

20 new primary schools to be established

On 27 June the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn TD, announced that 20 new primary schools are to be established over the next six years. The DES is forecasting an increase of over 45,000 primary pupils by the start of the 2017/18 school year. In order to meet the needs of this growing school population the DES will also have to extend a number of existing schools.

The new schools will generally have sixteen classrooms and will be established in the following areas:

2011

Blanchardstown West (Educate Together).
Mulhuddart (Educate Together).
Ashbourne (An Foras Patrúnachta).

2012

Mulhuddart (An Foras Patrúnachta).
Ashbourne (Educate Together).

Between 2012 and 2015

Midleton/Carrigtwohill, Co Cork.

South Suburbs (Grange/Douglas), Cork.
Mallow, Co Cork.

Riverstown/Glanmire, Co Cork
Sandymount/Ringsend, Dublin.
Swords, Dublin.

Carpenterstown, Dublin.
Tallaght (City West), Dublin – 2 schools.
Ballinteer (Stepaside), Dublin.

Ballinteer, Dublin.
Firhouse/Oldbawn, Dublin.
Lucan, Dublin.

Galway City (West).
Kildare.

The Minister also announced the establishment of a New Schools Establishment Group which will advise him on the patronage of the new schools. The Group is to be chaired by Dr Seamus McGuinness (retired senior lecturer in the Education Department at Trinity College Dublin) and also includes Ms Sylva Langford (retired Director of the Office of the Minister for Children) and Prof Seán Ó Riain (Sociology Department, NUI Maynooth).

Largest school building project in the State this year proceeding

In August, the Minister for Education and Skills gave the go ahead to Co Monaghan Vocational Education Committee to commence construction of a €35m education campus in Monaghan town. The campus will include a new 16 classroom primary school (Gaelscoil Ultain) as well as a post primary school and Institute of Further Education.

This is one of the first DES projects where responsibility has been devolved to a VEC. The VEC, as the project manager and client, is required to manage the project within budget parameters assigned by the DES.

Gaelscoil Ultain has operated on a restricted campus since it was established in 1986. They were not in a position to expand further due to the restricted nature of their existing site.

Summer Works Scheme

The Summer Works Scheme (SWS) saw almost 400 projects sanctioned at primary level in 2011.

In 2010 there were delays with some schools drawing down funding for their projects. The INTO urges schools due to draw down funding for their SWS projects in 2011 to do so by November in order that these monies are taken account of in the 2011 capital budget.

In addition 260 primary schools had projects sanctioned under the Jobs Initiative programme.

If students designed their own work spaces . . . what would they look like?

'A Space for Learning' was a design competition initiated by the Irish Architecture Foundation to challenge current thinking on school design, creating an opportunity for architects to collaborate with the end-users of educational spaces – the students. The outcome of the collaboration is the 'A Space for Learning' exhibition which opened in Carlow in June.

This groundbreaking exhibition showcases the winning ten designs from a competition that challenged current thinking on school design. 1500 students in 90 schools worked with 120 architects around the country in the developmental phase of this project as architects collaborated directly with Transition Year students on the design of educational spaces.

Ten winning architect-student teams from counties Cavan, Limerick, Louth, Cork and Dublin then created films, installations, models and drawings to illustrate their ideas about learning spaces and environments.

The exhibition continues on the following dates:

September 1 – October 1, Ormeau Baths Gallery, Belfast

11 October – 1 November: Triskel Arts Centre, Cork
November – January: Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny.



You can view participants' ideas, images and experiences at www.aspaceforlearning.blogspot.com. See also www.architecturefoundation.ie.