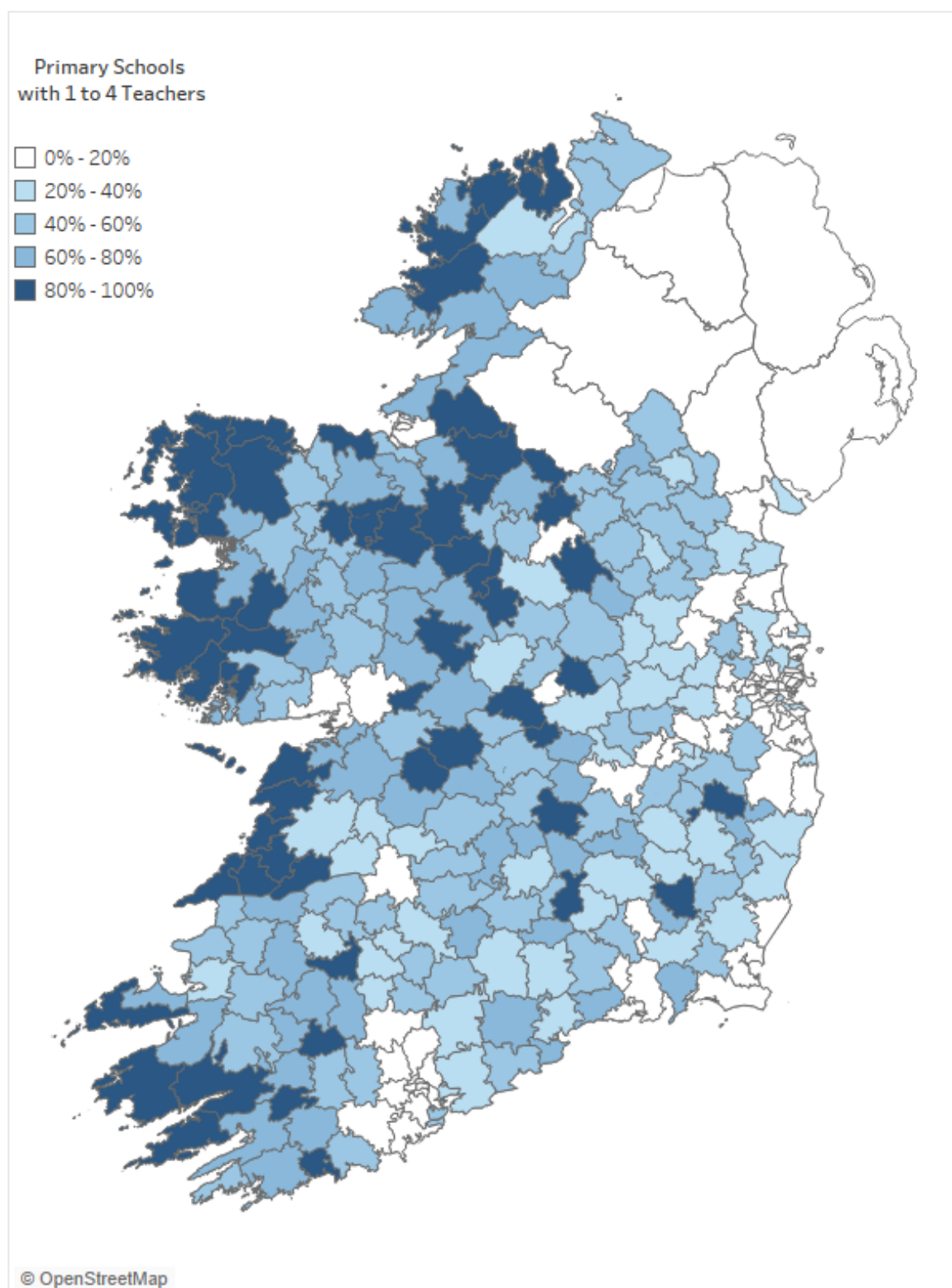
Figure 12 Mainstream primary schools and pupils classified by size of school, 2011-2021



Source: [Class Size Data](#)

Small schools comprise the majority of primary schools in many parts of the west of Ireland, while they are relatively rare in Dublin and its surrounding areas.

Map 2 Small schools as percentage of all schools by School Planning Area, 2021



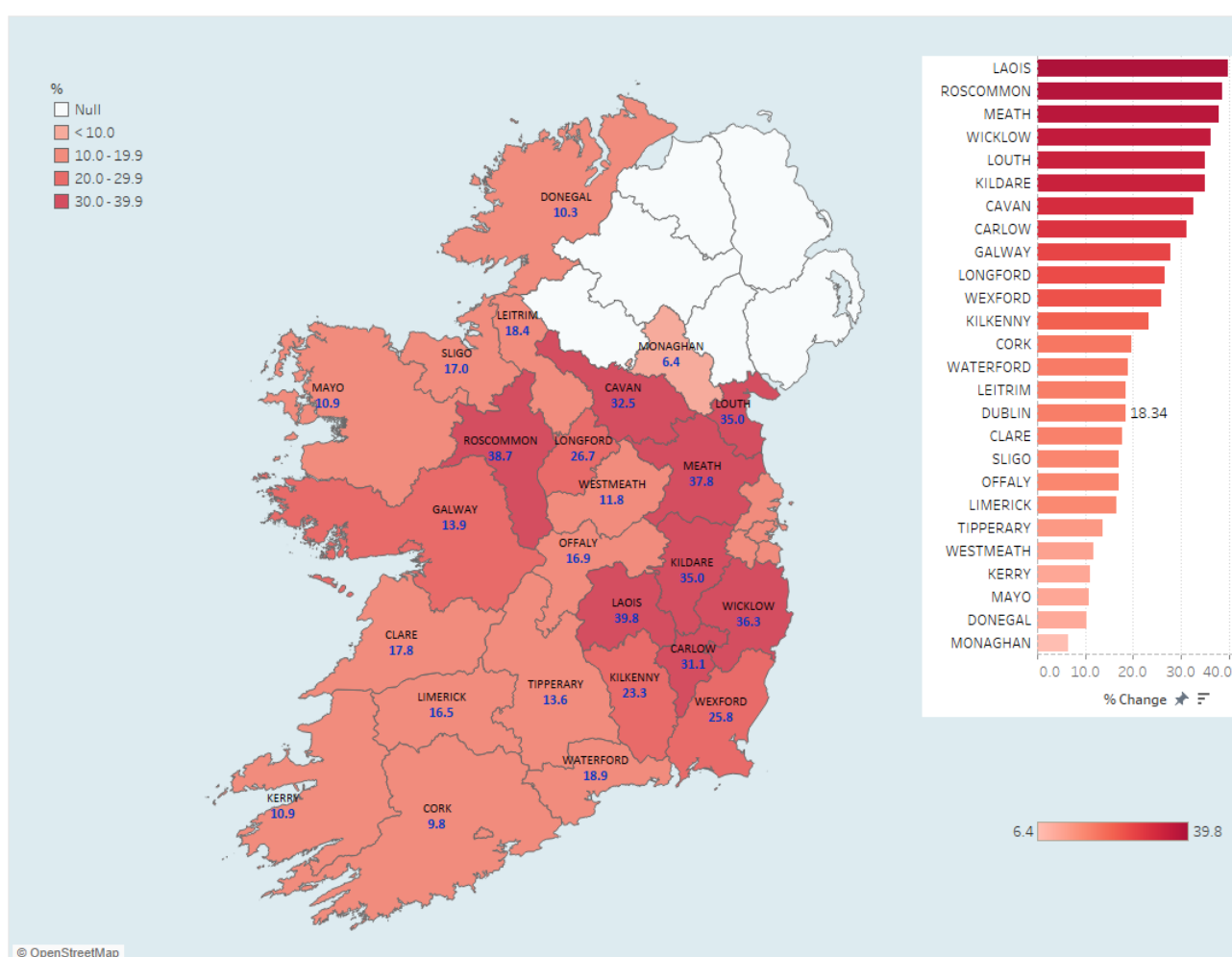
Post-primary

Enrolments

While enrolments in primary schools peaked in 2018, enrolments in post-primary schools continue to rise. Total enrolments stood at 391,698 in 2021, an increase of 12,514 on 2020. Enrolments have risen by 39,444 over the past five years.

Map 3 shows the change in enrolments over the past ten years. The largest increases can be seen in the counties surrounding Dublin; Laois (39.8%), Roscommon (38.7%) and Meath (37.8%) all increased by over 35 per cent, while Donegal (10.3%) and Monaghan (6.4%) saw smaller increases.

Map 3 Percentage change in post-primary enrolments by county, 2011-2021

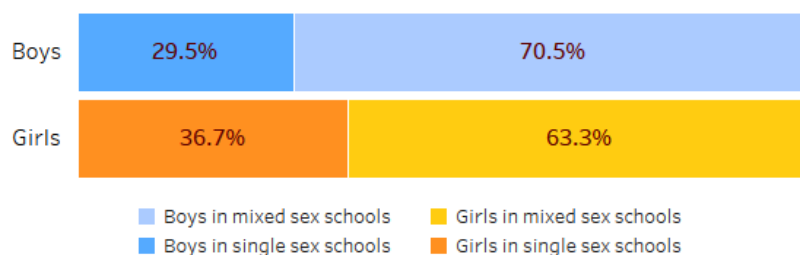


Source: [EDA69](#)

School gender

More boys than girls consistently attend mixed-sex schools, with 70.5 per cent of boys in a mixed school in 2021 compared with just 63.3 per cent of girls, as seen in Figure 13. This is reflected in the number of schools by gender category – in 2021 there were 126 all girls post-primary schools, compared with 100 all boys schools.

Figure 13 Post-primary enrolments by school gender, by sex, 2021

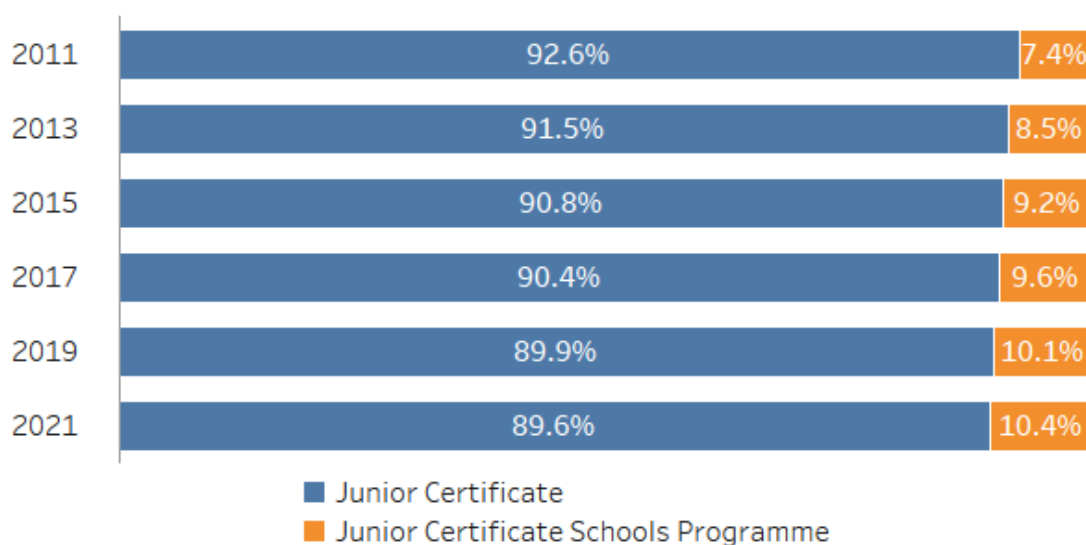


Source: [EDA72](#)

School programme

Figure 14 shows junior cycle enrolments by programme. As can be seen there is a general trend towards increasing participation in the JCSP program, with 10.4 per cent in 2021.

Figure 14 Junior Cycle enrolments by programme, 2011-2021

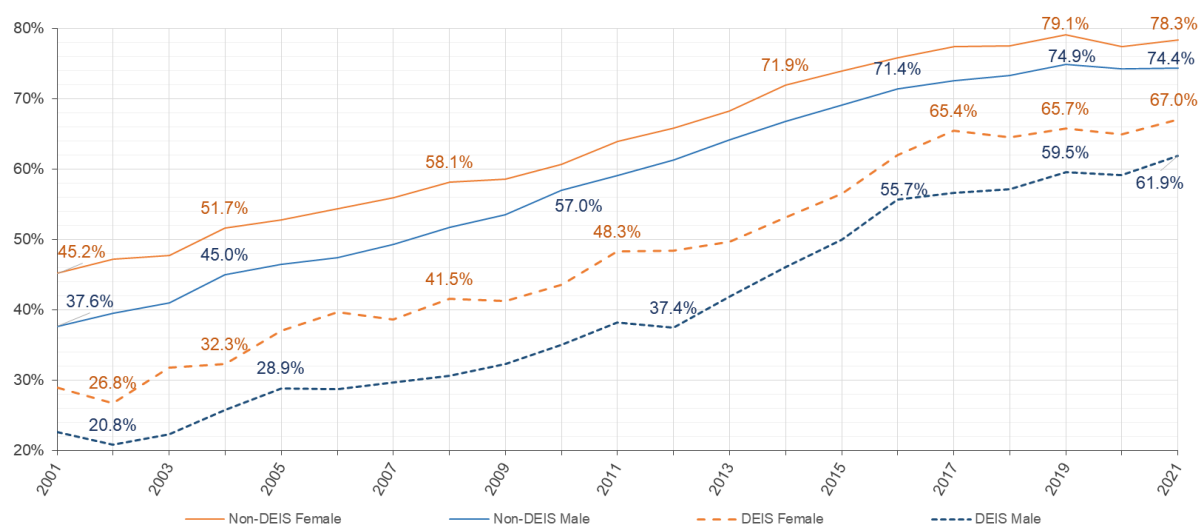


Source: [EDA70](#)

Transition year

Figure 15 shows the growing percentage of pupils who participate in TY by gender and DEIS status. More females than males consistently do TY, and uptake is lower in DEIS schools than in non-DEIS schools. However, there has been a small fall in TY participation in both school categories between 2019 and 2020, and an increase in the following year, 2021.

Figure 15 Transition Year as a % of previous Junior Cycle Year 3, by gender, by DEIS status, 2001-2021

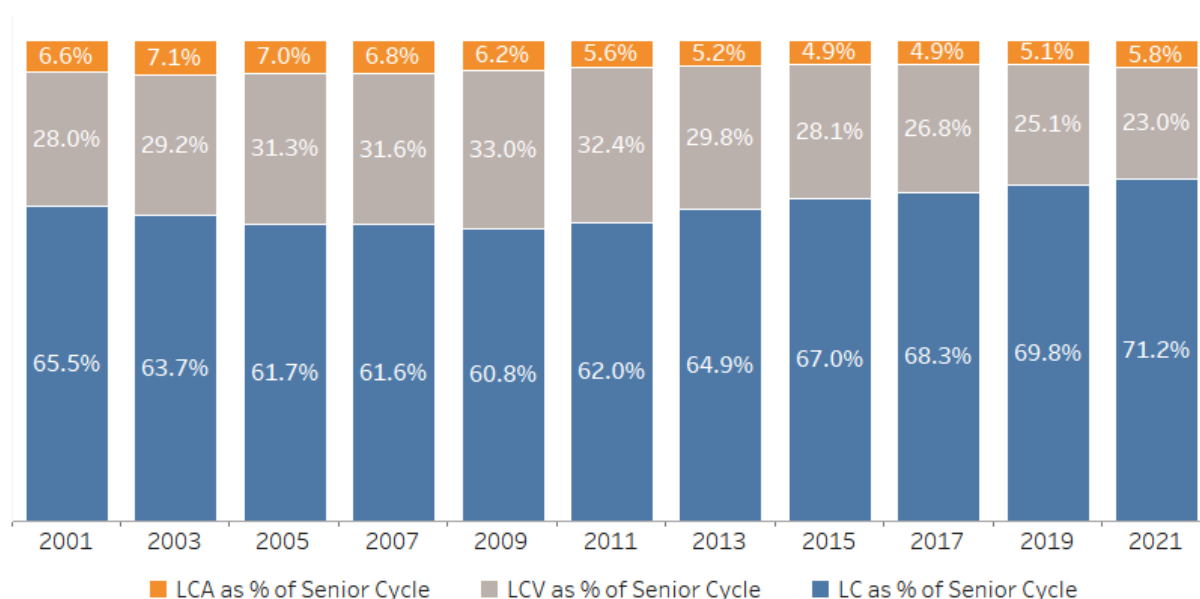


Source: [EDA70](#)

Leaving Certificate programme

Figure 16 shows the changing participation rates in LC, LCV and LCA since 2001. The percentage of pupils following the LCA program stood at 5.8 per cent in 2021, up slightly on 2020 (5.3%); participation in the LCV program stood at 23.0 per cent, representing a continuing downward pattern for this program, while LC stood at 71.2 per cent, a slight increase on 2020.

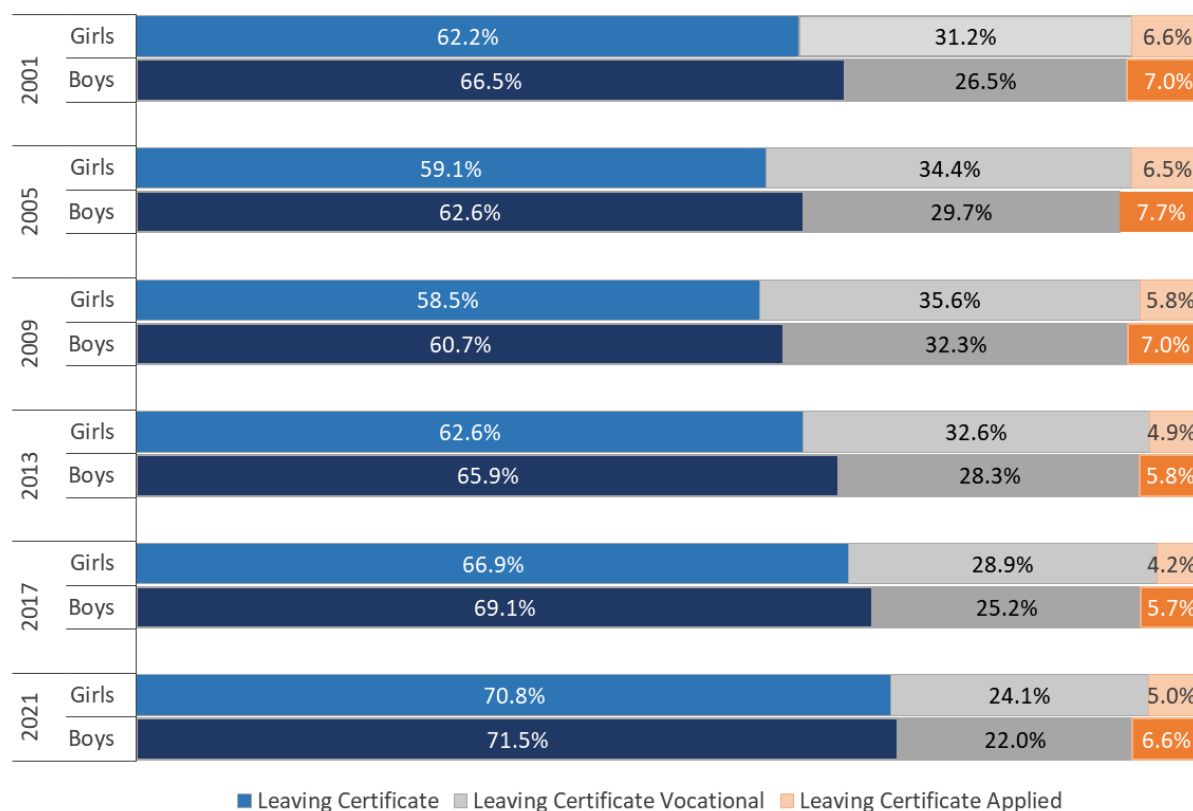
Figure 16 Senior Cycle enrolments by Programme, 2001-2021



Source: [EDA70](#)

There are some variations in programme uptake by gender, with a higher percentage of boys taking the Leaving Cert Applied programme, and girls more likely to follow the Leaving Cert Vocational programme (Fig 17).

Figure 17 Senior Cycle enrolments by programme, by gender, 2001-2021

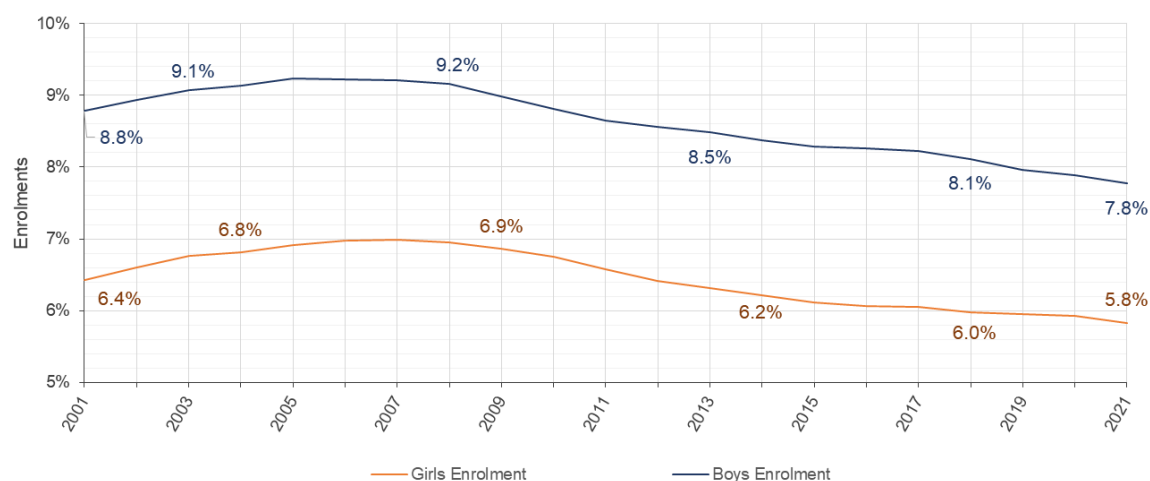


Source: [EDA70](#)

Fee-charging schools

There is a consistent pattern of more boys than girls attending fee-charging schools. Overall, 7.8 per cent of boys were enrolled in a fee-charging school in 2021, compared with 5.8 per cent of girls; as illustrated in Figure 18 both are down on 2020 and represent a continuing pattern of falling attendance at fee-charging schools.

Figure 18 Enrolments in fee-charging schools as % of total enrolments, by gender, 2001-2021



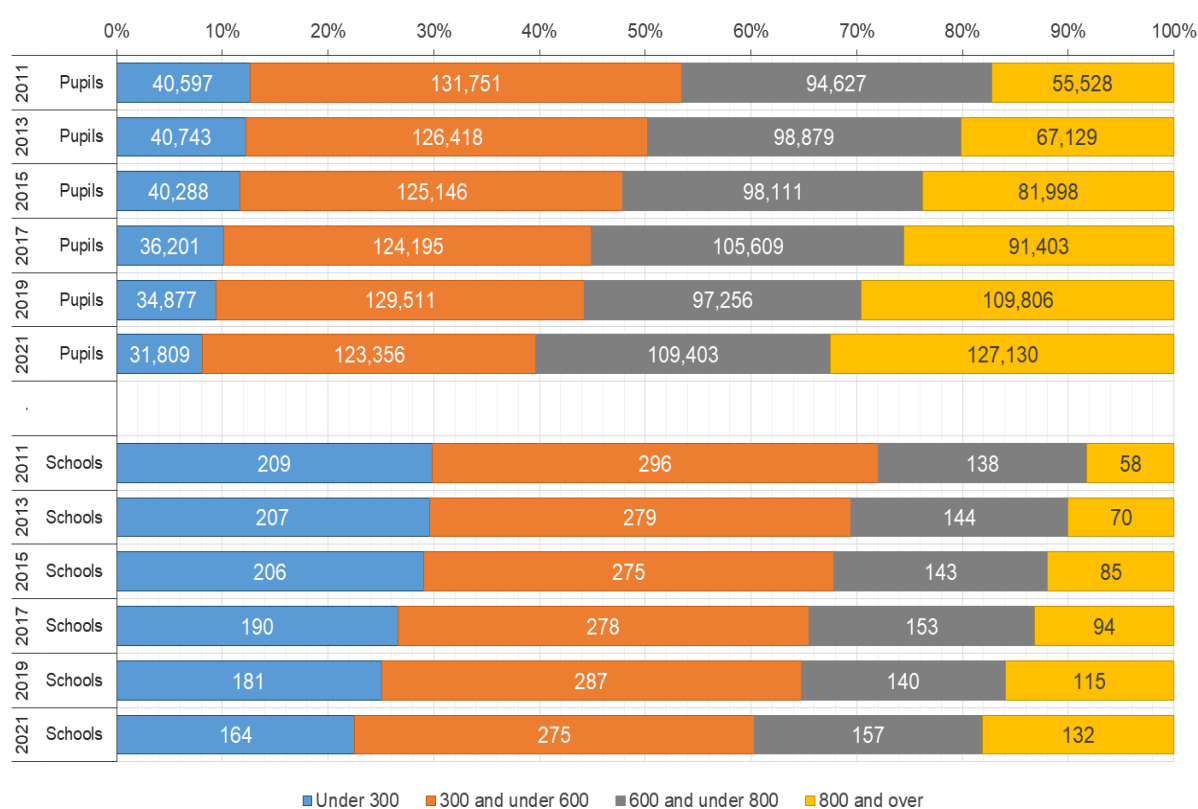
Source: [Data on Individual Schools](#)

School size

Figure 19 illustrates the growing importance of large schools in the post-primary system. While small schools (less than 300 pupils) made up 29.8 per cent of all schools in 2011, this has dropped to 22.5 per cent in 2021, while the number of very large schools (800+ pupils) has more than doubled (from 58 to 132).

The number of pupils attending small schools fell by 8,800 over this period, while the number of pupils attending large schools has increased from 55,528 to 127,130.

Figure 19 Second level schools and pupils classified by school enrolment size, 2011-2021



Source: [Data on Individual Schools](#)

Enrolments by programme

Data on enrolments by programme for each individual school have been published for the second time as part of the annual statistics reports.

Comparing the total enrolments in Leaving Certificate Year 1 (LC1) with Leaving Certificate Year 2 (LC2) in 2021 provides an estimate of expected growth in LC2 numbers for the coming school year. The results have been summarised by Local Authority and are presented in Figure 20. Overall enrolments in all schools are expected to rise by 5,325 while enrolments in Tipperary (NR) are expected to increase by 27.7%, with a rise of 304 pupils. Kerry and Galway City can both expect enrolments to fall in the coming school year by 3.1 and 6.7 percent, respectively. The five Local Authorities with the largest expected growth in LC2 2022 are presented in Table 2.

Figure 20 Expected growth rate in LC2 enrolments in 2022/23 based on LC1 2021/22 enrolments, by Local Authority

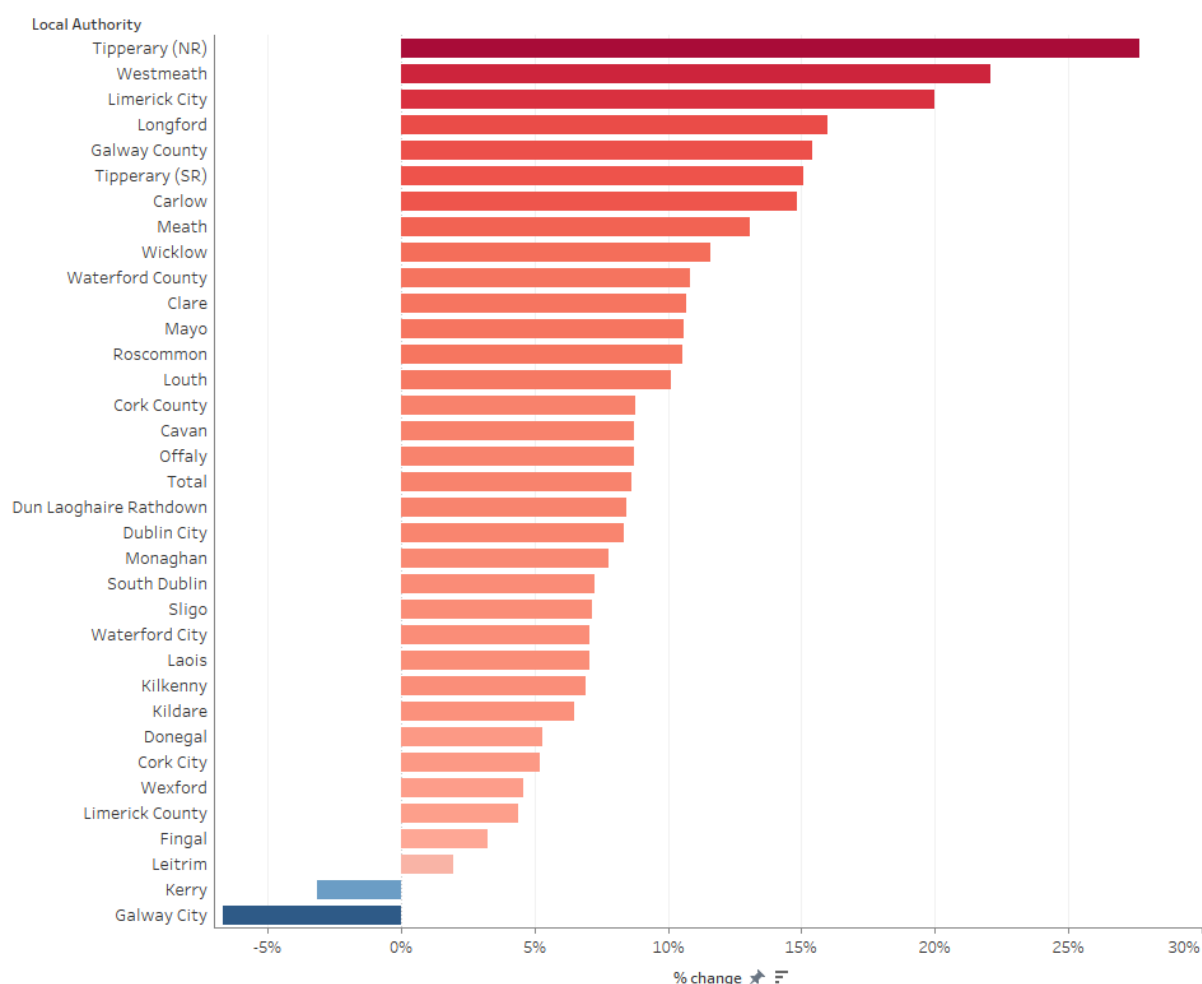


Table 2 Local Authorities with the largest expected growth in LC2 enrolments in 2022/23

<i>Local Authority</i>	<i>Leaving Certificate</i>			
	<i>Year 1 2021</i>	<i>Year 2 2021</i>	<i>expected growth in LC2 2022</i>	<i>growth rate</i>
Tipperary (NR) County Council	1,403	1,099	304	27.7%
Westmeath County Council	1,608	1,317	291	22.1%
Limerick City Council	1,308	1,090	218	20.0%
Longford County Council	777	670	107	16.0%
Galway County Council	2,830	2,452	378	15.4%

Background notes:

The source for this data is the Annual Census for 2021/2022, which is returned via the Primary/Post-Primary Online Database (POD/P-POD). Unless otherwise stated, the primary level data is reporting enrolments in mainstream schools only. Data is anchored on the census data of 30th September 2021. Note that only schools aided by the Department of Education and Skills are included in this report.

This data was published on 20th July 2022, and replaces the provisional data published in December 2021.

Queries should be sent to statistics@education.gov.ie or by phone at 01-889 2085.

In previous years the data reported in this bulletin was published in excel format as the Department's Annual Statistical Reports (ASR). The excel format of the ASR is now being discontinued and the data will be hosted on the CSO PxStat which can be accessed here: <https://data.cso.ie/>

The ASRs from previous years, and an explanatory document mapping the ASR tables to the PxStat tables, can be found on the Department's website here:

<https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Statistical-Reports/>

Appendix: Ukrainian pupils' enrolments

The enrolment data shown below provides insights into Ireland's response to the Ukrainian crisis, particularly, the primary and secondary school pupils' enrolments who arrived from Ukraine since the start of Russian invasion of Ukraine, i.e., 24 February 2022.

A.1 Primary

As of 29th June, there were 5,043 Ukrainian pupils enrolled in primary level. Table A.1.1 shows enrolment by standards with the higher enrolment in junior infants' class (15.5%).

Table A.1.1 Ukrainian pupils' enrolment in primary schools by standard

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Total to date</i>	<i>%</i>
Junior Infants	782	15.5%
Senior Infants	561	11.1%
First Class	630	12.5%
Second Class	642	12.7%
Third Class	668	13.2%
Fourth Class	646	12.8%
Fifth Class	633	12.6%
Sixth Class	470	9.3%
Special Class	11	0.2%
Total	5,043	100.0%

In total there were 1,042 primary schools where Ukrainian pupils were enrolled, of which 143 schools had 10 or more pupils and 90 schools had 10% or more Ukrainians enrolled in (Tab A.1.2).

Table A.1.2 Primary schools with Ukrainian pupils' enrolment

<i>Primary Schools</i>	<i>No.</i>
Schools with enrolments	1,042
Schools with 10 or more Ukrainian Pupils	143
Schools with 10% or more Ukrainian Pupils	90

The enrolment distribution by County is shown in Tab A.1.3 where it can be seen that Dublin has the highest per cent of Ukrainian enrolments (16.8%) with Cork being the second (10.9%).

Table A.1.3 Ukrainian pupils' enrolment in primary schools by County

<i>County</i>	<i>Total to date</i>	<i>%</i>
Dublin	847	16.8%
Cork	550	10.9%
Kerry	459	9.1%
Clare	366	7.3%
Galway	332	6.6%
Wexford	291	5.8%
Donegal	246	4.9%
Meath	180	3.6%
Wicklow	180	3.6%
Limerick	180	3.6%
Mayo	177	3.5%
Waterford	158	3.1%
Louth	146	2.9%
Cavan	119	2.4%
Leitrim	117	2.3%
Roscommon	98	1.9%
Kildare	91	1.8%
Tipperary	85	1.7%
Westmeath	79	1.6%
Laois	78	1.5%
Kilkenny	70	1.4%
Sligo	53	1.1%
Carlow	51	1.0%
Offaly	45	0.9%
Longford	29	0.6%
Monaghan	16	0.3%
Total	5,043	100.0%

A.2 Post-primary

As of 29th June, there were 2,238 Ukrainian pupils enrolled in post-primary level. Table A.2.1 shows enrolment by programme with the higher enrolment in JC2 (24.6%).

Table A.2.1 Ukrainian pupils' enrolment in post-primary schools by programme

<i>Programme</i>	<i>Total to date</i>	<i>%</i>
JC1	527	23.5%
JC2	550	24.6%
JC3	238	10.6%
TY	432	19.3%
LC1	425	19.0%
LC2	66	2.9%
Total	2,238	100.0%

In total there were 421 post-primary schools where Ukrainian pupils were enrolled, of which 59 schools had 10 or more pupils and 6 schools had 10% or more Ukrainians enrolled in (Tab A.2.2).

Table A.2.2 Primary schools with Ukrainian pupils' enrolment

<i>Post-Primary Schools</i>	<i>No.</i>
Schools with enrolments	421
Schools with 10 or more Ukrainian Pupils	59
Schools with 10% or more Ukrainian Pupils	6

The post-primary schools enrolment distribution by County is shown in Tab A.2.3 where it can be seen that, similar to the primary schools distribution, Dublin has the highest per cent of Ukrainian enrolments (17.9%) with Cork being the second (11.1%).

Table A.2.3 Ukrainian pupils' enrolment in post-primary schools by County

<i>County</i>	<i>Total to date</i>	<i>%</i>
Dublin	401	17.9%
Cork	249	11.1%
Kerry	209	9.3%
Clare	178	8.0%
Galway	119	5.3%
Wexford	115	5.1%
Donegal	100	4.5%
Louth	99	4.4%
Wicklow	97	4.3%
Waterford	81	3.6%
Limerick	73	3.3%
Mayo	59	2.6%
Cavan	53	2.4%
Kilkenny	53	2.4%
Sligo	46	2.1%
Meath	42	1.9%
Laois	42	1.9%
Tipperary	41	1.8%
Kildare	35	1.6%
Westmeath	33	1.5%
Leitrim	31	1.4%
Carlow	26	1.2%
Roscommon	20	0.9%
Offaly	16	0.7%
Longford	13	0.6%
Monaghan	7	0.3%
Total	2,238	100.0%