



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

## Statistical Bulletin – July 2023

Overview of Education 2002 – 2022



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## Primary

### Total enrolments

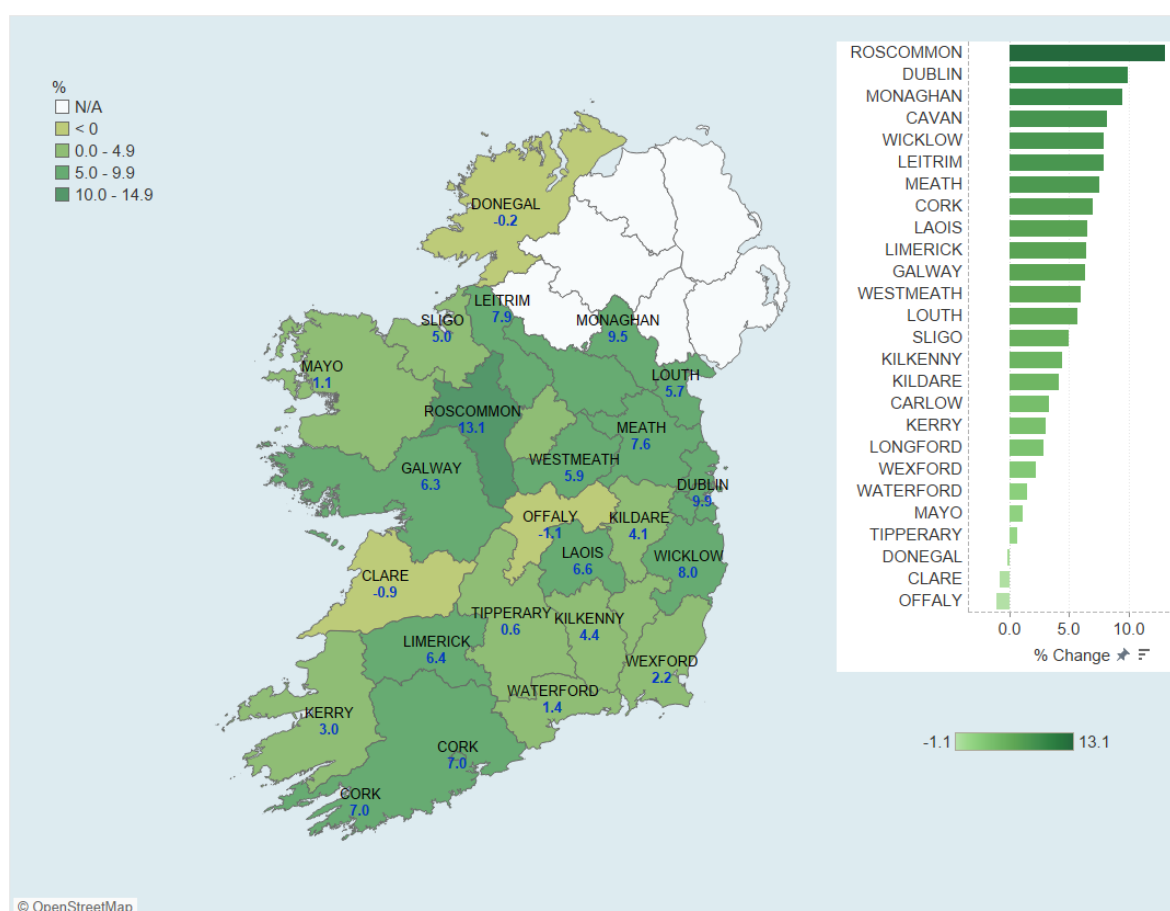
Total enrolments in primary schools in 2022 stood at 558,143, an increase of 3,355 on 2021 when the total was 554,788. Over the twenty-year period 2002 to 2022 there was an increase of 114,423 (25.8%) in enrolments in primary schools (mainstream and special) and enrolments are [projected](#) to fall over the coming eleven years.

Please note that enrolment data is fixed to the Census date of 30 September 2022, and accordingly, the recent, i.e., post Census date, enrolments of Ukrainian children are not included in these headline figures or the following analysis. The latest data on enrolments of Ukrainian children 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 in Roscommon at 13.1 per cent, followed by Dublin at 9.9 per cent and Monaghan at 9.5 per cent. The smallest increase occurred in Mayo (1.1%) and Tipperary (0.6%), while Offaly, Clare and Donegal were the areas that saw a largest decrease by 1.1 per cent, 0.9 per cent and 0.2 per cent, respectively.

Map 1 Percentage change in enrolments in primary schools, by county, 2012-2022



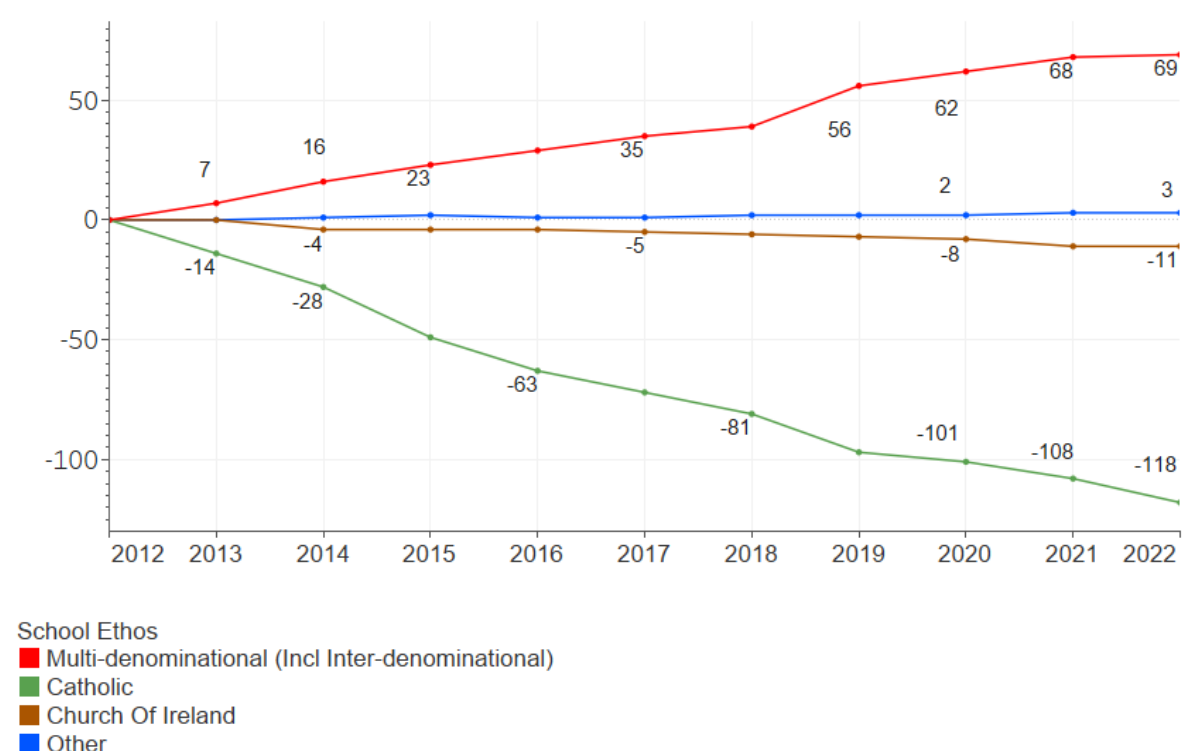
*Source:* [EDA57](#)

## School ethos

The total number of mainstream primary schools has declined by 57 since 2012, from 3,152 in 2012 to 3,095 in 2022. However, as can be seen in Figure 1 below, the pattern is not uniform, with 118 Catholic schools and 11 Church of Ireland schools closing between 2012 and 2022, while the number of multi-denominational schools has increased by 69 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 25 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 88.5 per cent of schools having a Catholic ethos in 2022.

Figure 1 Cumulative change in mainstream primary school numbers by ethos, 2012-2022

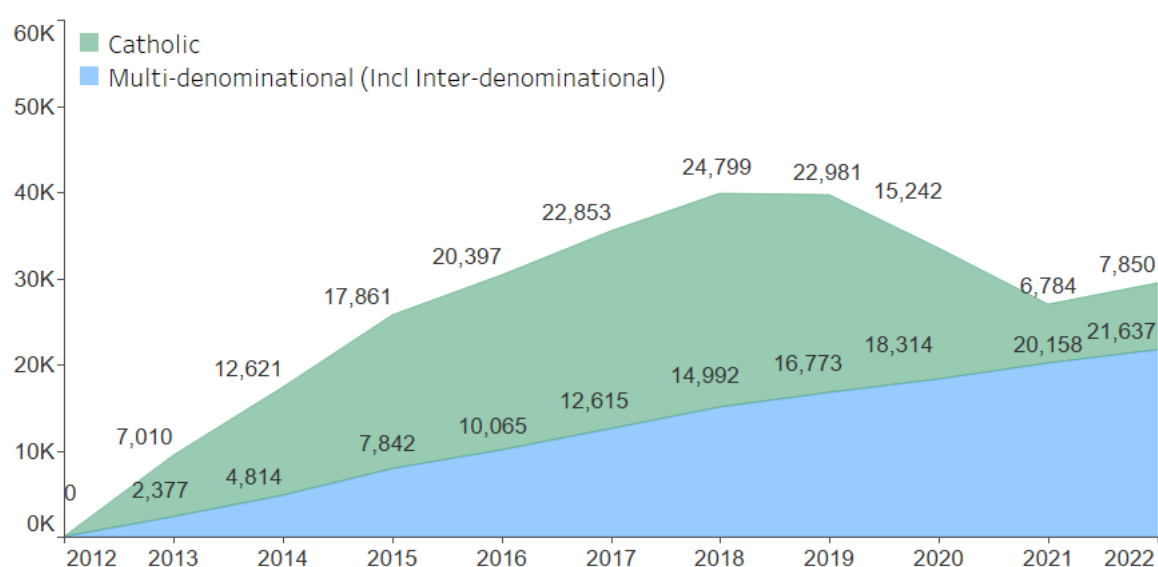


Source: [Data on Individual Schools](#)

Looking at enrolments by ethos, the total enrolments in Catholic schools increased by 1,066 between 2021 and 2022 (from 487,018 to 488,084), compared with a fall of 8,458 between 2020 and 2021, while enrolments in multi-denominational schools rose by 1,479 (from 41,502 to 42,981). The latest trends in Catholic schools enrolments show a steady decrease since 2018, however, the 2022 increase in total enrolments, and in Catholic schools, is due to additional enrolments of Ukrainian pupils (Fig. 2 and App.).

Figure 2 shows cumulative change in enrolments by ethos. The graph shows total enrolments falling as a result of falling Catholic enrolments until year 2021 and their increase in 2022, represented by the total area under the graph, while multi-denominational enrolments continue to rise steadily, represented by the blue section of the graph.

Figure 2 Cumulative change in primary school enrolments by ethos, 2012-2022



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 2012 – 2022, while Irish-medium schools inside the Gaeltacht fell by five. Irish-medium schools outside the Gaeltacht increased by ten (from 141 to 151). In terms of enrolments, Irish-medium schools outside the Gaeltacht have seen an increase in enrolments of 4,723, representing a 14.7 per cent increase, while Irish-medium Gaeltacht schools have seen their enrolments fall by 240 (3.3%) over the last decade.

Table 1 Cumulative changes in primary school numbers and enrolments by Irish classification, 2012-2022

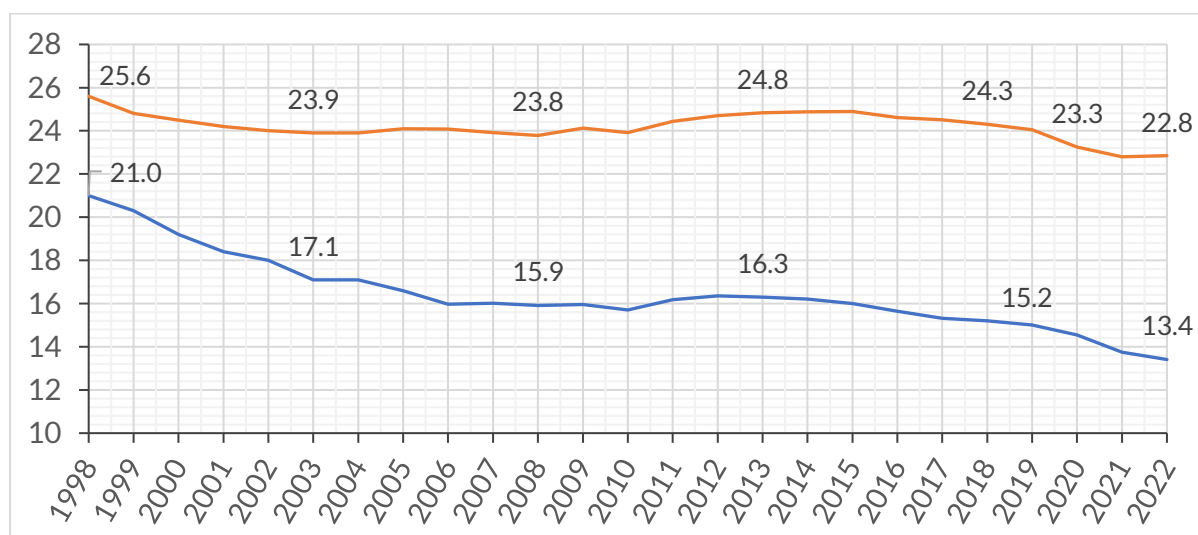
Schools				Enrolments			
Year	Non-Irish/ Part-Irish schools	Irish schools within the Gaeltacht	Irish schools outside the Gaeltacht	Year	Non-Irish/Part- Irish schools	Irish schools within the Gaeltacht	Irish schools outside the Gaeltacht
2012	0	0	0	2012	0	0	0
2013	-10	0	3	2013	8,294	20	1,491
2014	-18	0	3	2014	15,309	-17	2,698
2015	-32	0	4	2015	22,674	21	3,858
2016	-41	-1	5	2016	26,762	63	4,618
2017	-45	-2	6	2017	31,315	111	5,068
2018	-49	-3	6	2018	34,957	65	5,769
2019	-52	-1	7	2019	34,620	146	5,842
2020	-50	-3	8	2020	28,844	-176	5,578
2021	-56	-2	10	2021	22,491	-219	5,077
2022	-62	-5	10	2022	25,958	-240	4,723

Source: [Data on Individual Schools](#)

## Class size

The change in average class size over the twenty-year period 2002-2022 is presented in Figure 3 and shows there has been little change since 2002. It reached its lowest point in 2021, and again in 2022, at 22.8. The pupil:teacher ratio, on the other hand, has fallen consistently over the same period, from 18.0 in 2002 to 13.7 in 2021, and, despite the additional Ukrainian pupils' enrolments during the period, fell again to 13.4 in 2022.

Figure 3 Pupil:teacher ratio and average class size in primary schools, 2002-2022



Source: [EDA44](#)

The number of mainstream classroom teachers has risen by just 32.5 per cent (from 17,807 to 23,596) over the twenty-year period (Fig. 4). The total number of teaching posts has also increased by one-and-a-half times over the same period, i.e., from 24,700 to 41,623 (Fig. 5). This measure includes *other teachers* as well, i.e., special education teachers, English language support teachers, administrative principals, and Home School Community Liaison (HCSL) teachers, as well as any other full-time teaching staff. The *other teachers*' category has risen from 6,893 to 18,027.

Figure 4 Primary schools mainstream class teaching teachers, 2002-2022

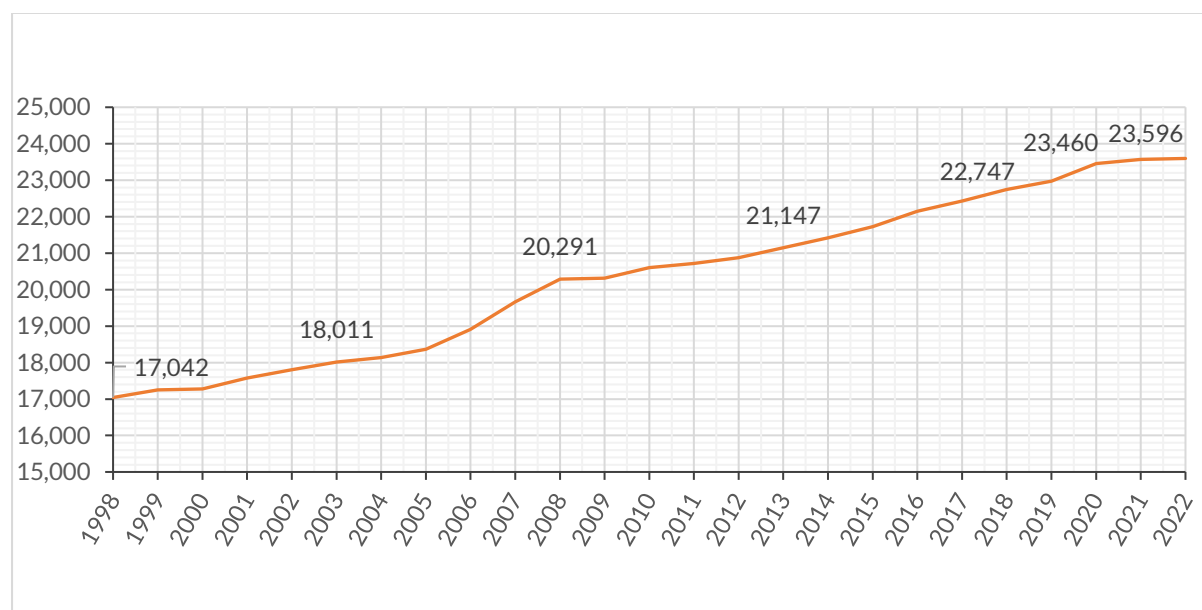
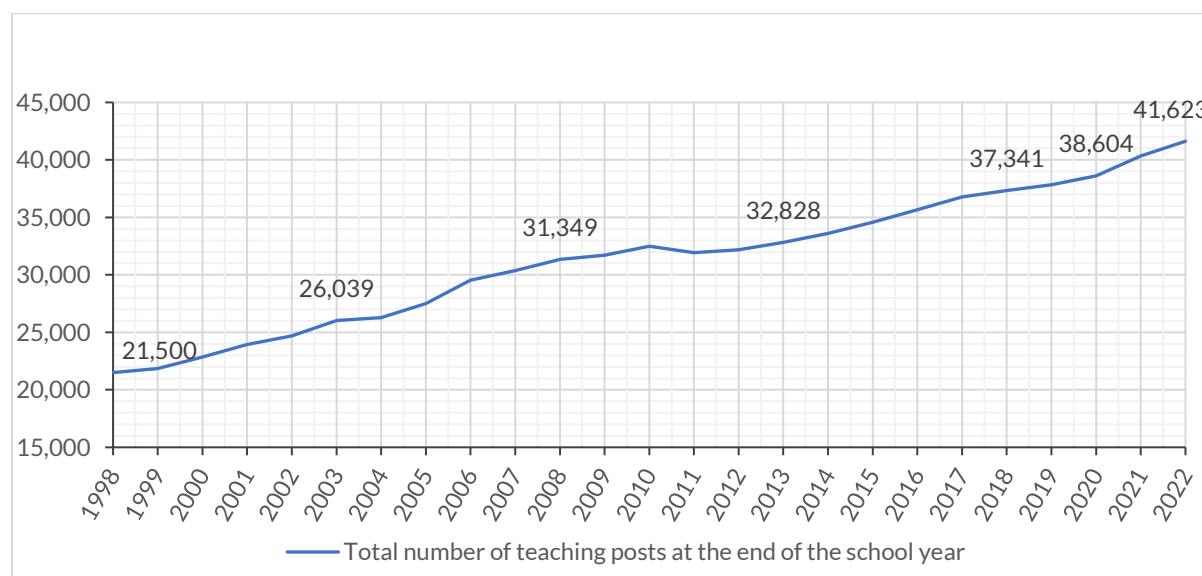


Figure 5 Total number of primary schools teaching posts at the end of the school year, 2002-2022

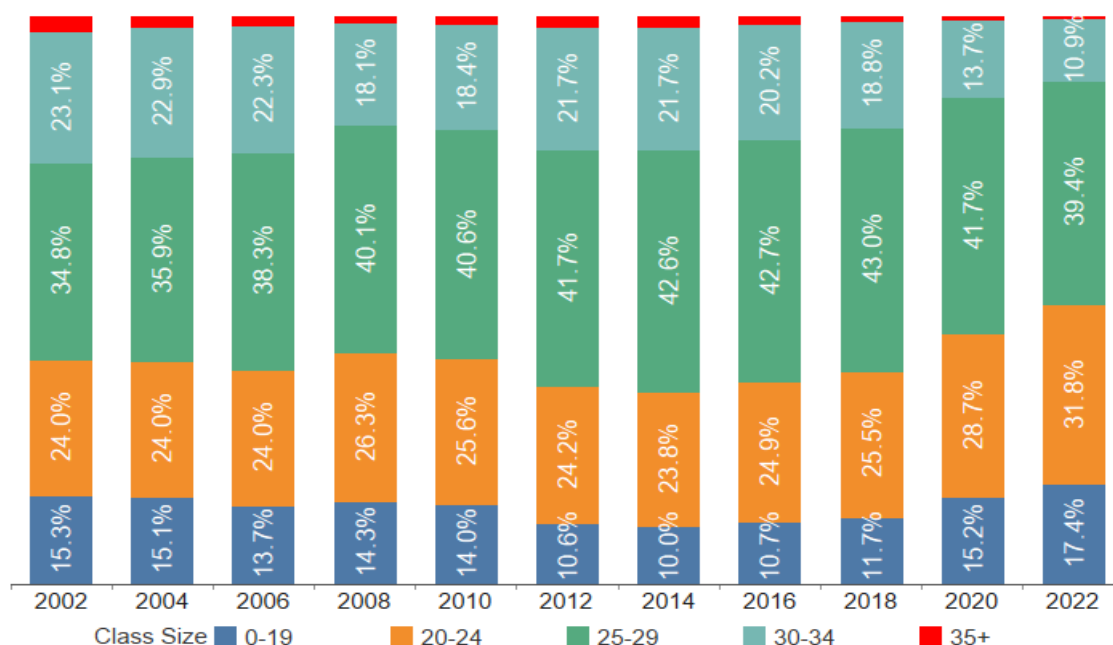


Source: [EDA44](#)

## Large classes

While the overall average class size has varied little since 2002, the number of pupils in classes of 35 or more fell sharply between 2002 (11,901) and 2022 (2,435) while those in the next-largest category (30-34) stood at 58,910 in 2022, down from 120,665 in 2015.

Figure 6 Pupils in primary schools, by class size, 2002-2022

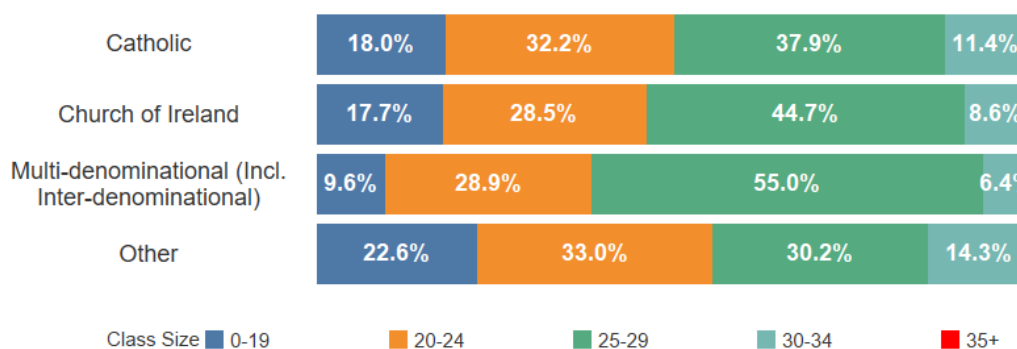


Source: [ED105](#)

## 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 11.9 per cent of pupils in Catholic schools were in classes of 30 pupils or more, compared with just 6.5 per cent of those in multi-denominational schools. However, the average class size in Catholic schools was 22.8, compared with 24.1 in multi-denominational schools. *Note: the category multi-denominational includes inter-denominational schools.*

Figure 7 Pupils in primary schools, by class size, by school ethos, 2022

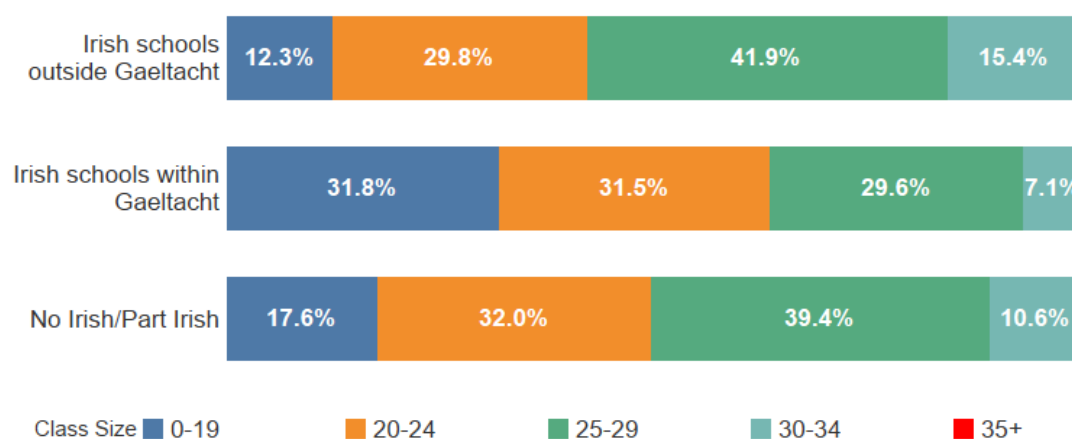


Source: [Class Size Data 2022](#)



When looked at by Irish classification the data shows 16.0 per cent of pupils were in large classes (30+) in Irish-medium schools outside the Gaeltacht, compared with only 11.1 per cent in English or part-English-medium schools and 7.1 per cent in Irish-medium schools within the Gaeltacht.

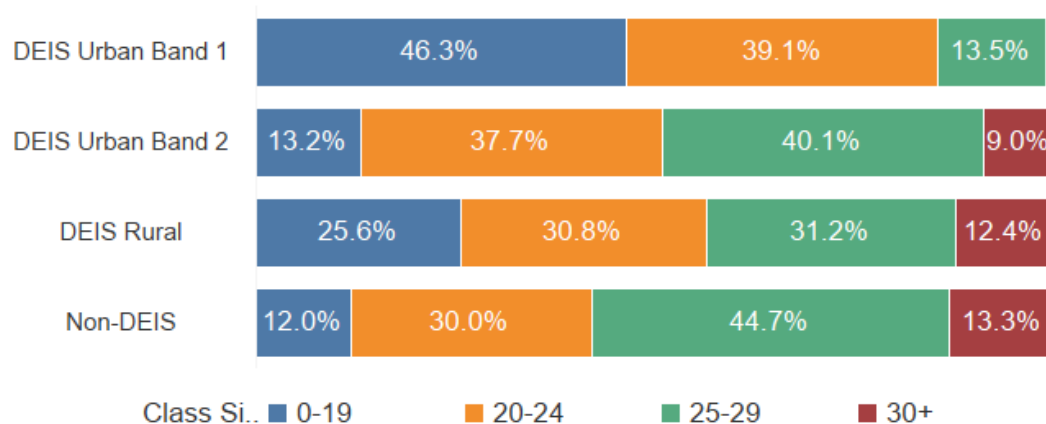
Figure 8 Pupils in primary schools, by class size, by Irish Classification, 2022



Source: [Class Size Data 2022](#)

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 85.3 per cent of pupils in classes of fewer than 25. Rural schools also have a high proportion of small classes, with more than half (56.4%) of pupils in classes of fewer than 25. For more information on DEIS Urban Band 1/2 and Rural see [here](#).

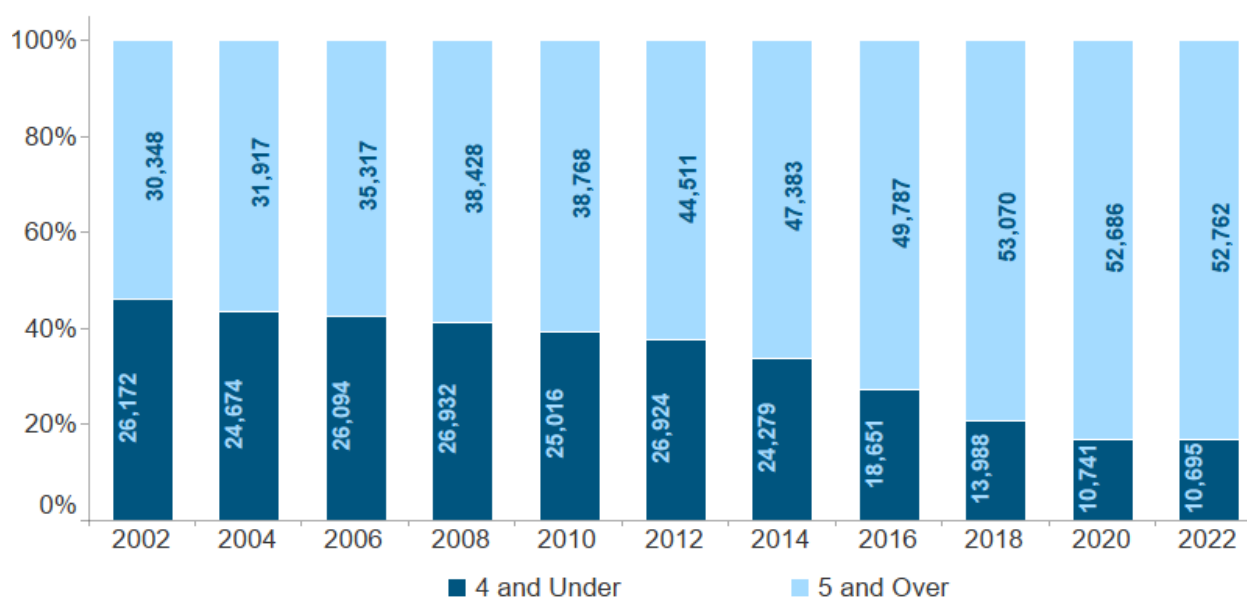
Figure 9 Pupils in primary schools, by class size, by DEIS status, 2022



Source: [Class Size Data 2022](#)

## Age of Junior Infants

Figure 10 Junior Infants under and over 4 years of age, at 1st January, 2002-2022



Source: [EDA42](#)

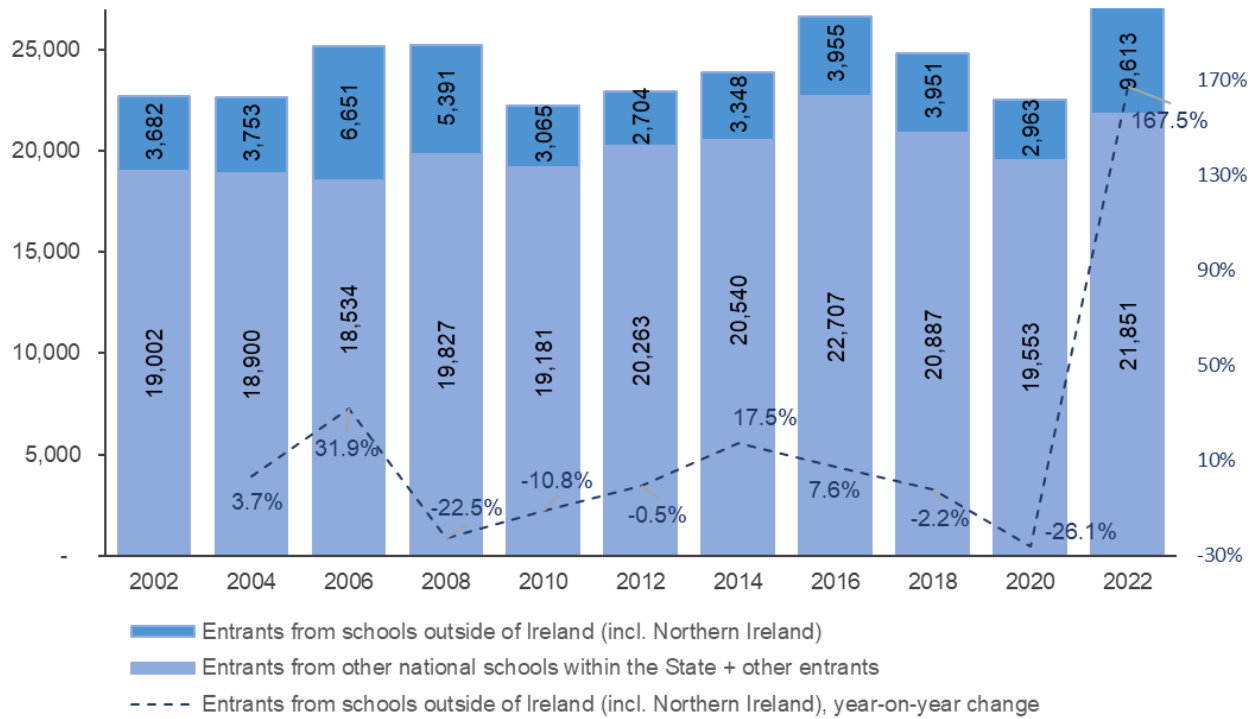
The age of junior infants has been steadily increasing for the past twenty years, although the trend has accelerated in recent times. This is most likely due to the introduction of the ECCE scheme in 2010, and its expansion to two years in 2016. Overall, the proportion of four year-olds (and younger) in junior infants has fallen from 46.3 per cent in 2002 to 16.9 per cent in 2022.

## 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 2022 21,851 pupils changed school, while a further 9,613 arrived from outside Ireland, including arrivals from Ukraine as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 (the up to-date enrolments of Ukrainian pupils are reported separately – see Appendix).

The previous peak year for entrants from abroad was 2007, with almost 7,000 arrivals, and the recent one occurred in 2022 with even larger number of new entrants from abroad, as 9,613 pupils. The year-on-year change in this category can be seen as a dash line in Figure 11. Please note, that for demonstration purpose only even years are shown in the graph, i.e., the change is derived by using every year in the reported years' range. As can be seen, the year 2022 shows the largest increase in new entrants from outside Ireland, i.e., 167.5%, when compared with the year 2021 data (3,593).

Figure 11 New entrants to 1st – 6th class by source, 2002-2022

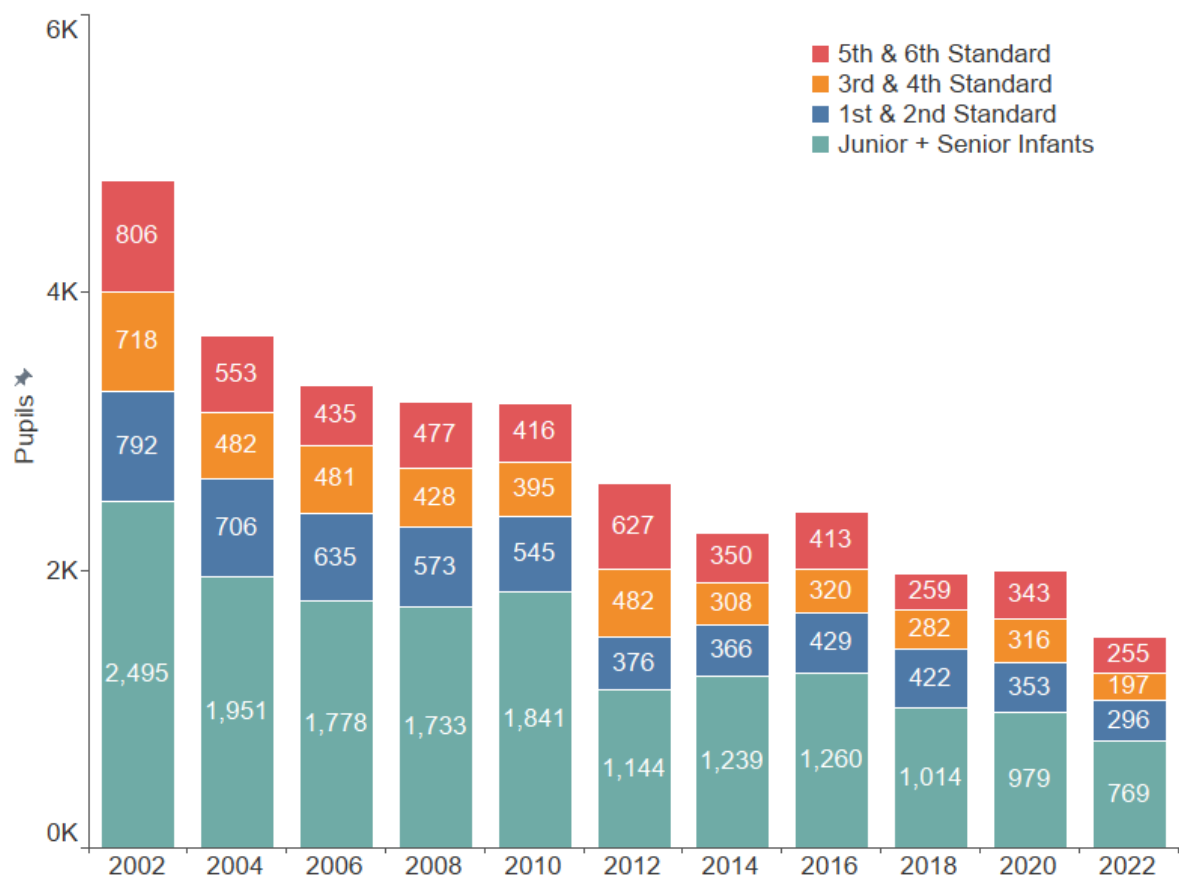


Source: [EDA52](#)

## Repeating a year

The number of pupils who repeat a year in primary school is presented in Figure 12 and shows a dramatic fall since 2002, when almost 5,000 pupils repeated compared with just over 1,500 in 2022. As can be seen, pupils are most likely to repeat junior or senior infants compared to other grades.

Figure 12 Pupils retained in the same standard/grade in primary schools, 2002-2022

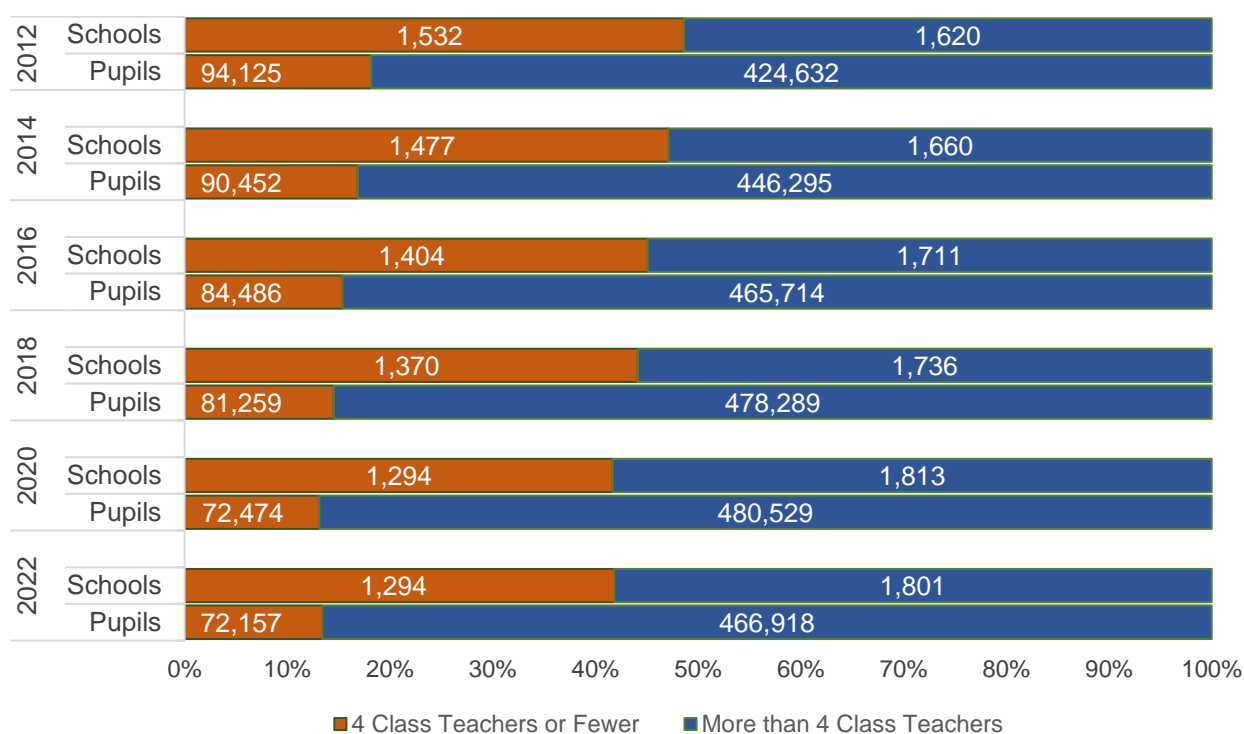


Source: [EDA52](#)

## 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 2022 academic year had 4 mainstream classes or fewer, although only 13.4 per cent of pupils were enrolled in small schools. While the number of small schools has been declining in recent years they remain very prominent, particularly in rural areas, as illustrated in Map 2 overleaf.

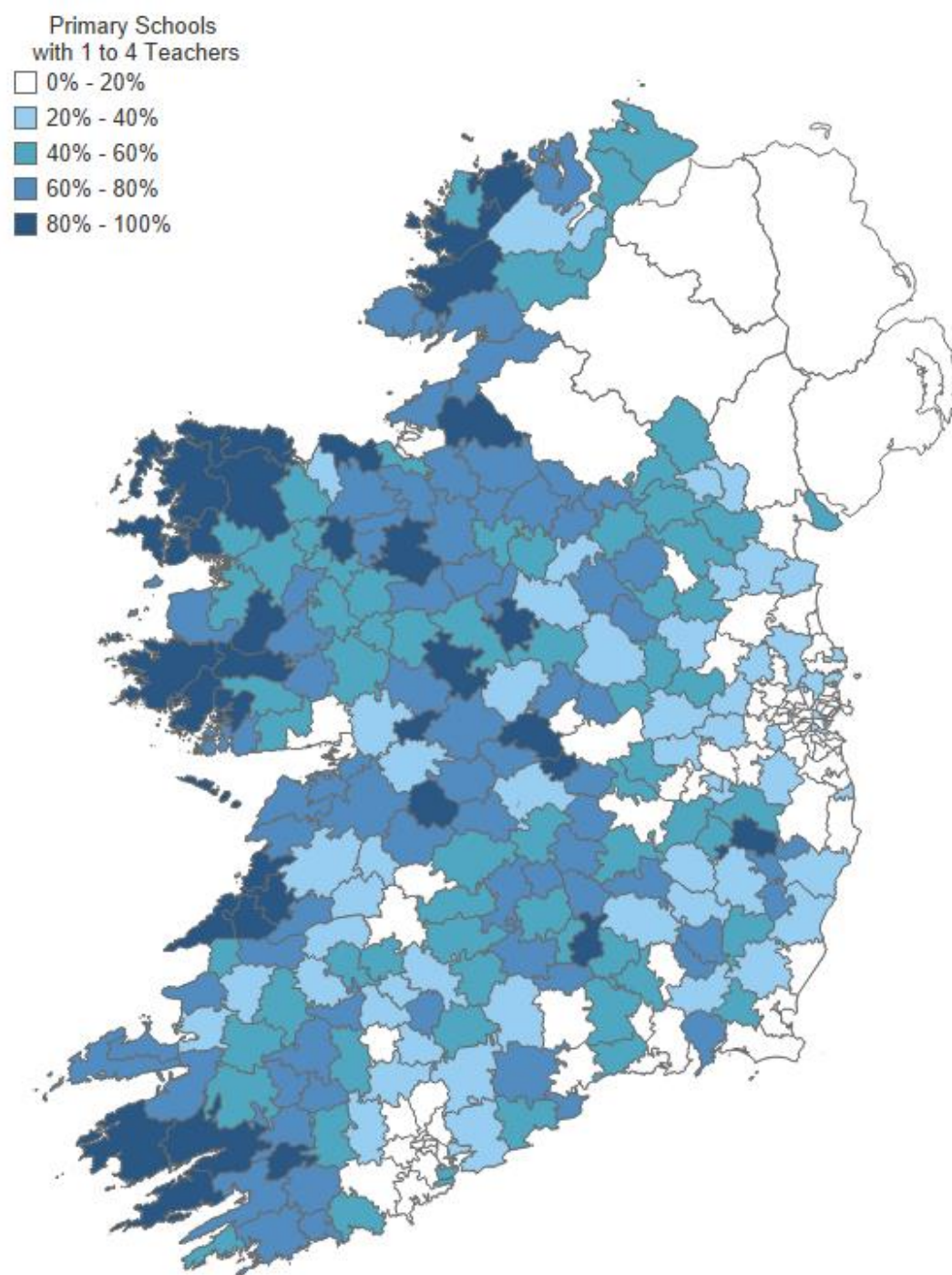
Figure 13 Mainstream primary schools and pupils classified by size of school, 2012-2022



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 primary schools as percentage of all schools by School Planning Area, 2022



© OpenStreetMap

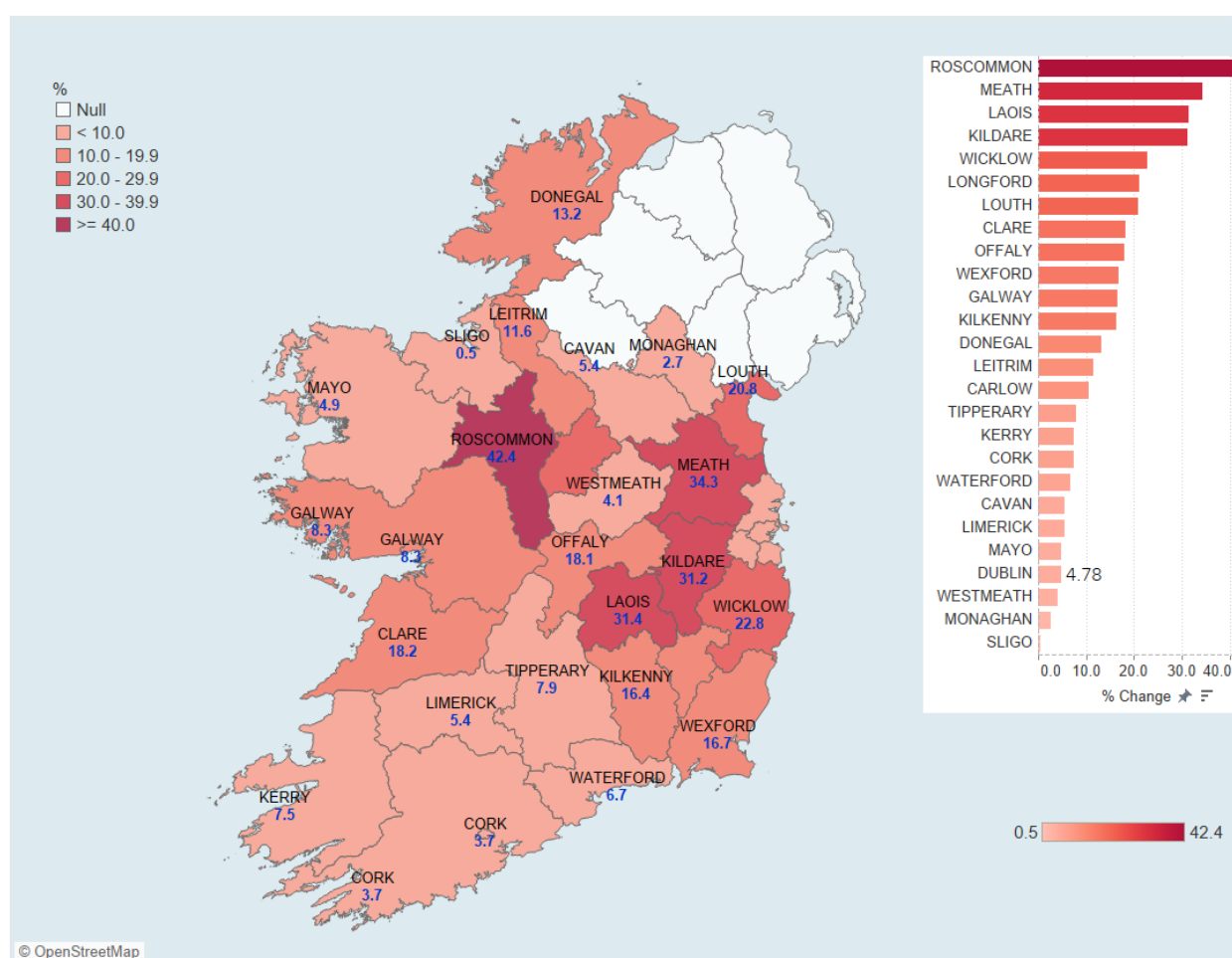
## Post-primary

### Enrolments

While enrolments in primary schools peaked in 2018, enrolments in post-primary schools continue to rise and, according to the published post-primary [projections](#), are expected to reach their peak in 2024. Please note that these projections were compiled in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic and prior to the unexpected additional enrolments due to the ongoing Ukrainian crisis.

Total enrolments stood at 406,392 in 2022, an increase of 14,694 on 2021. Enrolments have risen by 48,984 over the past five years. Map 3 shows the change in enrolments over the past ten years. The largest increases can be seen in Roscommon (42.4%), Meath (34.3%), Laois (31.4%), and Kildare (31.2%), all increased by over 30 per cent, while Monaghan (2.7%) and Sligo (0.5%) saw smaller increases.

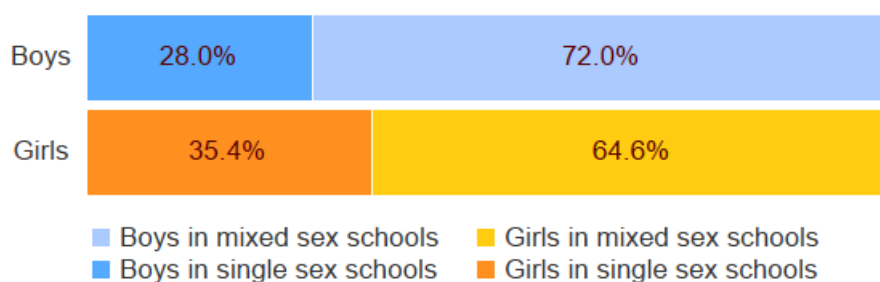
Map 3 Percentage change in post-primary enrolments by county, 2012-2022



## School gender

More boys than girls consistently attend mixed-sex schools, with 72.0 per cent of boys in a mixed school in 2022 compared with just 64.6 per cent of girls, as seen in Figure 14. This is reflected in the number of schools by gender category – in 2022 there were 124 all-girls post-primary schools, compared with 96 all-boys schools.

Figure 14 Post-primary enrolments by school gender, by sex, 2022

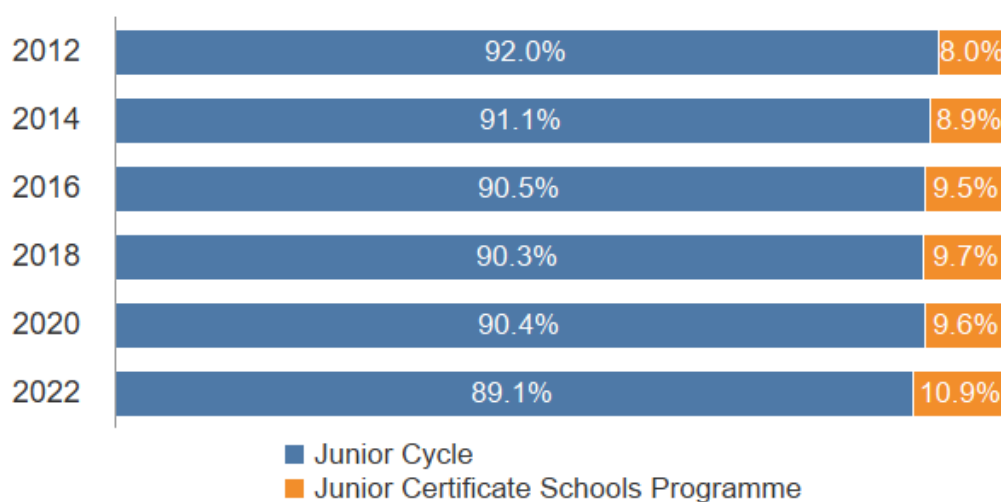


Source: [EDA72](#)

## School programme

Figure 15 shows junior cycle enrolments by programme. As can be seen there is a general trend towards increasing participation in the JCSP program, with 10.9 per cent in 2022.

Figure 15 Junior Cycle enrolments by programme, 2012-2022



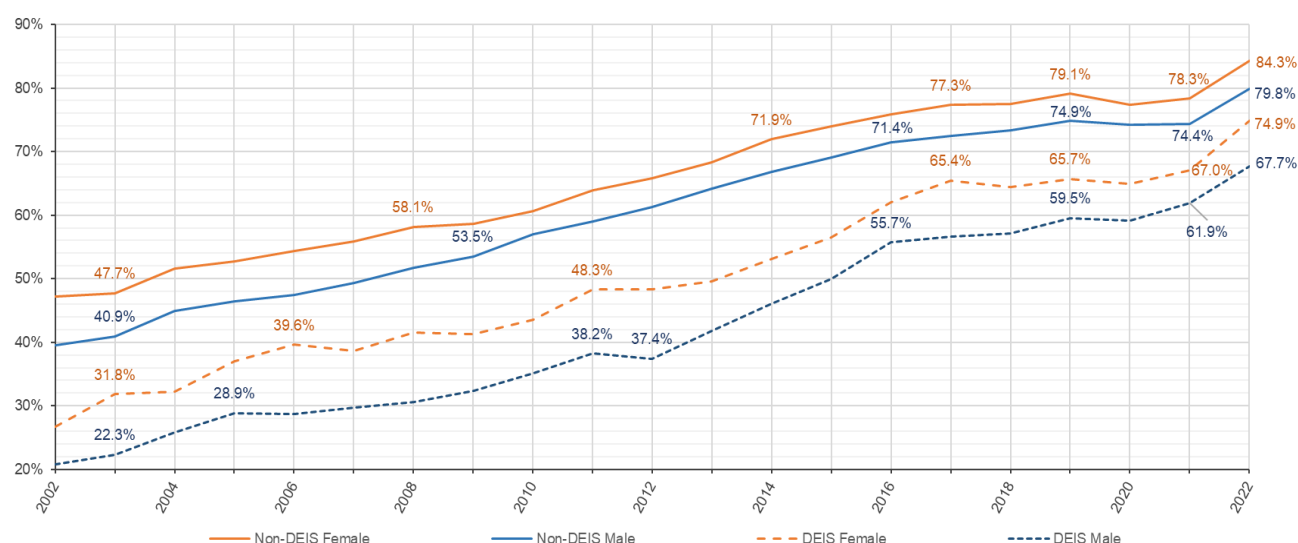
Source: [EDA70](#)



## Transition year (TY)

Figure 16 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 years, 2021 and, especially, 2022.

Figure 16 Transition Year as a % of previous Junior Cycle Year 3, by gender, by DEIS status, 2002-2022

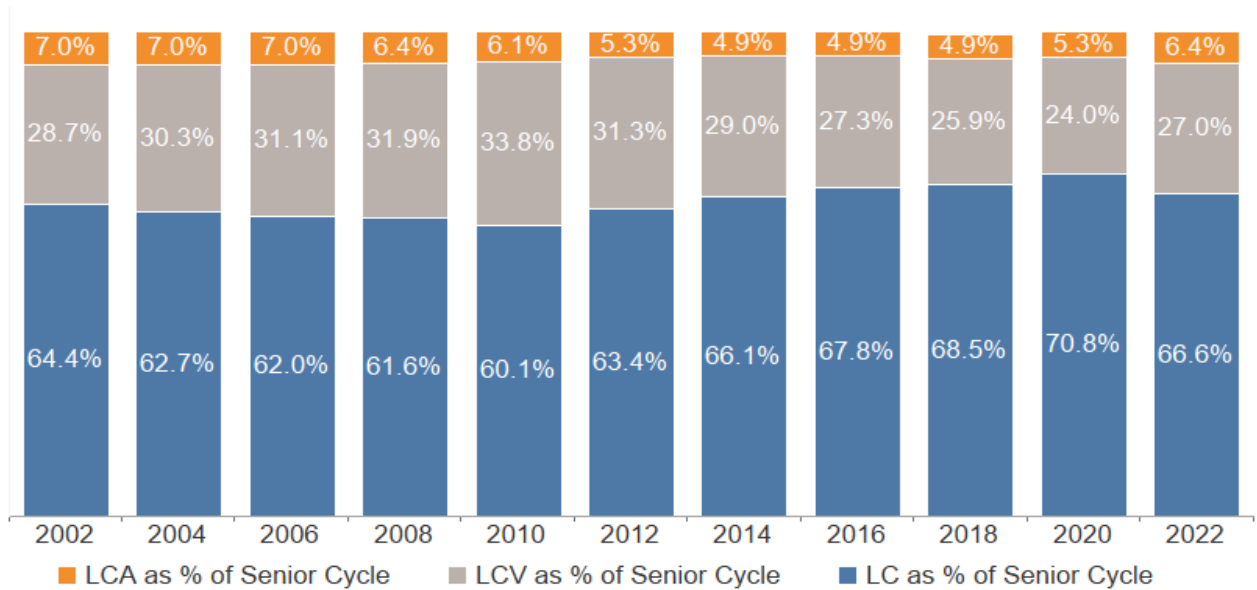


Source: [EDA70](#)

## Leaving Certificate programme

Figure 17 shows the changing participation rates in LC, LCV and LCA since 2002. The percentage of pupils following the LCA program stood at 6.4 per cent in 2022, up slightly on 2021 (5.8%); participation in the LCV program stood at 27.0 per cent, which show a change in previous downward pattern for this programme (23.0% in 2021), while LC stood at 66.6 per cent, a decrease on 2021 (71.2%).

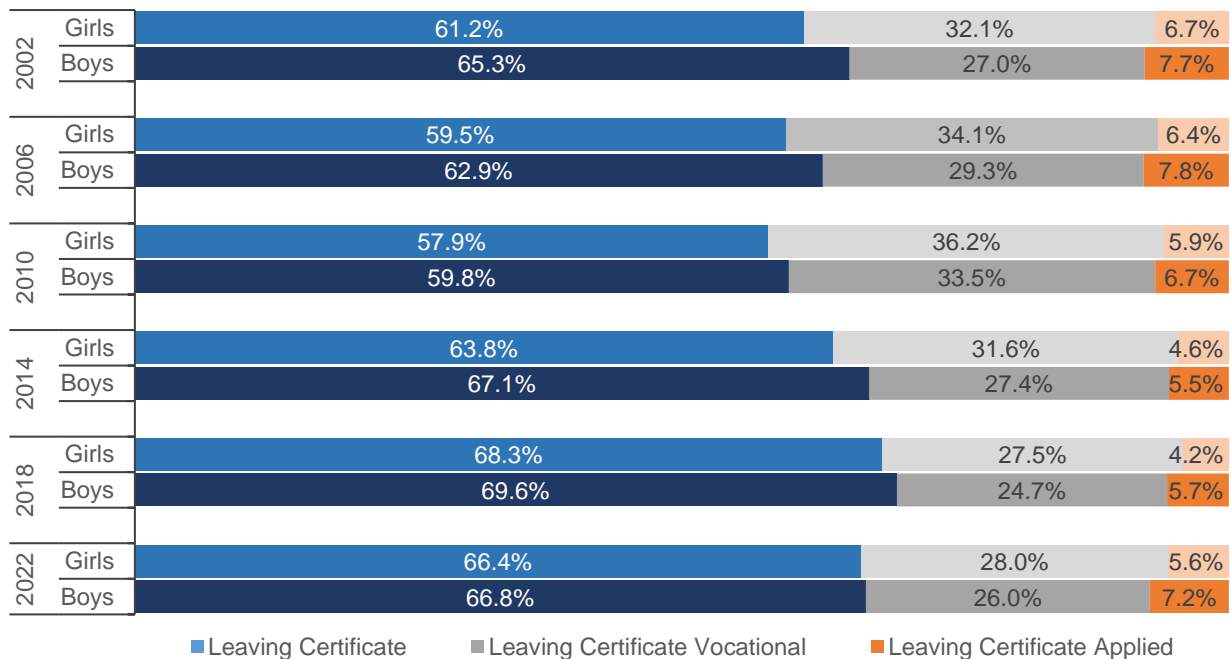
Figure 17 Senior Cycle enrolments by Programme, 2002-2022



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. 18).

Figure 18 Senior Cycle enrolments by programme, by gender, 2002-2022

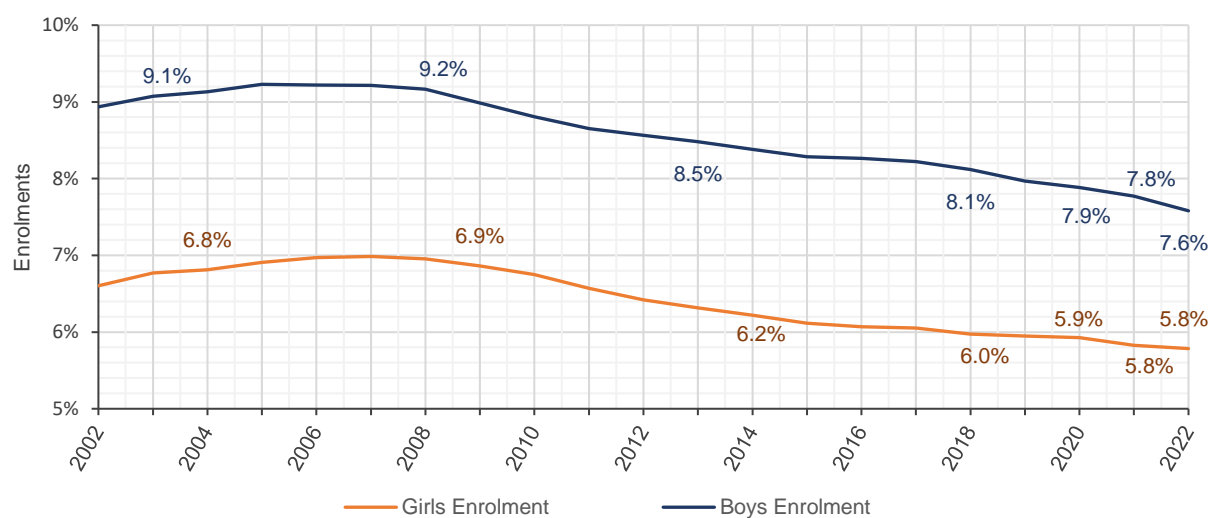


Source: [EDA70](#)

## Fee-charging schools

There is a consistent pattern of more boys than girls attending fee-charging schools. Overall, 7.6 per cent of boys were enrolled in a fee-charging school in 2022, compared with 5.8 per cent of girls; as illustrated in Figure 19 the enrolments in fee-charging schools, as percentage of total enrolments, are down on 2020 and represent a continuing pattern of falling attendance at fee-charging schools.

Figure 19 Enrolments in fee-charging post-primary schools as % of total enrolments, by gender, 2002-2022



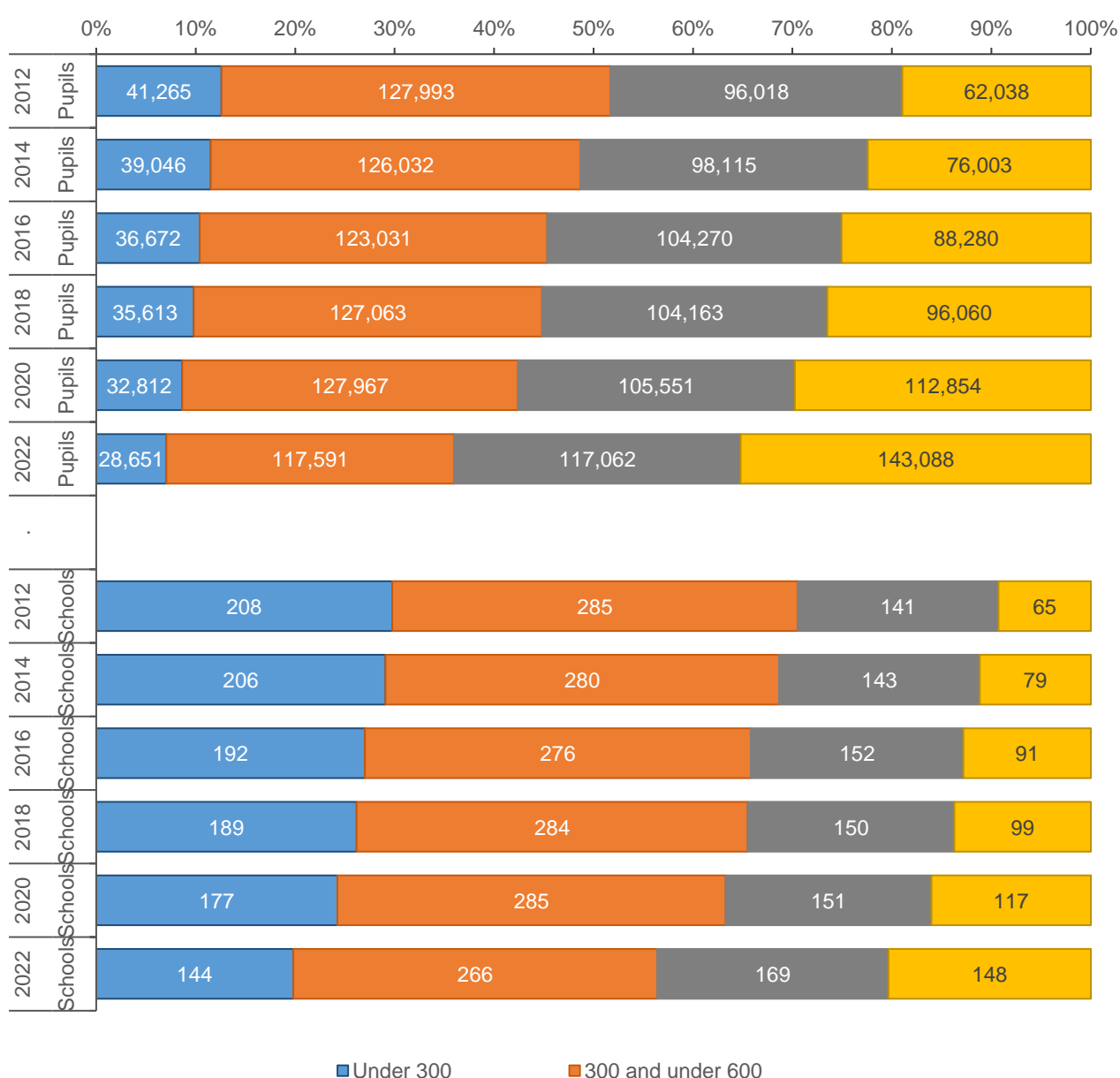
Source: [Data on Individual Schools](#)

## School size

Figure 20 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 2012, this has dropped to 19.8 per cent in 2022, while the number of large schools (800+ pupils) has more than doubled (from 65 to 148).

The number of pupils attending small schools fell by 12,614 over this period, while the number of pupils attending large schools has increased from 62,038 to 143,088.

Figure 20 Post-primary schools and pupils classified by school enrolment size, 2012-2022



Source: [Data on Individual Schools](#)

*Background notes:*

The source for this data is the Annual Census for 2022/2023, 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 30 September 2022. Note that only schools aided by the Department of Education are included in this report.

This data was published in July 2023, and replaces the provisional data published in December 2022.

Queries should be sent to [statistics@education.gov.ie](mailto: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 had been discontinued and the data has been hosted on the CSO PxStat which can be accessed here: <https://data.cso.ie/>

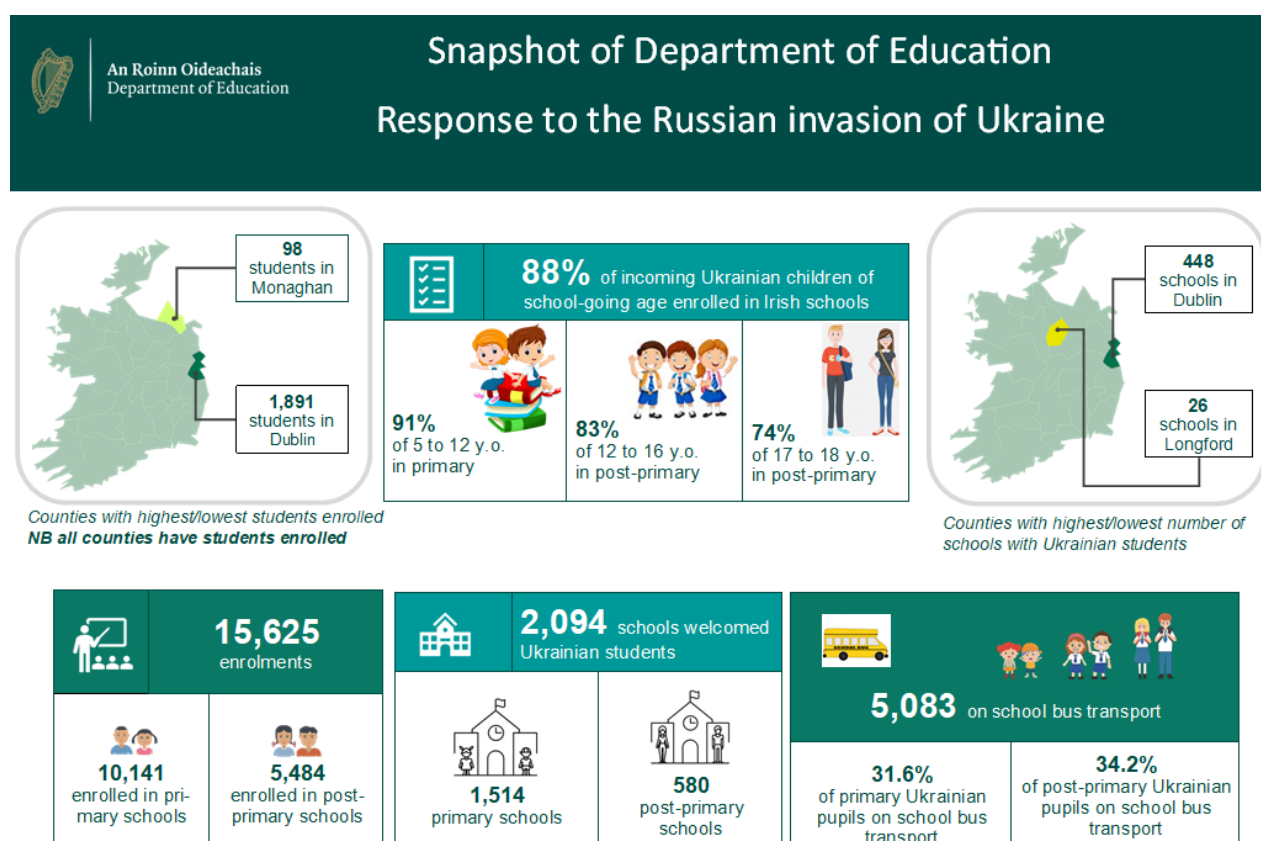
The ASRs from previous years, and an explanatory document mapping the ASR tables to the PxStat tables, can be found on the Department's website here:

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

These latest enrolments of Ukrainian children report the total number of Ukrainian pupils enrolled, i.e., from February 2022 to 12 June 2023 and 12 May 2023, primary and post-primary, respectively, i.e., including all additional enrolments post Census date (30 September 2022). Please note that enrolments fixed to the Census date only are reported in the main body of the Statistical Bulletin.



For more information on Ireland's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine see [gov.ie/Ukraine](https://gov.ie/Ukraine)

## A.1 Primary

As of 12th June, there were 10,141 Ukrainian pupils enrolled in primary level. Table A.1.1 shows enrolment by standards with the higher enrolment in junior infants' class (13.9%).

Table A.1.1 Ukrainian pupils' enrolment in primary schools by standard, 2022

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Total to date</i>	<i>%</i>
Junior Infants	1,413	13.9%
Senior Infants	1,089	10.7%
First Class	1,127	11.1%
Second Class	1,394	13.7%
Third Class	1,347	13.3%
Fourth Class	1,286	12.7%
Fifth Class	1,281	12.6%
Sixth Class	1,148	11.3%
Special Class	56	0.6%
Total	10,141	100.0%

In total there were 1,517 primary schools where Ukrainian pupils were enrolled, of which 335 schools had 10 or more pupils and 235 schools had 10% or more Ukrainians enrolled in (Tab A.1.2).

Table A.1.2 Primary schools with Ukrainian pupils' enrolment, 2022

<i>Primary Schools</i>	<i>No.</i>
Schools with enrolments	1,517
Schools with 10 or more Ukrainian Pupils	335
Schools with 10% or more Ukrainian Pupils	235

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 (11.9%) with Cork being the second (10.8%).

Table A.1.3 Ukrainian pupils' enrolment in primary schools by County, 2022

<i>County</i>	<i>Total to date</i>	<i>%</i>
Dublin	1,204	11.9%
Cork	1,096	10.8%
Kerry	1,039	10.2%
Donegal	868	8.6%
Galway	628	6.2%
Clare	584	5.8%
Mayo	526	5.2%
Wexford	526	5.2%
Limerick	330	3.3%
Wicklow	295	2.9%
Meath	293	2.9%
Waterford	277	2.7%
Louth	264	2.6%
Cavan	239	2.4%
Sligo	234	2.3%
Tipperary	231	2.3%
Leitrim	212	2.1%
Westmeath	208	2.1%
Roscommon	181	1.8%
Kilkenny	168	1.7%
Kildare	162	1.6%
Carlow	159	1.6%
Laois	145	1.4%
Offaly	125	1.2%
Longford	81	0.8%
Monaghan	66	0.7%
Total	10,141	100.0%



## A.2 Post-primary

As of 12th May, there were 5,484 Ukrainian pupils enrolled in post-primary level. Table A.2.1 shows enrolment by programme with the higher enrolment in JC1 (26.9%).

Table A.2.1 Ukrainian pupils' enrolment in post-primary schools by programme, 2022

<i>Programme</i>	<i>Total to date</i>	<i>%</i>
JC1	1,475	26.9%
JC2	1,310	23.9%
JC3	701	12.8%
TY	735	13.4%
LC1	1,117	20.4%
LC2	146	2.7%
Total	5,484	100.0%

In total there were 580 post-primary schools where Ukrainian pupils were enrolled, of which 180 schools had 10 or more pupils and 29 schools had 10% or more Ukrainians enrolled in (Tab A.2.2).

Table A.2.2 Post-primary schools with Ukrainian pupils' enrolment, 2022

<i>Post-Primary Schools</i>	<i>No.</i>
Schools with enrolments	580
Schools with 10 or more Ukrainian Pupils	180
Schools with 10% or more Ukrainian Pupils	29

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 (12.5%) but Kerry being the second (10.2%).

Table A.2.3 Ukrainian pupils' enrolment in post-primary schools by County, 2022

<i>County</i>	<i>Total to date</i>	<i>%</i>
Dublin	687	12.5%
Kerry	562	10.2%
Cork	533	9.7%
Donegal	467	8.5%
Clare	344	6.3%
Galway	325	5.9%
Mayo	278	5.1%
Wexford	238	4.3%
Limerick	207	3.8%
Louth	175	3.2%
Waterford	171	3.1%
Sligo	161	2.9%
Wicklow	158	2.9%
Tipperary	140	2.6%
Leitrim	134	2.4%
Meath	128	2.3%
Kilkenny	119	2.2%
Cavan	106	1.9%
Kildare	95	1.7%
Westmeath	95	1.7%
Carlow	89	1.6%
Laois	77	1.4%
Roscommon	62	1.1%
Longford	58	1.1%
Offaly	43	0.8%
Monaghan	32	0.6%
Total	5,484	100.0%