



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Main Features of Budget 2024

Department of Education

October 2023

Budget 2024 in numbers

**€10.5
billion**

2024 Budget of the Department of Education – continuing investment in our education system

c.212,000

Post-Primary students at Junior Cycle to get free school books and classroom resources, which will help families with the cost of accessing education

744

Additional special education teachers in the system in 2024 working in special classes and special schools, supporting children with special educational needs

21,584

Special needs assistants in the education system in 2024, an increase of 1,216 on 2023

**500 school
building
projects**

Progress 300 school building projects at construction and a further 200 projects to proceed to construction during 2024 / early 2025

**Over €80
million**

Permanent restoration of capitation funding for schools along with additional temporary funds in cost of living supports

**Cost of
Living**

Provide temporary additional funding to support increased running costs for primary and post-primary schools, a reduced fee on school transport and continue to waive the state examination entry fee

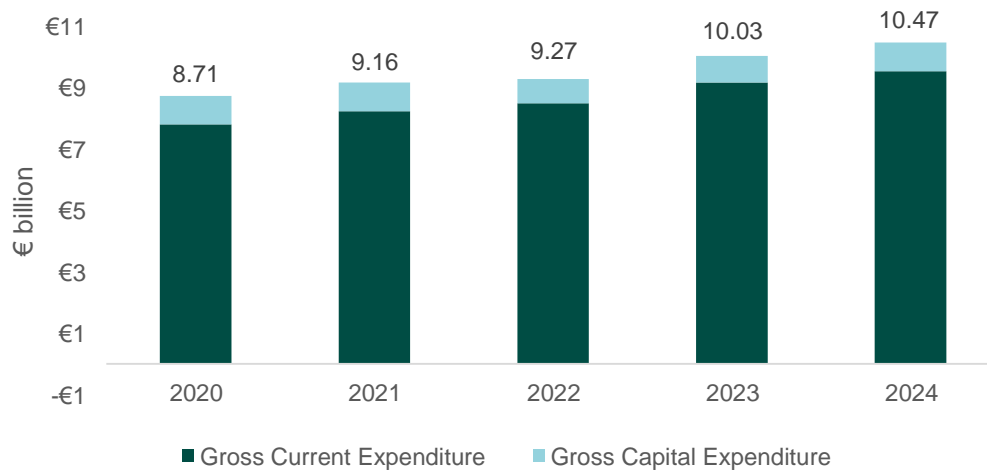
Budgetary overview

	Budget 2024	Allocation 2023
	€ million	€ million
Current – Core	9,491	9,071
Temporary	35	94
Total Current	9,527	9,165
Capital	940	860
Total Budget	10,467	10,025

Note: Some rounding in totals

The total budget for the Department of Education in 2024 will be €10.467 billion. Since 2020, funding for school-level education has increased by around €1.8 billion (20%). Budget 2024 provides an increase of €420 million in core funding, an increase of 4.6%, and builds on significant increases in recent budgets. There is also €35 million being allocated as temporary funding to facilitate selected COVID-19 measures during 2024 along with €135 million to be allocated for Cost of Living supports.

Total Education Budget, 2020-2024, € billion



School Resourcing

Financial Supports to Schools

Extra funding will be provided to primary and post-primary schools in the free education system to deal with challenges they face in day to day running costs.

A total of €21m full year costs is being provided for a permanent restoration of funding for schools, bringing the basic rate of capitation to €200 per student in primary schools and to €345 in post primary schools.

In addition, to particularly support schools this year with inflationary pressures, I have secured an additional €60 million in cost of living supports, which will be paid to all primary and post-primary schools in the free scheme.

Special Education

Increased staffing to support inclusion

In 2024, an additional 744 teaching posts will be created to support the inclusion of children with special educational needs in our education system in mainstream, special class, and special school settings:

- 205 special education teachers;
- 477 special class teachers;
- 62 teachers in special schools.

An additional 1,216 special needs assistant (SNA) posts will also be created:

- 260 SNAs in mainstream schools to provide for exceptional needs reviews and appeals;
- 806 SNAs to support new special classes;
- 150 SNAs to support special schools.

Extra funding of €11 million is also being provided for the support services for special schools catering for children with special educational needs. These support includes all such schools being entitled to an administrative deputy principal and extra teaching

posts being allocated to provide more appropriate education for post primary aged students who attend special schools.

Enhanced Summer Programme

Since 2020, the Summer Programme has expanded significantly to include all mainstream schools as the most inclusive way of reaching all children who need the extra support that the Programme provides. The Department has secured the required funding to maintain the enhanced summer programme in 2024. This programme is to provide additional supports for students at risk of educational disadvantage as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This will bring the total provision for the Summer Programme in 2024 to €40 million.

Supporting Families:

Free schoolbooks & classroom resources for junior cycle pupils

Back-to-school costs can be a burden for families. Removing the cost of free books and classroom resources in primary schools has been shown to be a huge step in addressing the cost of sending children to school. Funding of €67 million is to provide free schoolbooks and classroom resources for junior cycle pupils in recognised post-primary schools in the free scheme for the upcoming school year 2024/25. This will benefit some 212,000 pupils and add to the 558,000 children in primary and special schools who benefited from this initiative in the current school year.

School Transport

A significant €92 million of additional funding is being allocated to school transport services. This is to provide for the additional demands for pupils with special education needs on school transport services and increased bus contractor running costs.

This funding also allows for the continuation of the reduced school transport fees for the 2024/25 school year. This will continue to reduce the cost of sending children to schools and increase the number of pupils that will avail of the school transport service.

Curriculum and Senior Cycle Redevelopment

Additional funding of €6 million is available in 2024 for further implementing Senior Cycle Redevelopment. To progress this important programme, funding will be provided to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, the State Examinations Commission, and teacher professional development services.

Funding will be provided in 2024 to expand the Active School Flag programme in primary schools, increasing the number of flags awarded, while progressing the post-primary programme from pilot phase into full roll out.

Counselling Services

Further funding of €5 million has been provided to continue the pilot project of counselling and mental health supports for children in primary schools. This includes the provision of counselling support for individual children in their schools and the provision of mental health teams to support the strengthening of early intervention and preventative approaches to promote wellbeing and mental health in schools.

Teacher Supply

Professional masters in education incentive scheme

New funding of €4 million is to be provided to introduce a professional masters in education (PME) incentive scheme. Newly qualified teachers who possess a PME may be eligible for an incentive payment of €2,000. The single incentive payment will first become available to eligible primary and post primary teachers after completion of the 2024/25 school year.

This funding will assist schools that experience recruitment challenges, and recognises the costs that PME students bear in order to complete their initial teacher education.

Expansion of Upskilling Programmes

Further expansion of the current upskilling programmes will reduce the level of out-of-field teaching, by increasing the number of teachers who are qualified to teach in-demand subjects. The Teacher Supply Steering Group has identified out-of-field teaching as being amongst the most challenging issues in terms of teacher deployment.

School Leadership

Funding of €4 million will be made available to provide additional posts of responsibility in 2024. This is in recognition that school leaders play a key role in improving educational outcomes by creating a positive school climate and environment as well as motivating and empowering educators and learners within their school communities.

Social Inclusion

Funding of €5 million is being provided for additional Educational Welfare Officers posts. It will also provide supports for the Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service for their work in relation to the provision of education in places other than recognised schools, including home schooling and independent schools.

There is also €2 million available for increasing services in school retention and completion programmes and supports targeted at the most educationally disadvantaged children.

Capital Expenditure

Capital planning and budgeting is undertaken on a multiannual basis. Under Project Ireland 2040, over €5 billion will be invested in the education sector over the period 2021-2025. This investment is enabling the addition of essential capacity to ensure that every child has a school place, through the building of new schools and rollout of additional accommodation in existing schools. It allows us to meet needs arising from demographic growth and new residential developments, to increase provision for

children with special educational needs and to welcome children and young people from Ukraine into our school system.

The allocation of €940 million for 2024 will facilitate a continued rollout of urgently needed school building projects. This includes the continued progression of the c.300 building projects that are currently at construction. The majority of these projects, which include over 40 new school buildings and c.260 school extensions, are expected to be completed in 2024/early 2025. The continued rollout of the National Development Plan will involve a further c.200 school building projects that are currently at advanced design or tender stage commencing construction over the course of 2024 and 2025. Capital investment in schools allows us to meet needs arising from demographic growth and new residential developments, and to increase provision for children with special educational needs.

Funding in 2024 will also allow us to progress work on the decarbonisation pathfinder programme for schools, a key commitment in the Climate Action Plan.

Funding to support pupils from Ukraine

The Department of Education will continue to provide resources and funding to support pupils from Ukraine who have enrolled in our schools, including English-language supports. Funding will be held in a central reserve by the Department of Public Expenditure NDP Delivery and Reform, and the Department of Education will draw down the funds as needed.