



## Statistical Bulletin

### Enrolments September 2019- Preliminary Results

This Statistical Bulletin presents first results on enrolments in mainstream primary and post-primary schools on 30th September 2019. The data is preliminary in nature, final data will be published in June 2020.

**Primary:** Total enrolments in mainstream primary schools stood at 559,378 in September 2019, a decrease of 170 pupils, or 0.03 per cent, on September 2018 (559,548). The number of girls fell by 417 pupils, from 274,029 to 273,612 while the number of boys rose by 247 from 285,519 to 285,766.

Figure 1 presents total enrolments by school ethos. Total enrolments in Catholic schools stood at 503,223 in September 2019, representing 90.0 per cent of all pupils, down from 90.3 per cent in 2018. Enrolments in multi-denominational schools stood at 38,082, accounting for 6.8 per cent of the total (up from 6.5% in 2018), while Church of Ireland schools had enrolments of 16,312 representing 2.9 per cent of all pupils. Other faiths accounted for 1,761 pupils, or 0.3 per cent.

Figure 1. Enrolments in mainstream primary schools by school ethos, September 2019

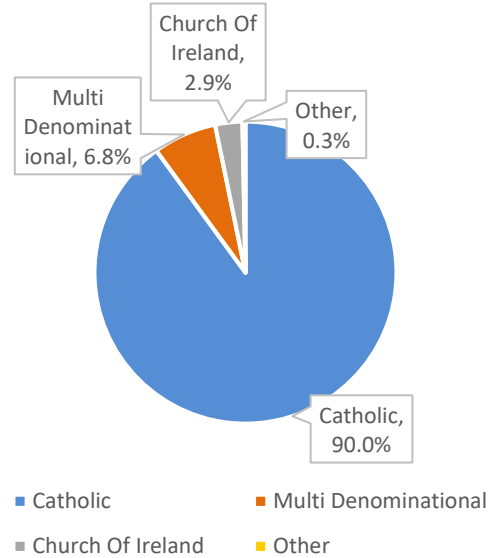


Figure 2 presents the absolute and percentage change by ethos. The fastest growing category in both percentage and absolute terms was multi-denominational schools which increased by 4.8 per cent with an additional 1,746 pupils. This compares with Catholic schools which decreased by 0.4 per cent, or 1,810 fewer pupils.

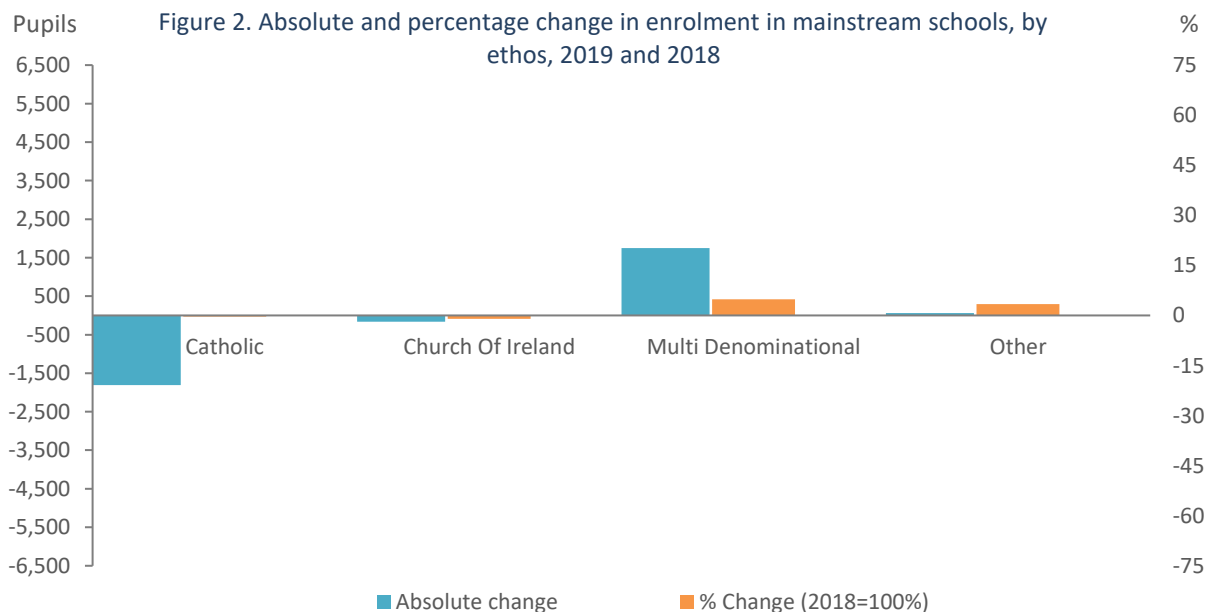


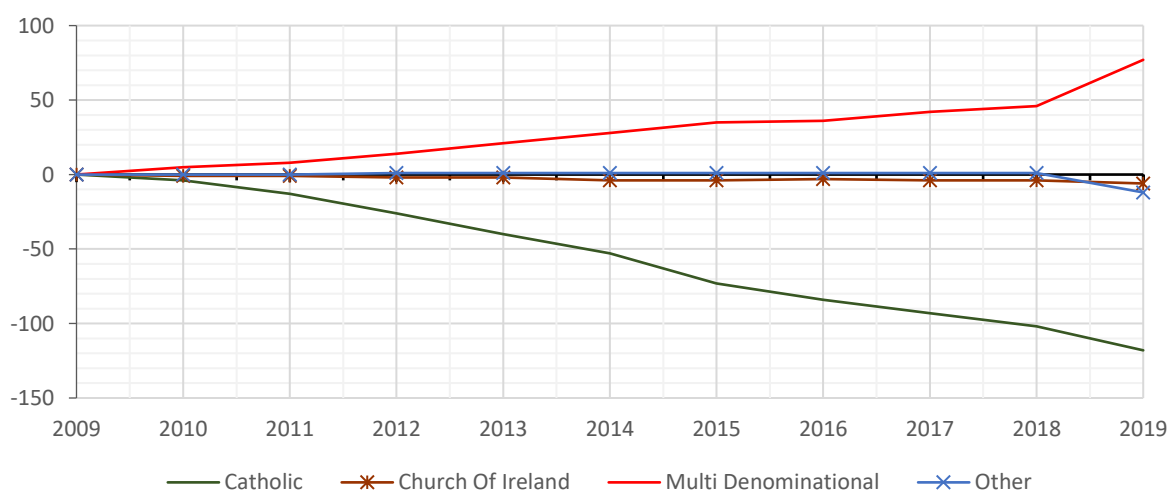
Table 1 presents schools by ethos from 2009 to 2019. Between 2018 and 2019 the number of schools with a Catholic ethos fell by 16, from 2,776 to 2,760 while those with a multi-denominational ethos rose by 31, from 119 to 150. As is illustrated in Figure 3 below this is part of a longer term trend, with the number of Catholic schools falling by 118 in the last ten years, while the number of multi-denominational schools has risen from 73 to 150, an increase of 105.5 per cent.

Table 1. Mainstream primary schools by ethos, 2009 - 2019

<b>Ethos</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
Catholic	2,878	2,865	2,838	2,805	2,785	2,776	2,760
Church of Ireland	178	177	176	174	174	174	172
Multi-denominational	73	81	94	108	115	119	150
Other	36	36	37	37	37	37	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,165</b>	<b>3,159</b>	<b>3,145</b>	<b>3,124</b>	<b>3,111</b>	<b>3,106</b>	<b>3,106</b>

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 38 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 5 schools per year.

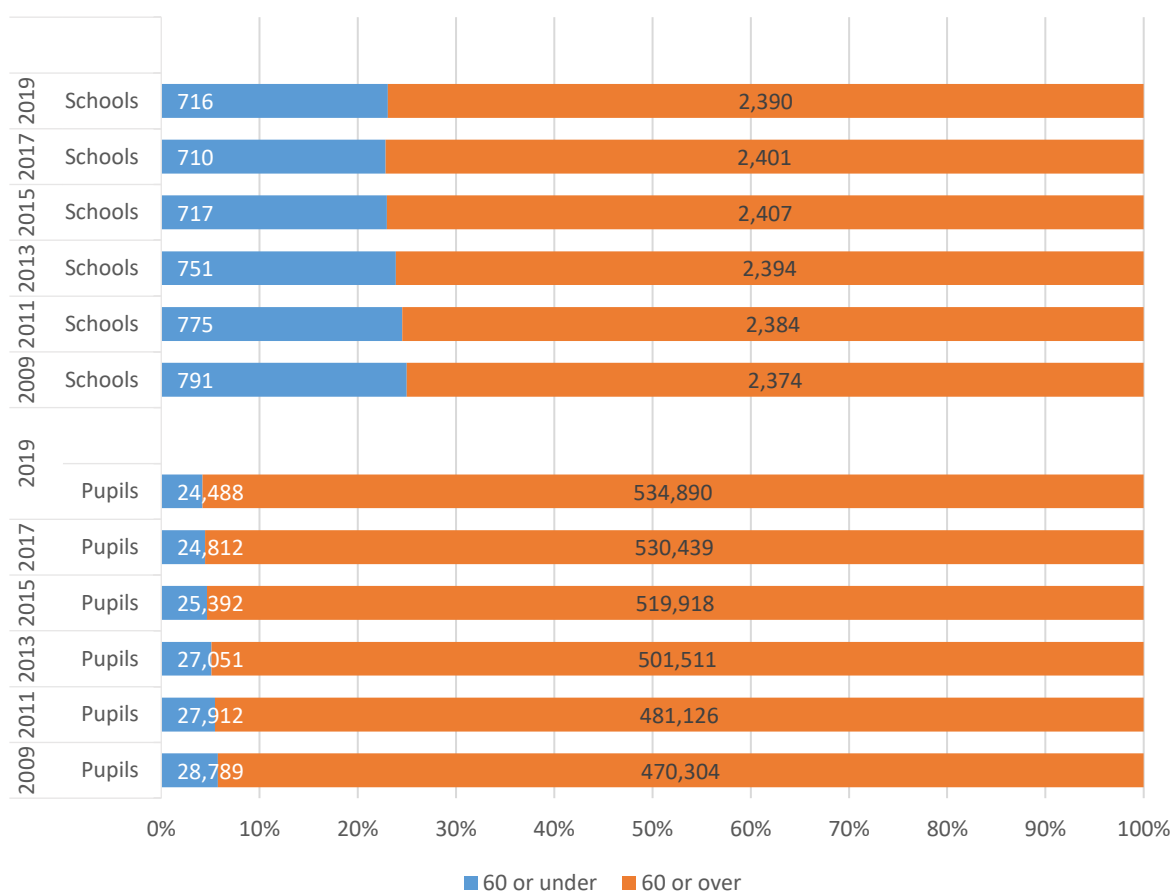
Figure 3. Changes in number of primary schools by ethos since 2009



## Small schools

Despite these ongoing closures small schools remain a distinctive feature of the Irish education system, with 716 schools having 60 or fewer pupils enrolled for the 2019 academic year. This accounts for 23.1 per cent of all schools, yet represents just 4.4 per cent of total enrolments. Since 2009 the number of small primary schools has decreased by 9.5 per cent and the number of pupils attending these schools has decreased by 14.9 per cent.

Figure 4. Mainstream primary schools and pupils classified by size of school, 2009 -2019



The prevalence of small schools varies widely by region, with slightly less than half of schools in Mayo, Roscommon and Leitrim having 60 or fewer pupils, in contrast to Fingal and South Dublin who have 1 small school each, 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.

Overall, small schools are most common in the west of Ireland (Mayo, Galway and Roscommon), representing 41.4 per cent of schools (11.9% of enrolments), while they are least prevalent in the Dublin region, accounting for only 3.8 per cent of schools and 0.4 per cent of enrolments.

Table 2. Small primary schools and enrolments by administrative county, 2019

<b>Administrative County</b>	<b>% Small Schools (1 - 60 pupils)</b>	<b>% Pupils in Small Schools</b>
<b>Border Region</b>	<b>35.8</b>	<b>10.4</b>
Cavan County Council	21.3	6.6
Donegal County Council	42.0	12.6
Leitrim County Council	48.6	16.9
Monaghan County Council	27.4	7.4
Sligo County Council	37.3	10.0
<b>West Region</b>	<b>41.4</b>	<b>11.9</b>
Galway City Council	0.0	0.0
Galway County Council	36.8	10.5
Mayo County Council	49.4	16.6
Roscommon County Council	48.9	18.2
<b>Mid-West Region</b>	<b>26.9</b>	<b>6.9</b>
Clare County Council	39.6	10.5
Tipperary County Council	25.5	8.3
Limerick City and County Council	17.9	3.5
<b>South-East Region</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>3.8</b>
Carlow County Council	19.0	4.2
Kilkenny County Council	26.8	7.5
Waterford City and County Council	10.8	2.1
Wexford County Council	12.9	2.7
<b>South-West Region</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>5.4</b>
Cork City Council	3.8	0.1
Cork County Council	23.4	4.9
Kerry County Council	37.9	11.3
<b>Dublin Region</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>0.4</b>
Dublin City Council	6.2	0.8
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	4.5	0.4
Fingal County Council	1.1	0.0
South Dublin County Council	1.0	0.1
<b>Mid-East Region</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>1.1</b>
Kildare County Council	8.8	1.0
Louth County Council	4.3	0.6
Meath County Council	6.1	0.9
Wicklow County Council	14.6	2.2
<b>Midlands Region</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>5</b>
Laois County Council	21.5	4.1
Longford County Council	35.1	8.4
Offaly County Council	12.3	2.9
Westmeath County Council	20.5	4.5
<b>Whole Country</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>4.4</b>

**Post-primary:** Total enrolments in post-primary schools stood at 371,455 at September 2019 - an increase of 8,566 pupils, or 2.4% per cent, on September 2018 (362,889). The number of girls stood at 183,920 while the number of boys stood at 187,535.

Figure 5 presents total enrolments by school ethos. Catholic schools dominated with 187,744 pupils. There were 169,180 pupils in multi-denominational schools<sup>1</sup> and 11,669 in Church of Ireland schools.

Figure 6 shows the absolute and percentage change by ethos. Pupils in multi-denominational schools increased by 4.0 per cent (6,557 pupils) over the twelve months, which was ahead of the rise in Catholic schools which saw their numbers rise by 1,770 (1.0%). Church of Ireland schools saw an increase in enrolments, by 179 (1.6%).

Figure 5. Enrolments in post-primary schools by school ethos, September 2019

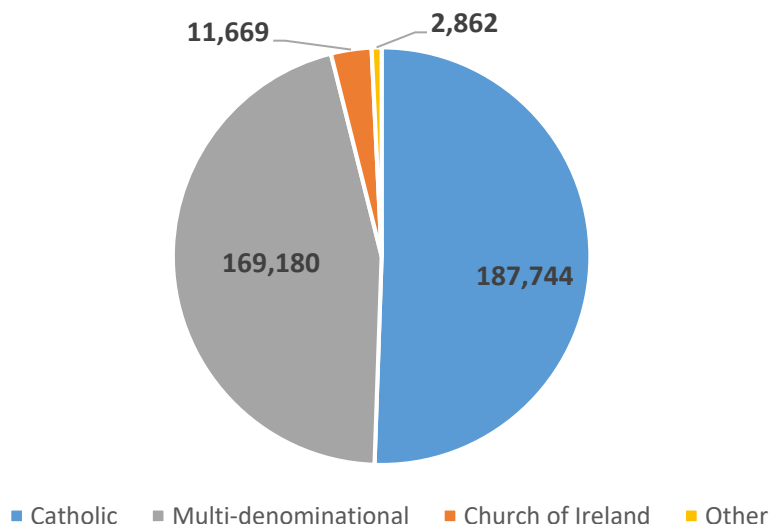
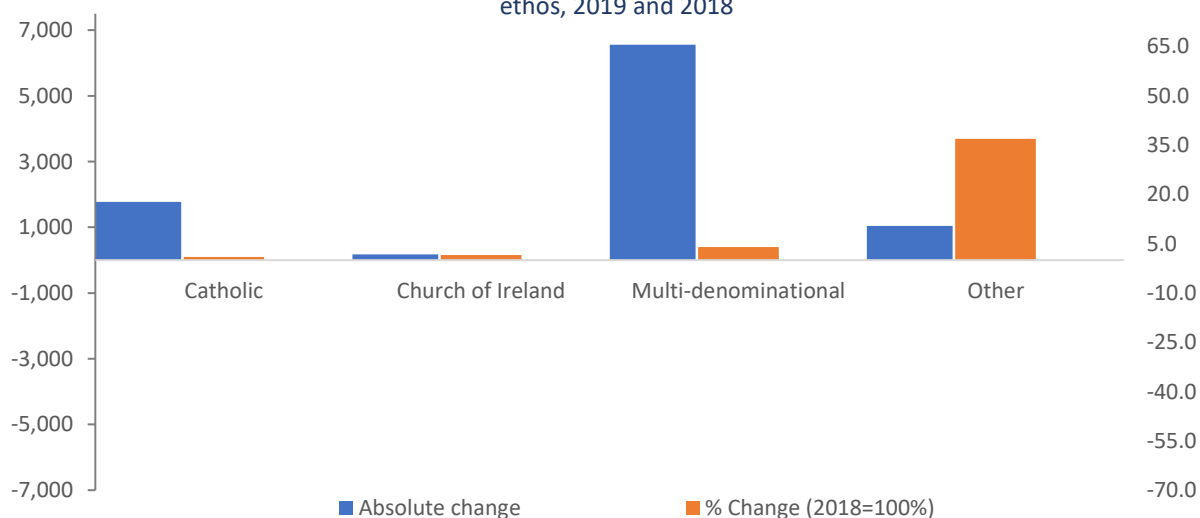


Figure 2. Absolute and percentage change in enrolment in post-primary schools, by ethos, 2019 and 2018



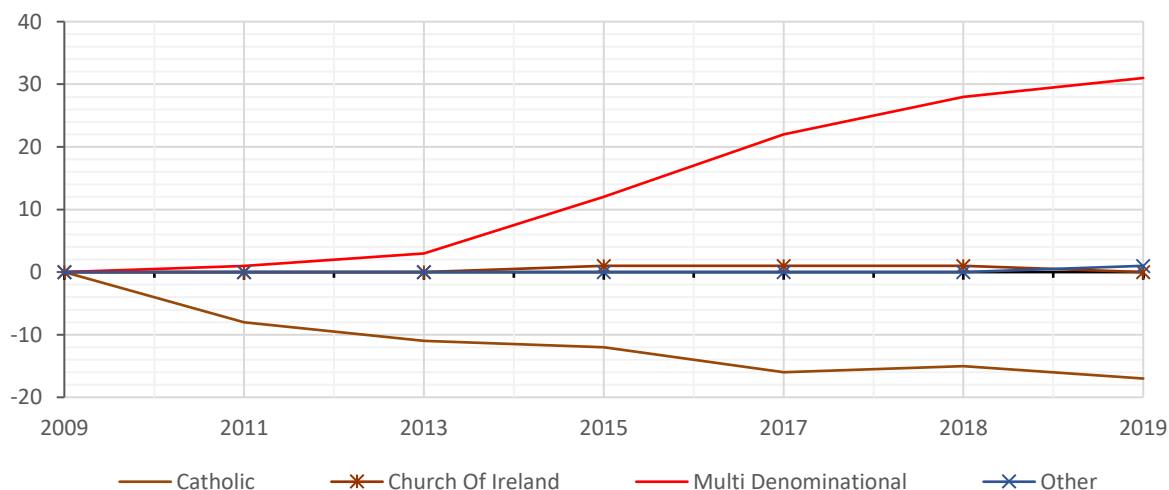
<sup>1</sup> The majority of schools under the patronage of the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) were categorised as inter-denominational up to 2018. 181 schools have since changed their description to multi-denominational but for the purpose of this report inter-denominational are combined with 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 723 in 2019. As can be seen in table 3, this growth has been led by multi-denominational schools, which have increased by 9.7 per cent in the last 10 years from 321 in 2009 to 352 in 2019. In the same period the number of Catholic schools has decreased by 4.7 per cent, from 361 to 344.

Table 3. Post-primary schools by ethos, 2009 - 2019

Ethos/Religion	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2018	2019
Catholic	361	353	350	349	345	346	344
Church of Ireland	22	22	22	23	23	23	22
Multi-denominational	321	322	324	333	343	349	352
Other	4	4	4	4	4	4	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>708</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>723</b>

Figure 7. Changes in post-primary school numbers by ethos, 2009-2019



### 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 112.9 per cent from 54 to 115, and the number of pupils enrolled in these schools showing an increase of 115.6 per cent, from just under 51,000 to just under 110,000. 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 40 per cent of pupils attend such schools, with the highest concentration found in Kildare where more than half of pupils (53.3%) are enrolled in large schools.

Figure 8. Post-primary schools and pupils classified by enrolment size, 2009 -2019

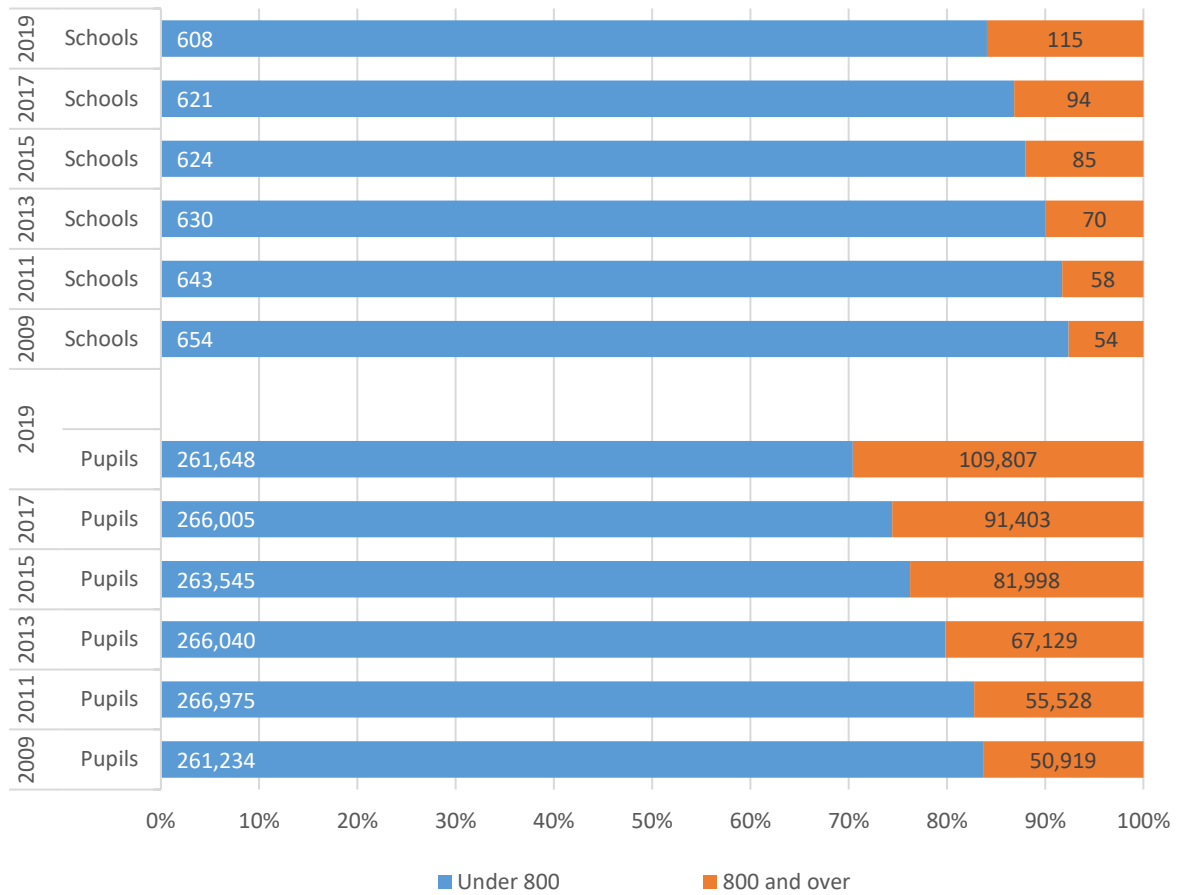


Table 4. Large post-primary schools and enrolments by administrative county, 2019

<b>Administrative County</b>	<b>% Large Schools (800+ Pupils)</b>	<b>% Pupils in Large Schools</b>
<b>Border Region</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>17.3</b>
Cavan County Council	0.0	0.0
Donegal County Council	18.5	34.9
Leitrim County Council	0.0	0.0
Monaghan County Council	0.0	0.0
Sligo County Council	7.7	19.5
<b>West Region</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>10.1</b>
Galway City Council	0.0	0.0
Galway County Council	10.8	26.5
Mayo County Council	0.0	0.0
Roscommon County Council	0.0	0.0
<b>Mid-West Region</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>18.3</b>
Clare County Council	11.1	25.2
Limerick City and County Council	10.7	20.0
Tipperary County Council	6.6	12.1
<b>South-East Region</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>37.5</b>
Carlow County Council	18.2	30.8
Kilkenny County Council	18.8	35.7
Waterford City and County Council	17.6	34.3
Wexford County Council	27.3	44.3
<b>South-West Region</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>23.9</b>
Cork City Council	3.4	7.6
Cork County Council	19.6	34.6
Kerry County Council	3.8	11.6
<b>Dublin Region</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>31.7</b>
Dublin City Council	5.3	11.7
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	15.7	29.9
Fingal County Council	29.7	47.8
South Dublin County Council	28.2	42.2
<b>Mid-East Region</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>46.7</b>
Kildare County Council	39.3	53.3
Louth County Council	33.3	46.0
Meath County Council	40.1	56.8
Wicklow County Council	13.0	22.7
<b>Midlands Region</b>	<b>25.6</b>	<b>39.7</b>
Laois County Council	30.0	45.4
Longford County Council	0.0	0.0
Offaly County Council	27.3	39.3
Westmeath County Council	38.5	54.7
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>29.6</b>



## All schools

Table 5 shows the primary and post-primary enrolments by schools ethos for years 2018 and 2019, and percentage change on 2018. As can be seen, the largest increase in both sectors occurred in multi-denominational schools with rises of 4.8 per cent and 4.0 per cent in primary and post-primary respectively. When combined multi-denominational schools increased by 4.2 per cent between 2018 and 2019.

Table 5. Primary and post-primary schools enrolments by school ethos, 2018 and 2019

	<b>Ethos/Religion</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>Difference (2018=100%)</b>
<b>Primary</b>	Catholic	505,033	503,223	-0.4
	Church of Ireland	16,476	16,312	-1.0
	Multi-denominational (incl. Inter-denominational)	36,336	38,082	4.8
	Other	1,703	1,761	3.4
<b>Post-primary</b>	Catholic	185,974	187,744	1.0
	Church of Ireland	11,490	11,669	1.6
	Multi-denominational (incl. Inter-denominational)	162,623	169,180	4.0
	Other	2,812	2,862	1.8
<b>Primary &amp; Post-primary</b>	Catholic	691,007	690,967	0.01
	Church of Ireland	27,966	27,981	0.1
	Multi-denominational (incl. Inter-denominational)	198,959	207,262	4.2
	Other	4,515	4,623	2.4

Background Notes:

The source for this data is the Annual Census for 2019/2020, 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 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019. 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 December 2019. Final data will be published in June 2020. The final data will replace the provisional data.

Queries should be sent to [statistics@education.gov.ie](mailto: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/>