



**Suirbhé chóiríocht na nGaelscoileanna ar  
son Chomhairle na Gaelscolaíochta**  
A conditions survey of Irish-medium  
schools on behalf of Comhairle na  
Gaelscolaíochta



**2025**



# Réamhrá - Foreword



**Maria Thomasson,  
Príomhfheidhmeannach  
Chomhairle na  
Gaelscolaíochta**

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Maria Thomasson,  
CEO of Comhairle na  
Gaelscolaíochta

In 2024, 7,414 pupils attend Irish-medium (IM) schools. This accumulates to a growth of 50.85% in the last 10 years. The vibrancy and continued popularity of the IM sector is due, in no small part, to the energy, dedication and dynamism shown by the supporting communities, parents, governors, teachers and principals alike.

The rapid growth of the Irish-medium Education (IME) sector has left the ill equipped and under resourced education system struggling to respond to the growing demand. The absence of a policy or strategy within the Department of Education (DE) to develop and facilitate the IME sector equates to a systemic lack of long-term planning and a reactive rather than proactive approach to meeting the accommodation needs of IME schools. Furthermore, DE's Sustainable Schools Policy (2009) does not pay much regard to the needs of the young, developing IME sector. This, coupled with the establishment of unwieldy Area Planning structures, designed to rationalise the dwindling school population, has created an unnecessarily complicated environment where IME schools are not facilitated to grow and flourish easily.

It is neither a surprise nor a secret therefore that most IM schools are housed in temporary accommodation. Whilst DE has made significant capital investment in the IME sector over the years, this accommodation has been usually allocated on an ad-hoc basis and, without a ring-fenced budget to regularly replace and refresh this accommodation, many gaelscoileanna find themselves in buildings that are unequipped to effectively deliver the Northern Ireland Curriculum (NIC).

Irish-medium pupils and their parents deserve better than this.

Irish-medium educators and school support staff deserve better than this.

The challenging financial climate, coupled with the fact that no Irish-medium schools featured on DE's last three capital investment calls, despite meeting the eligibility criteria, has led to a stalemate across the wider sector. Moreover, those gaelscoileanna named on previous capital investment lists almost a decade ago are yet to progress to the first stages of the process. This delay has resulted in a deteriorating school estate and a bottle neck of need which in turn has created a growing sense of frustration amongst IM school communities and parents alike.

Additionally, the fund available to provide accommodation for new IME early years provision has not been replenished on a regular basis and is now almost non-existent. As a result of this financial constraint and uncertainty, Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) has been unable to appropriately support communities wishing to establish new IME provision in their local area in recent years. This is contrary to Article 89 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 which places a statutory duty on the Department of Education to encourage and facilitate the development of Irish-medium education.



IM pupils with additional needs and their families are also disproportionately affected by this accommodation crisis. Like in all sectors, the number of IM pupils in receipt of a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) has risen exponentially in recent years. With special schools bursting at the seams, in response the DE and the Education Authority (EA) have established Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools (SPiMS). Currently, only 6 active SPiMS exist within the IME sector, all of which are located in Belfast. The interest from the IME sector to establish SPiMS classes has been overwhelmingly receptive and positive however, due to the insufficient, inappropriate nature of the accommodation, most gaelscoileanna have been deemed ineligible. Therefore, IME schools are not being facilitated or encouraged to offer this resource to SEN pupils and their families. Irish-medium pupils with additional learning needs and their families deserve better than this. The IME sector requires the establishment of a regional network of SPiMS so that no parent has to choose between IME and the appropriate support for their child.

A school community is so much more than the building in which it's housed and this is especially true in the IM context. However, it is important to recognise that poor school buildings can have a significant negative impact on both pupil health and educational outcomes. Some examples of these are outlined below;

#### **Health Issues:**

- **Physical Health:** Buildings with poor ventilation, inadequate lighting, or structural issues can contribute to health problems such as respiratory issues, allergies, and headaches among students and staff.
- **Safety Concerns:** Schools with structural deficiencies, old or damaged buildings, or lack of safety measures can pose risks of accidents and injuries to students and staff.

#### **Mental Health:**

- **Stress and Anxiety:** Uncomfortable or unsafe learning environments can contribute to increased stress and anxiety among students, impacting their ability to focus, learn, and succeed academically.
- **Negative Learning Environment:** Poorly maintained buildings can create a negative atmosphere that affects students' motivation, engagement, and overall well-being.

#### **Educational Outcomes:**

- **Academic Performance:** Inadequate facilities can hinder teaching and learning processes. Limited access to appropriate accommodation can impact on the school's ability to deliver the NIC e.g. lack of a multi-purpose hall to safely and effectively facilitate PE lessons, no library or IT facilities to enable pupils to work and study independently. Poor lighting, noise distractions, and uncomfortable temperatures can impair students' concentration and academic performance.
- **Attendance and Dropout Rates:** Unhealthy or unsafe school environments may lead to higher absenteeism rates among students. Moreover, students may be more likely to drop out of school if they perceive the environment as unsupportive or detrimental to their well-being.
- **Retention of Staff:** Teacher retention/attrition rates have been impacted by poor accommodation according to studies.

#### **Equity Issues:**

- **Disadvantaged Communities:** Schools in low-income areas are more likely to suffer from poor building conditions due to lack of funding for maintenance and renovations. This exacerbates existing educational inequalities, as students in these communities

already face numerous challenges in accessing quality education. Given that 1/3 of Irish-medium schools are located in the 100 most Super Output Areas (SOAs), this is a major concern within the sector.

- **Establishment of SPiMS:** A limited number of SPiMS exist within the IME sector, none of which are located outside Belfast. This is an equality issue as the current accommodation crisis within the sector makes IME inaccessible for SEN pupils outside Belfast requiring this type of setting.
- **Resource Allocation:** Limited resources spent on maintaining or upgrading school facilities may divert funding from other educational resources, further impacting the quality of education provided.

Addressing these issues requires regular and significant investment in infrastructure maintenance and renovation, as well as policies aimed at ensuring all students and staff have access to safe, healthy, and conducive learning/working environments.

In the context of the statutory duty, it is incumbent on DE to agree and implement an Accommodation Improvement Plan for the Irish-medium sector as a matter of urgency. CnaG is committed to working proactively and collaboratively with the department and the IME sector to construct and implement this plan.

Furthermore, it is the view of Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) that DE should adopt and implement an Irish-medium Education Policy to ensure the sector is enabled to grow and develop in line with parental preference. This policy should be developed in conjunction with CnaG to identify priority areas for development and should include steps to redress shortfalls in an incremental and timely fashion. This policy should also attract and secure annual ring-fenced, protected funding to implement change and deliver improved outcomes across the IME sector on a short, medium and long-term basis.

A comprehensive review of the accommodation of the IME sector was recommended as part of DE's Review of IME carried out in 2008. Like too many of the recommendations contained within the report, the sector still awaits implementation.

In conclusion, in launching this report, CnaG is reiterating the content of recommendation 8 in the 2008 Review of Irish-medium Education which stated that the following actions should be taken by the Department of Education to address the accommodation crisis in the Irish-medium sector;

- DE should ensure the accommodation needs of existing Irish-medium primary schools are clearly identified.
- DE should ensure the needs of viable Irish-medium schools are considered in programmes of capital expenditure on the schools' estate.
- DE should work with the Irish-medium sector to identify a suitable mechanism to provide funding as a matter of urgency, to address the most pressing accommodation deficiencies in existing schools and to facilitate demand for new IM provision.

Given that sixteen years have now passed since these recommendations were made and that the need is greater today than it was in 2008, it is imperative that DE takes immediate action to ensure every child and young person in the IME sector is happy, learning and succeeding.







## Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta

The Trust Fund for Irish–Medium Education

I would like to congratulate Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta on commissioning this survey of the current state of accommodation in the IME sector in the north. Congratulations also to ArdMackel Architects for presenting a comprehensive, exhaustive and evidence-based report which shows the state of the sector. The overall picture is not very encouraging. As a sector too many of our schools have been housed in temporary accommodation – in some cases the word ‘temporary’ has been stretched out to more than three decades – and on sites that are not fit for purpose. This survey shows that there is an accommodation deficit in the IME sector, and it needs to be addressed in a systematic and targeted manner.

The reason for the accommodation deficit in the IME sector is clear and it relates to the surge in the establishment of IME primary schools from the late 1990’s to the 2010’s. When the then education minister Martin McGuinness revised the recognition criteria for setting up primary schools in 2001 it released the demand for IME that had previously been, if not suppressed, actively discouraged by the state. This effectively led to the creation of a sector that had not been anticipated by the Department of Education and, to a large extent, the current accommodation deficit is a direct result of that surge and the failure by the DE to resource the capital needs of the emergent sector.

According to the DE’s own statistics, there have been 31 primary schools set up in the north from 2000 – 2022. Of those schools 21 are Irish-medium schools, more than two thirds of new schools in the past 20 years. Almost all of the 10 non-IM schools are in permanent school buildings on sites that are fit for purpose, which contrasts starkly with the other 21 IME schools, of which one school, Gaelscoil na gCrann, in Omagh, is in a newbuild, another, Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach is in a modular build and three others are on the majors capital list. The other 16 schools are in temporary accommodation that ranges from decent to extremely poor.

There is progress being made and recognition needs to be given to the tremendous efforts being made by some of the officials in the Investment and Infrastructure Division of the DE, but the situation cannot be remedied within the existing parameters.

The DE needs to address the lack of capital support for the emergent IME sector, it needs to make a business case to the Executive for targeted funding to address the accommodation deficit in the IME sector. The Education Order 1998 places a statutory duty on the DE to encourage and facilitate the development of IME and the Treacy Judgement 2011 found that the DE could take positive steps or remove obstacles in ways that it need not for other sectors to further that statutory duty. We need the Minister for Education to show leadership and bring fresh, imaginative thinking to resolve this issue which has the potential to ghettoise a significant part of the educational estate. One suggestion which has merit, is to set aside a number of places for IME schools on the future major capital calls, at least until the structural deficiencies of the IME sector are closer to the other sectors in the schools’ estate.

It is now 51 years since Bunscoil Phobal Feirste opened its doors, so there needs to be an acceptance that IME is not an aberration or is a temporary phenomenon, it needs to be embraced as an example of the inclusive pluralist ethos of governance in the north of Ireland in the 21st century. There is only one permanent IME school building outside of Belfast and no child attending IME in Derry City has any experience of being taught in a permanent brick building. And we haven’t even begun to discuss the challenge of ensuring IME post primary education in the region. These are facts that must be challenged going xxx



forward. There was an acceptance from the generation of pioneering parents in the 80's, 90's and 2000's that in choosing IME it meant the child would not be afforded the same standard of accommodation or resources as other children in English medium schools. But that has now been replaced by an expectation of equality in all aspects of the child's experience on his/her educational journey. I commend this report and see it as another step towards parity for the IME community and I hope it sparks a constructive dialogue with the Department of Education.

**Pilib Ó Ruanaidh,  
Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta**



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# Context

ARdMackel Architects was commissioned by CnaG to undertake a conditions survey on the current state of a number of the primary school buildings in the IIME sector in terms of infrastructure and accommodation, measured against the Departmental Handbook as it relates to primary school accommodation. The full list of the surveyed schools is noted below.

The DE Design Standards for Primary Schools are articulated in Sections 3a and 3b of the Building Handbook, specifically, Section 3a Primary Schools Building Handbook, Edition 3 September 2020 and Section 3b Primary Schools Schedules of Accommodation, Edition 3, September 2020. The DE Handbooks are complemented by an Environmental Assessment Guide, intended to help with strategies to achieve BREEAM 'Excellence' for new build schools, and to achieve 'Very Good' for extension and refurbishment projects. The environmental assessment guide did not form part of our evaluation process, as our focus was on the spatial and dimensional requirements.

The departmental documents are intended as guidance for the construction of new schools and Section 3a, 1.2iv adds that 'a more pragmatic approach, particularly to the Schedules of Accommodation and associated areas is expected' for existing school buildings. That said, the reference documents provide 'the general design requirements and room inter-relationships applicable to the design of primary schools', and, therefore, the physical, spatial and dimensional expectations to assist the education of children and young people.

The September 2020 edition, 2.1, notes that the delivery of primary education 'has continued to develop over the last 10 - 15 years ...' and refers to 'improved resources and general educational facilities within the school system', however, importantly, no such improvement of resources or educational facilities were evident to us, in the IIME sector, in our surveys undertaken February to April 2021, and late-May 2022, June 2023, and updated in June 2024.

It is one thing to be pragmatic and flexible in this regard, but this survey reveals a systemic under-provision of an entire educational sector.

The teachers, teaching assistants, parents and Boards of Governors are endeavouring to provide stimulating, growing, learning environments but are desperately restricted by the physical resources and lack of key spaces, particularly school halls. The educational environment and intentions for shared learning, and creation towards a respectful, caring society with mutual trust and understanding is strongly impacted by such lack of physical resources.

The following reports for each of the surveyed schools indicate the spatial and dimensional under-provision. Each report notes and compares the site size and play areas in comparison with the DE recommended site areas and also includes a table of comparative room sizes, including a school hall (Multi-Purpose Hall). A series of captioned photographs accompanies each report.

School Meals accommodation is provided by the Education Authority and is not provided by the Department of Education and the room areas are not therefore included in the enclosed tables. It is the case, however, that school meals are provided in the schools, and lunches are served in less than adequate facilities. In a number of instances, the school meals furniture was stored in corridors and rooms, and in what were designed as 'resource spaces', but are perceived, understood and used as wide corridors.

Not one of the 16 surveyed schools met the areas recommended in the DE Primary Schools' Handbook Limit of Internal Area (LIA). Only six of the sixteen schools had any grass play

areas, and four of these were but a fraction of the required areas. The bulk of the Irish language schools surveyed were 4-class base or 5-class-base and it is shocking then to realise that the extent of spatial under-provision across the surveyed schools is the equivalent of either 6.7 times the full spatial provision (LIA) of a 4-class base school, or 5.7 times (LIA) of a 5-class base school.

Several of the surveys at the schools were undertaken at times during the Covid pandemic when the schools were closed to pupils, but travel was permitted and some schools were providing teaching and support for children of key workers.

The survey updates, however, were undertaken when the schools were in full operation.



## DE Design Guidelines and Design Considerations

Section 3a Primary Schools Building Handbook, Edition 3 September 2020 and Section 3b Primary Schools Schedules of Accommodation, Edition 3, September 2020 include sample schedules (Appendix 3) and refer to a number of important factors:

- provision of resource spaces with direct access and vision to an appropriate number of adjacent classrooms
- cloakroom/toilet accommodation preferably en-suite between pairs of classrooms (as appropriate) and with external access
- circulation space generally being limited as far as is practical
- the requirement for limited built-in furniture
- the need for areas for community and after hours use to be separately zoned
- the likelihood that it may not be feasible or cost effective to provide resource spaces in existing buildings; and
- satisfy the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005

The Room Data sheets for each of the principal rooms and spaces in a primary school are clearly detailed and described in Section 3a of the Building Handbook. Each room data sheet notes the requirements for each of several planning matters, including Room Activities, Size, Location, Layout, General Guidance; Internal Environment, including Acoustic performance, Daylighting; Building Fabric, including walls, floors, ceiling, doors, windows, ironmongery, fixtures and fittings, and storage. The mechanical and electrical service provisions are also listed for each room, each with several factors to be considered.

The tables included within each survey report are based on the 2020 Schedule of Accommodation tables (The most recent DE document).

Section 3a Primary Schools Building Handbook, Edition 3 September 2020 in Appendix 2 includes a Table of Play and Site Areas for a range of pupil enrolment categories and Section 3b Primary Schools Schedules of Accommodation, Edition 3, September 2020 includes the schedules for 4-, 5-, 6-, and 7-classroom primary schools which have been used for the purposes of this survey. We also cross-checked these against the older 2011 edition, specifically where there are major omissions of rooms or where room areas are demonstrably at variance with the current Departmental standards.

## DE Site Area

Section 3a Primary Schools Building Handbook, Edition 3 September 2020, at Appendix 2 includes the preferred minimum site and play areas for each of the enrolment number categories. The notes to the appendix add 'within the confines of an urban setting or when redeveloping an existing site' ... that the Department will consider the minimum area on a case-by-case basis.

Many of the surveyed schools are in urban or built-up areas and as such do suffer from lack of external grass and hard play areas, but this chronic under-provision indicates that urgent studies are required to scope alternative sites for the schools concerned or to explore possibilities for acquisition of contiguous spaces to extend the footprint of the school site.

## DE Schedules of Accommodation

Section 3b Primary Schools Schedules of Accommodation, Edition 3, September 2020 includes the schedules for 4-, 5-, 6-, and 7-classroom primary schools which have been used for the purposes of this survey. Each Schedule of Accommodation lists the spaces and their floor areas required and also refers to the room data sheets which provide more detail for each space. The 4- and 5-classroom schools have 22 rooms /spaces on the list; the

6-classroom school has 23 rooms /spaces, and the 7-classroom school has 30 listed rooms /spaces.

What is demonstrably clear is that most schools in the IM sector suffer from lack of multi-purpose hall, multi-purpose rooms, the stores associated with the hall, pupils' changing at the hall, and lack of separate hygiene rooms. The following reports for each school note the extent, in terms of square metres, of the 'missing rooms'.

The lack of provision of Multi- Purpose Halls and their associated storage spaces is a major omission at very many of the schools. And, as a result, pupils have no communal indoor gathering, learning or play space. In one school, Bunscoil an lúir, the multi-purpose hall is so 'multi-purpose' that it functions primarily as a circulation space.

In the few schools that do have halls, they also function as dining rooms, and, therefore, technically, should not be considered as part of the Limit of Internal Area. That some schools manage staff time to re-arrange furniture to use the space as flexibly as possible only points to the lack of provision and the searing gap in much needed spatial resources.

The lack of a Hygiene Room and lack of adequate provision of changing spaces for pupils is also a problem in the operation of all the schools.

In several of the schools, the use of existing buildings and clusters of 'mobile classrooms' (at varying levels of dimension, floor areas, thermal value, material quality and lighting levels) provided much needed space when first required but are not now fit-for-purpose. The schools and the pupils suffer from lack of adequate and appropriate room areas for all the major required spaces. The 'mobile classroom' provision of separate blocks does not facilitate cross peer group learning and the lack of shared resources spaces restricts learning opportunities.

This survey does not address the chronic poor material quality of many of the schools. Most schools are in urgent need of repairs and replacement of elements, including windows etc. Rather, the client brief for this survey was to document the current state of primary school buildings in the IME sector in terms of infrastructure and accommodation, measured against the Departmental Handbook, as it relates to primary school accommodation.

## Summary of Survey Findings

DE recommended; LIA, hard play, and grass/soft play area requirements for each school, as defined by the enrolment category, were compared with the actual provision in each school and colour coded as follows:

| Percentage v DE Recommended provision | Colour Coding |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| <50%                                  | Red           |
| >50% - <70%                           | Orange        |
| >70% - <90%                           | Yellow        |
| >90%                                  | Green         |

A summary of survey findings is contained on the pages overleaf.



## Site & Limit of Internal Area

Department of Education required site area, and Limit of Internal Area (LIA) requirement for each school as defined by the enrolment category:

|    | School                   | DE site requirement | School site | Percentage of site area | DE LIA      | School area | Percentage of LIA |
|----|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|
| 1  | Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir   | 10,000sqm           | 3,369sqm    | 34%                     | 1,443sqm    | 961sqm      | 67%               |
| 2  | Bunscoil Cholmcille      | 6,700sqm            | 4,928sqm    | 74%                     | 1,032sqm    | 580sqm      | 56%               |
| 3  | Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí   | 6,700sqm            | 2,972sqm    | 44%                     | 1,032sqm    | 574sqm      | 56%               |
| 4  | Gaelscoil na Speiríní    | 6,300sqm            | 1,364sqm    | 22%                     | 884sqm      | 432sqm      | 49%               |
| 5  | Gaelscoil Neachtain      | 6,700sqm            | 3,865sqm    | 58%                     | 1,032sqm    | 718sqm      | 70%               |
| 6  | Gaelscoil na Daróige     | 6,300sqm            | 2,270sqm    | 36%                     | 884sqm      | 516sqm      | 58%               |
| 7  | Bunscoil an Lúir         | 6,700sqm            | 1,602sqm    | 24%                     | 1,032sqm    | 735sqm      | 71%               |
| 8  | Gaelscoil na mBeann      | 6,300sqm            | 5,400sqm    | 86%                     | 884sqm      | 532sqm      | 61%               |
| 9  | Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche | 6,700sqm            | 5,730sqm    | 85%                     | 1,032sqm    | 638sqm      | 62%               |
| 10 | Gaelscoil Eoghain        | 6,700sqm            | 3,238sqm    | 48%                     | 1,032sqm    | 653sqm      | 63%               |
| 11 | Bunscoil an Traonaigh    | 6,300sqm            | 3,434sqm    | 55%                     | 884sqm      | 538sqm      | 61%               |
| 12 | Gaelscoil an Chaistil    | 6,300sqm            | 6,000sqm    | 95%                     | 884sqm      | 631sqm      | 71%               |
| 13 | Gaelscoil na Móna        | 6,300sqm            | 4,155sqm    | 66%                     | 884sqm      | 585sqm      | 66%               |
| 14 | Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach | 6,300sqm            | 11,000sqm   | 174%                    | 884sqm      | 627sqm      | 71%               |
| 15 | Gaelscoil an Lonnáin     | 6,300sqm            | 1,200sqm    | 19%                     | 884sqm      | 466sqm      | 53%               |
| 16 | Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain  | 6,300sqm            | 1,284sqm    | 20%                     | 884sqm      | 516sqm      | 58%               |
|    |                          | 106,900sqm          | 61,811sqm   | 57.8%                   | = 15,591sqm | = 9,675sqm  | 62.05%            |

## Soft & Hard Play Areas

Department of Education required grass/soft & hard play areas for each school as defined by the enrolment category:

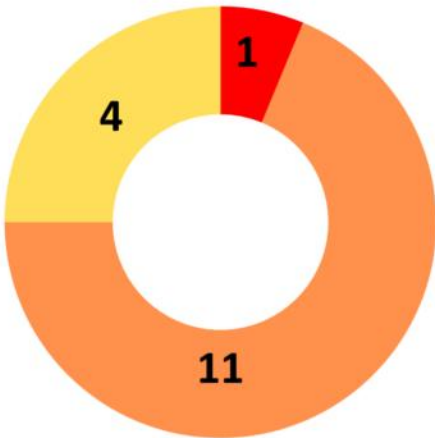
|    | School                   | DE grass play | School site | Percentage of site area | DE hard play | School hard play area | Percentage of LIA |
|----|--------------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1  | Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir   | 5,000sqm      | NIL         | 0%                      | 1,100sqm     | 445sqm                | 40%               |
| 2  | Bunscoil Cholmcille      | 3,000sqm      | NIL         | 0%                      | 800sqm       | 1,086sqm              | 135%              |
| 3  | Gaelscoil na Daróige     | 3,000sqm      | NIL         | 0%                      | 650sqm       | 623sqm                | 96%               |
| 4  | Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí   | 3,000sqm      | NIL         | 0%                      | 800sqm       | 432sqm                | 54%               |
| 5  | Gaelscoil na Speiríní    | 3,000sqm      | 200sqm      | 7%                      | 650sqm       | 210sqm                | 32%               |
| 6  | Gaelscoil Neachtain      | 3,000sqm      | NIL         | 0%                      | 800sqm       | 1,000sqm              | 125%              |
| 7  | Bunscoil an Lúir         | 3,000sqm      | NIL         | 0%                      | 800sqm       | 400sqm                | 50%               |
| 8  | Gaelscoil na mBeann      | 3,000sqm      | NIL         | 0%                      | 650sqm       | 297sqm                | 46%               |
| 9  | Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche | 3,000sqm      | 2,000sqm    | 67%                     | 800sqm       | 900sqm                | 112%              |
| 10 | Gaelscoil Eoghain        | 3,000sqm      | NIL         | 0%                      | 800sqm       | 290sqm                | 36%               |
| 11 | Bunscoil an Traonaigh    | 3,000sqm      | 385sqm      | 13%                     | 650sqm       | 800sqm                | 123%              |
| 12 | Gaelscoil an Chaistil    | 3,000sqm      | 1,270sqm    | 42%                     | 650sqm       | 650sqm                | 100%              |
| 13 | Gaelscoil na Móna        | 3,000sqm      | 500sqm      | 17%                     | 650sqm       | 334sqm                | 51%               |
| 14 | Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach | 3,000sqm      | 3,000sqm    | 100%                    | 650sqm       | 684sqm                | 102%              |
| 15 | Gaelscoil an Lonnáin     | 3,000sqm      | NIL         | 0%                      | 650sqm       | 190sqm                | 30%               |
| 16 | Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain  | 3,000sqm      | NIL         | 0%                      | 650sqm       | 325sqm                | 50%               |
|    |                          | = 50,000sqm   | = 6,855sqm  | 14%                     | = 11,750sqm  | = 8,666sqm            | 74%               |





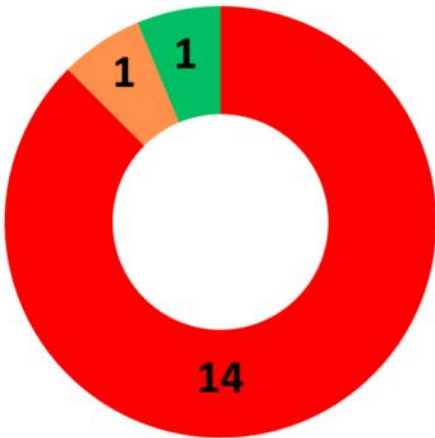
### Site Area

| School Provision v DE Recommended provision | Number of Schools |
|---|-------------------|
| <50%  | 8                 |
| >50% - <70%                                 | 3                 |
| >70% - <90%                                 | 3                 |
| >90%  | 2                 |



### LIA

| School Provision v DE Recommended provision | Number of schools |
|---|-------------------|
| <50%  | 1                 |
| >50% - <70%                                 | 11                |
| >70% - <90%                                 | 4                 |
| >90%  | 0                 |



### Grass Play Area

| School Provision v DE Recommended provision | Number of schools |
|---|-------------------|
| <50%  | 14                |
| >50% - <70%                                 | 1                 |
| >70% - <90%                                 | 0                 |
| >90%  | 1                 |



### Hard Play Area

| School Provision v DE Recommended provision | Number of Schools |
|---|-------------------|
| <50%  | 5                 |
| >50% - <70%                                 | 4                 |
| >70% - <90%                                 | 0                 |
| >90%  | 7                 |

## Way Forward

In summary, we surveyed 16 schools across the North of Ireland, and although, during the time of the surveys, many of the schools were closed, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we had opportunity to view and appraise the spatial resources available as teaching and learning spaces for 1,609 children, and saw 'at first hand' the compromises and balances provided by committed teaching professionals and their support staff who have given up valuable staff spaces to facilitate rooms for the educational needs of the children.

As is well-articulated by others, the Irish-medium sector is rooted in the inter-generational, mutual inter-dependency of family and friends and that, of course, also needs spatial expression to provide the support spaces for families, and, in particular, for young people in inner-city areas where levels of deprivation within the community are high and which often manifest in behavioural problems in schools. All strongly suggest that notwithstanding the gaps in the spatial provision, that further additional hubs and support spaces are required for the sector. No such educational requirements, however, are factored into the DE School's Handbook.

The DE Design Guidelines and Design Considerations refer to several 'important factors', which are listed above, and which require some critique and challenge, particularly as the implications of this report are disseminated and discussed and some way forward devised to ensure compliance across each of the areas.

The understandable desire, and absolute need, in some schools to use so-called 'resource spaces' as teaching spaces, or standard classrooms, does give each cohort and year group autonomy and its own valuable space, though it does remove the possibility of more flexible learning for other year-groups. That said, too many of the 'resource spaces' were remoted from the classrooms and could not possibly offer the 'direct access and vision to an appropriate number of adjacent classrooms', envisioned by the authors of the Building Handbook.

In one school, Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach, the 'resource space' was designed as a widening to either side of the corridor, and is remote from the classrooms, and is, therefore, perceived and used as circulation and casual storage.

Circulation in many of the schools was problematic, not just that Halls were used as circulation through-routes, and in one instance, the classrooms themselves were through-routes, but that what appears as external play and amenity space is also compromised as pupils move from one classroom to another during periods of play for year-groups. This was made much worse, of course, by the remote location of a single external located toilet block accommodation at Bunscoil Cholmcille, in Derry.

The gaps in the provision (as headlined at the beginning of this paper) are obvious and startling, and there is much work to be done to lobby for full and proper accommodation for all schools. But there is a meanwhile period: an interregnum that could be used to imaginatively explore means to connect; to build low-energy, loose-fit structures, and enclosures, to improve the accommodation provision and to improve the spatial and material experience for the children and staff.

There are examples, elsewhere, of the use of connecting structures that could, with some level of imagination and innovation, find means to connect the structures and extend the learning experience. This is not to say that the proper and full space standards should be delayed. They absolutely should not.



# Schools

The following 16 Irish-medium primary schools were identified for survey and ARdMackel undertook the surveys from February – April 2021, May 2022, June 2023, and updated in June 2024.

**Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir**

128 Bóthar na Leice, Doire, Cathair Dhoire, BT48 6NP

**Bunscoil Cholmcille**

40a Bóthar Bhaile an Stiallaigh, Doire, Cathair Dhoire, BT48 8EX

**Gaelscoil na Daróige**

Corráin Uí Nualláin, Doire, Cathair Dhoire, BT48 0PD

**Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí**

40 Sráid an Tionól, Machaire Fíolta, Contae Dhoire, BT45 6BW

**Gaelscoil na Speiríní**

82 Bóthar na Sé Bhaile, Baile na Croise, Contae Dhoire, BT45 7BB

**Gaelscoil Neachtain**

8 Sráid an tSéipéil, Dún Geimhin, Contae Dhoire, BT47 4SE

**Bunscoil an Iúir**

74 Sráid na Cille Móire, An t-Iúir, Contae an Dúin, BT34 2DH

**Gaelscoil na mBeann**

127A Bóthar an Chaisleáin Nua, Cill Chaoil, Contae an Dúin, BT34 4NL

**Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche**

32 Cuarbhóthar, Caisleán Uidhlin, Contae an Dúin, BT31 9EB

**Gaelscoil Eoghain**

32 Sráid an tSéipéil, Corr Críochach, Contae Thír Eoghain, BT80 8QD

**Bunscoil an Traonaigh**

10 Drumbrughas Thuaidh, Lios na Scéithe, Contae Fhear Manach, BT92 0PE

**Gaelscoil an Chaistil**

5 Bóthar na hÁithe, Baile an Chaistil, Contae Aontroim, BT54 6QQ

**Gaelscoil na Móna**

1 Nasc na Mona, Béal Feirste, Contae Aontroim, BT11 8QB

**Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach**

15 Bóthar Lann Abhaigh, Cromghlinn, Contae Aontroim, BT29 4LA

**Gaelscoil an Lonnain,**

61 Bóthar na bhFál, Béal Feirste, Contae Aontroim, BT12 4PD

**Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain, (EA Controlled School)**

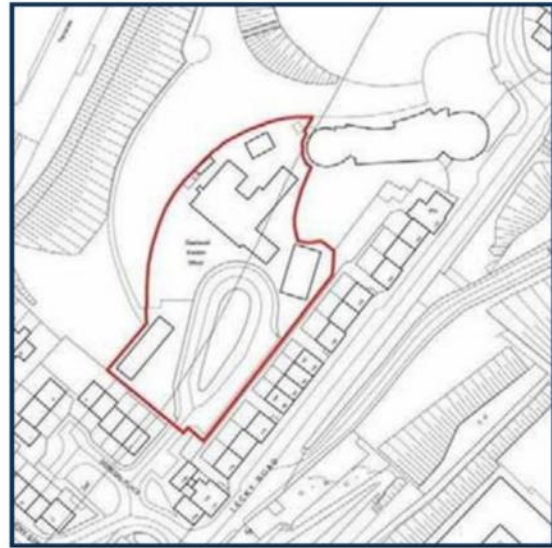
10 Sráid Lancaster, Béal Feirste, BT15 IE2

| School   | Enrolled<br>R1 - R7 | Approved<br>Enrolment | Class base    |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| <b>Cathair is Contae Dhoire</b>                |                     |                       |               |
| Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir                         | 158                 | 182                   | 7-class base  |
| Bunscoil Cholmcille                            | 126                 | 140                   | 5-class base  |
| Gaelscoil na Daróige                           | 114                 | 100                   | 4-class base  |
| Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí                         | 103                 | 125                   | 5-class base  |
| Gaelscoil na Speiríní                          | 79                  | 87                    | 4-class base* |
| Gaelscoil Neachtain                            | 128                 | 145                   | 5-class base  |
| <b>Contae an Dúin</b>                          |                     |                       |               |
| Bunscoil an Iúir                               | 98                  | 129                   | 5-class base  |
| Gaelscoil na mBeann                            | 94                  | 87                    | 4-class base* |
| Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche                       | 131                 | 130                   | 5-class base  |
| <b>Contae Thír Eoghain</b>                     |                     |                       |               |
| Gaelscoil Eoghain                              | 107                 | 135                   | 5-class base  |
| <b>Contae Fhear Manach</b>                     |                     |                       |               |
| Bunscoil an Traonaigh                          | 65                  | 58                    | 4-class base* |
| <b>Contae Aontroma</b>                         |                     |                       |               |
| Gaelscoil an Chaistil                          | 87                  | 116                   | 4-class base  |
| Gaelscoil na Móna                              | 87                  | 145                   | 5-class base  |
| Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach                       | 99                  | 105                   | 4-class base  |
| Gaelscoil an Lonnáin                           | 46                  | 71                    | 4-class base* |
| Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain (EA Controlled School) | 50                  | 87                    | 4-class base* |

*\*Gaelscoil na Spéiríní, Gaelscoil na mBeann, Bunscoil an Traonaigh, Gaelscoil an Lonnáin, and Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain have approved enrolment numbers at a lesser number than the 'Enrolment Number Category' in Appendix 2 of Section 3a of the Primary Schools Building Handbook. For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that a 4-class school is the base point for the spatial provision in a primary school, and as such we have used the Schedule of Accommodation for a 4-classroom school as provided in the Primary School Building Handbook.*

**Schools were contacted for final adjustments and accuracy in December 2024. All information is correct as of this date.  
School enrolment data is sourced from DE's 2023/24 published enrolment figures.**





## Introduction

Naíscóil Éadain Mhóir was established in 1997 and it was followed by the establishment of Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir in 1998 with 6 children. It was located beside Seán Dolan's GAA. The Gaelscoil remained on this site to 2001 until its relocation to its present site at the Gasyard, Brandywell, Derry. The Department of Education officially recognised the school in 2002. In 2009 the Department and Education Authority constructed a small multi-purpose hall (107sqm) with adjoining store, toilets, serving kitchen and serving hatch. (Total floor area at 140sqm).

Despite its continuous battle against inadequacy of its accommodation and site size, enrolments at the school have increased over recent years. At present, there are 158 children attending Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir and 26 children attending Naíscóil Éadain Mhóir which exceeds the sustainability threshold (140) making it eligible for the Department of Education's capital list.

## Overview

Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir is located at the Gasyard, Brandywell, Derry. The school is located on a very restricted site which it has outgrown substantially for some time. It has been submitted to the last two Capital Calls by the Department of Education but, to date, has not been approved for the capital list. The facilities in school fall far below the guidance from DE Handbook, and concerning Health and Safety issues are arising due to the state of the buildings and the lack of space on the school site for safe parking. The school grounds are on long-term lease from Gasyard Development Trust, who have submitted a letter informing the school that they have plans for the land and that Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir will need to vacate the site.

## Survey

The enrolment number category for Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir is 181 – 210 pupils and as such the recommended site area is 1.0 ha (10,000sqm). The DE recommended site area includes 5,000sqm of grass play and 1,100sqm of hard play. Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir has no grass play and only 445sqm of hard play.

The site (at 3,369sqm) is less than 40% of the DE recommended site area, and the hard play area is 655sqm less than requirements.

A general 7-classroom primary school LIA, including services rooms and circulations, but excluding SMA, has a recommended area of 1,443sqm.

The teaching accommodation at Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir is provided within four prefabricated buildings, built over several phases – most of which have linked corridors. The floor area of the school is 961sqm.

The following table indicates the under-provision of support spaces, resources, school hall /multi-purpose rooms, and storage areas. The total amount of net floor space not provided and, therefore, lost to the school, and the activities of the pupils, is 482sqm, of which 119sqm relates to the under-provision of multi-purpose halls and associated storage spaces.

## Assessment

Existing rooms /spaces classrooms were measured and compared with the required standards outlined in DE Schedules of Accommodation (see attached table on next page).

## Summary

Required informal grass play area of 5,000sqm. No grass play space is provided.

Under provision of hard play area of 655sqm

Under provision of Limit of Internal Area = 482sqm

The school site is 34% of the recommended area

The school floor area is 67% of the LIA

## General Observations

(Summary of findings compared to DE Schedules of Accommodation)

| Room/Space    | Findings        |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Classrooms    | Inadequate      |
| Toilets       | Inadequate      |
| Computer Area | Inadequate      |
| Hall          | Under-provision |
| Play Areas    | Inadequate      |



Schedule of Accommodation for a 7-classroom primary school and the accommodation provided at Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir (Category 181 – 210).

| No of Spaces | Area                    | Description of Space   | Total area recommended by DE | Provision at this school | Notes   |
|--------------|-------------------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 7            | 60sqm                   | Classroom  | 420sqm                       | 384.7sqm                 | 4 of the classrooms are marginally larger than required |
| 2            | 40sqm                   | Resource Area  | 80sqm                        | 67.7sqm                  |   |
| 1            | 160sqm                  | Multi-Purpose Hall   | 160sqm                       | 107sqm                   | The hall has an adjacent servery kitchen of 12.5sqm     |
| 1            | 60sqm                   | Library Facilities   | 60sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 30sqm                   | Small Group/Medical Inspection Room                                  | 30sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1<br>1<br>1  | 15sqm<br>15sqm<br>15sqm | Multi-Purpose Room 1<br>Multi-Purpose Room 2<br>Multi-Purpose Room 3 | 35sqm<br>15sqm<br>15sqm      | YES<br>NIL<br>NIL        | 2 spaces - without measurement                          |
| 1            | 33sqm                   | Staff Room   | 33sqm                        | 15sqm                    |   |
| 1            | 20sqm                   | Principal's Office   | 20sqm                        | 12.3sqm                  |   |
| 1            | 20sqm                   | General Office   | 20sqm                        | 12.4sqm                  |   |
| 1            | 5sqm                    | Caretaker's Office   | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |   |
| 7            | 5sqm                    | Classroom Store  | 35sqm                        | 32.5sqm                  |   |
| 2            | 5sqm                    | Resource Store   | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 15sqm                   | PE Equipment Store   | 15sqm                        | 12.5sqm                  |   |
| 1            | 10sqm                   | Mat Store  | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm                   | Adult Chair Store  | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm                   | Stage Store  | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 15sqm                   | External Play Store  | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1<br>1       | 9sqm<br>6sqm            | Cleaner's Store 1<br>Cleaner's Store 2                               | 9sqm<br>6sqm                 | 2.3sqm<br>NIL            |   |
| 1            | 10sqm                   | Central Store  | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 5sqm                    | MP1 Store  | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 6sqm                    | Consumables Store  | 6sqm                         | NIL                      |   |
| 7            | 15sqm                   | Class Toilets and Coat Space   | 105sqm                       | 73sqm                    | Each toilet suite is smaller than recommended           |
| 2            | 12sqm                   | Pupil's changing at Multi-Purpose Hall                               | 24sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 2            | 7.5sqm                  | Pupil's toilets at Multi-Purpose Hall                                | 15sqm                        | 4sqm                     |   |
| 1            | 13sqm                   | Hygiene Room   | 13sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 2            | 6sqm                    | Staff Toilets  | 12sqm                        | 12.4sqm                  |   |
| 1            | 5sqm                    | Computer Hub Room  | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |   |

As noted in the table, the classrooms are generally close in area to the recommended room floor area and two of their associated stores are larger than recommended.

The major lack of provision at this school is the reduced size of the multi-Purpose hall and all its associated storage spaces, and the lack of provision of the recommended smaller multi-purpose rooms. This is a major omission at a school of this size. The current multi-purpose hall is also used for school meals which compromises its functionality.

The lack of a hygiene room and overall lack of adequate provision of storage spaces is also a problem in the operation of the school.

Classroom sizes at the school are: 59.6sqm, 59.6sqm, 67.7sqm, 64.2sqm, 66.8sqm, 66.8sqm.



*Rot to external walls of classrooms*



*Patched paintwork on external classroom walls*



*Lack of play space for school population*



*Lack of parking facilities*



*Less than standard sized classroom*



*Classroom with no modern learning aids*





*External play area*

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*Multi-Purpose Hall*

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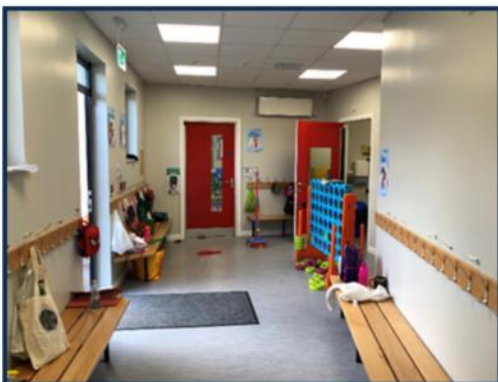
*Classroom*

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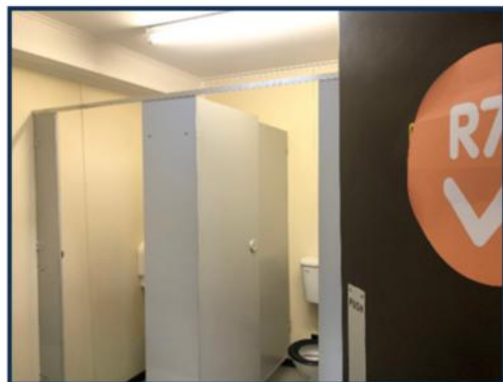
*Internal arrangements*

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*Entrance Hall*

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*Toilet accommodation*

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## Introduction

Bunscoil Cholmcille was originally established in 1983 as an Irish-medium unit within Steelstown Primary School in Steelstown, Derry City. Bunscoil Cholmcille was subsequently established as a standalone Irish-medium CCMS school in 1993; the first of its kind in the north. The enrolments at the school have grown steadily in recent years despite the poor condition of the current accommodation and the lack of basic facilities such as a multi-purpose hall.

## Overview

Bunscoil Cholmcille from its establishment has endured poor temporary accommodation and infrastructure issues which has made its growth and sustainability more commendable. Therefore, the current site and accommodation which has stymied the development of the Bunscoil urgently needs to be upgraded and modernised.

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## Survey

The enrolment number category for Bunscoil Cholmcille is 121 - 150 pupils and as such the recommended site area is 0.67 ha (6,700sqm). The DE recommended site area includes 3,000sqm of grass play and 800sqm of hard play. Bunscoil Cholmcille has no grass play and has 1,086sqm of hard play.

A general 5-classroom primary school LIA, including services rooms and circulations, but excluding SMA, has a recommended area of 1,032sqm.

The teaching accommodation at Bunscoil Cholmcille is provided within a cluster of six prefabricated buildings. The 'mobile classroom' provision of separate blocks does not facilitate cross peer group learning and the lack of shared resources spaces restricts learning opportunities.

The following table indicates the under-provision of support spaces, resources, school hall /multi-purpose rooms, and storage areas. The total amount of net floor space not provided and, therefore, lost to the school, and the activities of the pupils, is 452sqm, of which 259sqm relates to the lack of multi-purpose halls and associated storage spaces.



## Assessment

Existing rooms /spaces classrooms were measured and compared with the required standards outlined in DE Schedules of Accommodation (see attached table on next page).

## Summary

Required informal grass play area of 3,000sqm. No grass play space is provided.

The provision of hard play area meets the requirements.

Under provision of Limit of Internal Area = 452sqm.

The school site is 74% of the recommended area

The school floor area is 56% of the LIA

## General Observations

(Summary of findings compared to DE Schedules of Accommodation)

| Room/Space    | Findings   |
|---------------|------------|
| Classrooms    | Adequate   |
| Toilets       | Inadequate |
| Computer Area | Inadequate |
| Hall          | Inadequate |
| Play Areas    | Inadequate |

Schedule of Accommodation for a 5-classroom primary school and the accommodation provided at Bunscoil Cholmcille (Category 121 – 150).

| No of Spaces | Area           | Description of Space                         | Total area recommended by DE | Provision at this school | Notes  |
|--------------|----------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 5            | 60sqm          | Classroom                                    | 300sqm                       | 314.7sqm                 | All the classrooms are much smaller than required, at an average of 44sqm            |
| 2            | 40sqm          | Resource Area                                | 80sqm                        | 41.8sqm                  | Used as the computer teaching space  |
| 1            | 160sqm         | Multi-Purpose Hall                           | 160sqm                       | NIL                      |  |
| 1<br>1       | 15sqm<br>15sqm | Multi-Purpose Room 2<br>Multi-Purpose Room 3 | 35sqm<br>15sqm               | NIL<br>NIL               |  |
| 1            | 33sqm          | Staff Room                                   | 33sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 15sqm          | Principal's Office                           | 15sqm                        | 9.8sqm                   |  |
| 1            | 15sqm          | General Office                               | 15sqm                        | 11.4sqm                  |  |
| 5            | 5sqm           | Classroom Store                              | 25sqm                        | 27.8sqm                  | 2 of the classroom stores are larger than recommended and 1 classroom has no storage |
| 2            | 5sqm           | Resource Store                               | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 15sqm          | PE Equipment Store                           | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Mat Store                                    | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Adult Chair Store                            | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Stage Store                                  | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 15sqm          | External Play Store                          | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 9sqm           | Cleaner's Store                              | 9sqm                         | 4.3sqm                   |  |
| 1            | 6sqm           | Consumables Store                            | 6sqm                         | NIL                      |  |
| 5            | 15sqm          | Class Toilets and Coat Space                 | 75sqm                        | 19.6sqm                  | The toilet accommodation is completely unsatisfactory                                |
| 2            | 12sqm          | Pupil's changing at Multi-Purpose Hall       | 24sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 13sqm          | Hygiene Room                                 | 13sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 2            | 6sqm           | Staff Toilets                                | 12sqm                        | 4.1sqm                   |  |
| 1            | 5sqm           | Computer Hub Room                            | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |  |

As noted in the table, the classrooms are much smaller than the recommended area as are the associated classroom stores. There are, also, no related resource spaces and completely inadequate storage and support spaces.

The lack of capacity of the teaching spaces has a direct impact on the numbers of pupils at the school. The approved enrolment number will not be attained within the existing teaching spaces.



A further major lack of provision at this school is the multi-purpose hall and all its associated storage spaces. And there is also no provision of the recommended smaller multi-purpose rooms. This is a major omission at a school of this size, and when considered with the classroom sizes the under-provision of spatial requirements has educational impact.

The lack of a hygiene room and overall lack of adequate provision of toilet accommodation is also a problem in the operation of the school. The toilet accommodation is in a remote building accessed externally and is entirely unsatisfactory.

Classroom sizes at the school are: 45.3sqm, 45.3sqm, 41.8sqm, 40.6sqm, 44.6sqm, 52.3sqm, 44.6sqm.



*External rot of classroom walls*



*Rot on the floor of classroom*



*External rot of classroom walls*



*Hole in the floor of classroom*



*External paintwork in need of action*



*Dampness on internal walls of classroom*



*Main teaching accommodation*

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*Classroom*

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*Computer Hub/Hall used by all pupils*

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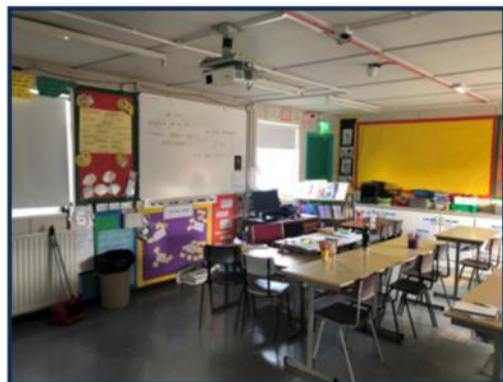
*Toilet block used by all pupils*

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*Entrance Hall*

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*Typical classroom*

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## Introduction

Gaelscoil na Daróige was originally established in 2008. The enrolments at the school have grown steadily in recent years despite the restricted nature of the site and the current lack of external play space and space for future growth. The multi-purpose /dining hall is an important facility for the school.

## Overview

The school entirely comprises stand alone independent 'mobile' units and although several of these were provided in recent years, including the staff facilities, all are less than the recommended areas. The lack of connectivity also increases movement time for staff and pupils and has a negative impact on functionality.

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## Survey

The enrolment number category for Gaelscoil na Daróige is 91 – 120 pupils and as such the recommended site area is 0.63 ha (6,300sqm). The DE recommended site area includes 3,000sqm of grass play and 650sqm of hard play. Gaelscoil na Daróige has no grass play and has 623sqm of hard play. Although it comprises several narrow and small portions, and the largest general play area is only 250sqm.

The site (at 2,270sqm) is less than the DE recommended site area, and the hard play area is 27sqm less than requirements. (And see the comment above)

A general 4-classroom primary school, LIA including services rooms and circulations, but excluding SMA, has a recommended area of 884sqm.

*\*Minister for Education approved development proposal for statutory pre-school provision, April 2024.*

The teaching accommodation at Gaelscoil na Daróige is provided within a cluster of 6 independent timber frame structures /'mobile classrooms', and several of the teaching spaces are provided, without storage or toilet accommodation, in buildings of poor insulation standards. All the accommodation is much smaller than the recommended areas.

The following table indicates the under-provision of support spaces, resources, school hall /multi-purpose rooms, and storage areas. The total amount of net floor space not provided and, therefore, lost to the school, and the activities of the pupils, is 368sqm, of which 235sqm relates to the lack of multi-purpose halls and associated storage spaces. As noted, the SMA is used as a multi-purpose hall.

## Assessment

Existing rooms /spaces classrooms were measured and compared with the required standards outlined in DE Schedules of Accommodation (see attached table on next page).

## Summary

Required informal grass play area of 3,000sqm.

No grass play space is provided.

The provision of hard play area is marginally below (27sqm) the requirements.

Under provision of Limit of Internal Area = 387sqm

## General Observations

(Summary of findings compared to DE Schedules of Accommodation)

| Room/Space    | Findings   |
|---------------|------------|
| Classrooms    | Inadequate |
| Toilets       | Inadequate |
| Computer Area | Inadequate |
| Hall          | Inadequate |
| Play Areas    | Inadequate |



Schedule of Accommodation for a 4-classroom primary school and the accommodation provided at Gaelscoil na Daróige (Category 91 – 120).

| No of Spaces | Area           | Description of Space                         | Total area recommended by DE | Provision at this school | Notes   |
|--------------|----------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 4            | 60sqm          | Classroom                                    | 240sqm                       | 215sqm                   | All the classrooms are smaller than required and only two rooms have storage spaces   |
| 1            | 40sqm          | Resource Area                                | 40sqm                        | 38sqm                    | This room is used as the P7 teaching base   |
| 1            | 160sqm         | Multi-Purpose Hall                           | 160sqm                       | NIL                      | The School Meals accommodation (85sqm) is used as a Hall, when possible   |
| 1<br>1       | 15sqm<br>15sqm | Multi-Purpose Room 2<br>Multi-Purpose Room 3 | 15sqm<br>15sqm               | NIL<br>NIL               |   |
| 1            | 30sqm          | Staff Room                                   | 30sqm                        | NIL                      | The former staff room (30sqm) is now used as a classroom, staff use the School Meals accommodation/a classroom on adhoc basis |
| 1            | 15sqm          | Principal's Office                           | 15sqm                        | 16.4sqm                  |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | General Office                               | 15sqm                        | 10.84sqm                 |   |
| 4            | 5sqm           | Classroom Store                              | 20sqm                        | 9sqm                     |   |
| 1            | 5sqm           | Resource Store                               | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | PE Equipment Store                           | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Mat Store                                    | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Adult Chair Store                            | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Stage Store                                  | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | External Play Store                          | 15sqm                        | 8sqm                     | Provided by parents   |
| 1            | 9sqm           | Cleaner's Store                              | 9sqm                         | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 6sqm           | Consumables Store                            | 6sqm                         | NIL                      |   |
| 4            | 15sqm          | Class Toilets and Coat Space                 | 60sqm                        | 21.6sqm                  | Two classrooms have no toilet or coat storage spaces  |
| 2            | 12sqm          | Pupil's changing at Multi-Purpose Hall       | 24sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 13sqm          | Hygiene Room                                 | 13sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 2            | 6sqm           | Staff Toilets                                | 12sqm                        | 7.5sqm                   |   |
| 1            | 5sqm           | Computer Hub Room                            | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |   |

The school shares its school meals accommodation as the multi-purpose hall.

As noted in the table, all the classrooms are below the recommended floor areas and are reasonably well lit, given the nature of the timber frame construction and the narrow plan dimensions. There are, however, no resource spaces, and several of the classrooms have no storage spaces, nor toilet accommodation. Most of the timber structures are thin wall, poorly insulated rooms more than 25 years old and only one of the classrooms is of recent construction.

Classroom sizes at the school are: 52sqm, 51sqm, 53sqm, 58sqm.



*Entrance to school*



*Former staff block on right and school meals on left*



*Site circulations and movement*



*Site circulations and movement*



*External play area*



*External play area*





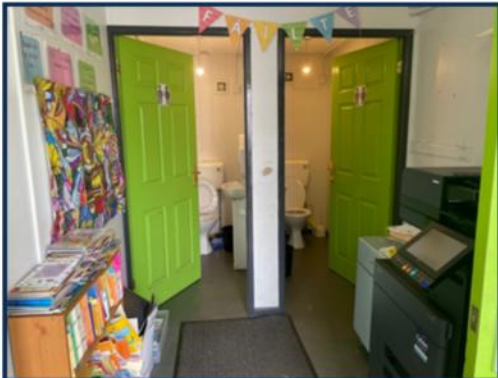
*Typical classroom*

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*Typical classroom*

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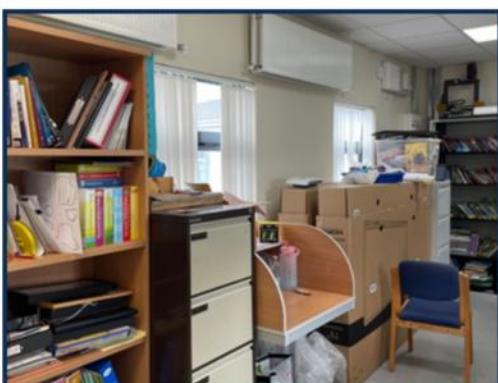
*Toilet accommodation*

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*Toilet accommodation*

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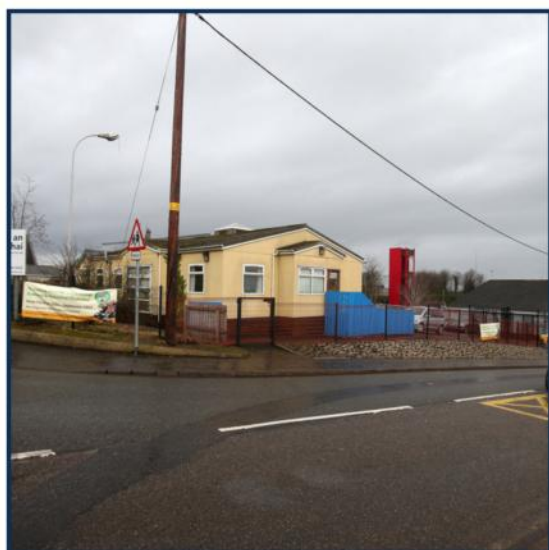
*Former staff room now used as class space*

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*Coats store*

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## Introduction

Naíscoil an tSeanchaí was established in Magherafelt, County Derry, in 2004 and it was followed by the establishment of Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí as an Irish-medium Primary School in 2009. The Department of Education officially recognised the school in 2010. Despite the physical limitations of its current site, enrolments at the school have remained steady over recent years. Currently there are 112 children attending Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí. In 2022 the Minister for Education approved the relocation of Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí to a former controlled school-site.

## Overview

Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí is situated on Meeting Street, Magherafelt, County Derry, but has its vehicular access on Fair Hill. The school is housed in a former controlled nursery school. It is a very limited site which it has outgrown, and the Department of Education has accepted this by deciding to relocate Gaelscoil na tSeanchaí to the former Magherafelt controlled sector site.

The school has very limited play space, and a very constricted parking and turning area. There is no space for bus turning within the curtilage of the school site, and the vehicular access on Fair Hill is narrow and steep, making access and egress difficult.

The relocation to a new site is urgent and should be timetabled and planned within a very short timeframe.

## Survey

The enrolment number category for Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí is 121 – 150 pupils and as such the recommended site area is 0.67 ha (6,700sqm). The DE recommended site area includes 3,000sqm of grass play and 800sqm of hard play. Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí has no grass play and has 432sqm of hard play.

A general 5-classroom primary school LIA, including services rooms and circulations, but excluding SMA, has a recommended area of 1,032sqm.



The teaching accommodation at Bunscoil Cholmcille is provided within a cluster of six prefabricated buildings. The 'mobile classroom' provision of separate blocks does not facilitate cross peer group learning and the lack of shared resources spaces restricts learning opportunities.

The following table indicates the under-provision of support spaces, resources, school hall /multi-purpose rooms, and storage areas. The total amount of net floor space not provided and, therefore, lost to the school, and the activities of the pupils, is 452sqm, of which 259sqm relates to the lack of multi-purpose halls and associated storage spaces.

## Assessment

Existing rooms /spaces classrooms were measured and compared with the required standards outlined in DE Schedules of Accommodation (see attached table on next page).

## Summary

Required informal grass play area of 3,000sqm. No grass play space is provided.

Under provision of hard play area of 368sqm

Under provision of Limit of Internal Area = 458sqm

The school site is 44% of the recommended area

The school floor area is 56% of the LIA

## General Observations

(Summary of findings compared to DE Schedules of Accommodation)

| Room/Space    | Findings   |
|---------------|------------|
| Classrooms    | Inadequate |
| Toilets       | Inadequate |
| Computer Area | Adequate   |
| Hall          | Inadequate |
| Play Areas    | Inadequate |



Schedule of Accommodation for a 5-classroom primary school and the accommodation provided at Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí (Category 121 – 150).

| No of Spaces | Area           | Description of Space                         | Total area recommended by DE | Provision at this school | Notes  |
|--------------|----------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 5            | 60sqm          | Classroom                                    | 300sqm                       | 234.3sqm                 | All the classrooms are much smaller than required, at an average of 44sqm            |
| 2            | 40sqm          | Resource Area                                | 80sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 160sqm         | Multi-Purpose Hall                           | 160sqm                       | 42.2sqm                  | Also used as the staff room  |
| 1<br>1       | 15sqm<br>15sqm | Multi-Purpose Room 2<br>Multi-Purpose Room 3 | 15sqm<br>15sqm               | NIL<br>NIL               |  |
| 1            | 30sqm          | Staff Room                                   | 30sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 15sqm          | Principal's Office                           | 15sqm                        | 12.2sqm                  |  |
| 1            | 15sqm          | General Office                               | 15sqm                        | 12.2sqm                  |  |
| 5            | 5sqm           | Classroom Store                              | 25sqm                        | 46.6sqm                  | 2 of the classroom stores are larger than recommended and 1 classroom has no storage |
| 2            | 5sqm           | Resource Store                               | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 15sqm          | PE Equipment Store                           | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Mat Store                                    | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Adult Chair Store                            | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Stage Store                                  | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 15sqm          | External Play Store                          | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 9sqm           | Cleaner's Store                              | 9sqm                         | 2.2sqm                   |  |
| 1            | 6sqm           | Consumables Store                            | 6sqm                         | NIL                      |  |
| 5            | 15sqm          | Class Toilets and Coat Space                 | 75sqm                        | 65.7sqm                  | The toilet accommodation is completely unsatisfactory                                |
| 2            | 12sqm          | Pupil's changing at Multi-Purpose Hall       | 24sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 13sqm          | Hygiene Room                                 | 13sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 2            | 6sqm           | Staff Toilets                                | 12sqm                        | 10.26sqm                 | Accommodation is completely unsatisfactory - one toilet between 18 members of staff  |
| 1            | 5sqm           | Computer Hub Room                            | 5sqm                         | 7sqm                     | An ad hoc space adjacent to one of the classrooms                                    |

The accumulation of small annex spaces and additions give the impression that this school meets some of the spatial provisions of the DE Schools Handbook, but as noted in the table, only one of the classrooms is close to the recommended floor area. Two rooms have particularly inadequate storage provision and so are forced to store some resources on shelves in the pupil toilets. What is deemed as a school hall is an L shaped space which does not provide a space to be used by all pupils and is less than satisfactory, at one quarter of the recommended floor area and has no associated storage space and is used as the staff room, which does not have a sink to clean dishes. There are, also, no other related resource spaces and completely non-existent support spaces.

The major lack of provision at this school is impacted by a much-constricted site and the lack of an appropriate multi-Purpose Hall and all its associated storage. And there is also no provision of the recommended smaller multi-purpose rooms. This is a major omission at a school of this size.

The lack of a Hygiene Room and lack of a staff office is also a problem in the operation of the school.

Classroom sizes at the school are: 27.38sqm, 34.2sqm, 52.8sqm, 52.8sqm, 67.1sqm.



*External rot on classroom windows*

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*External rot on classroom walls*

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*Close up of rot on school windows*

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*Extra heating to classrooms*

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*Access point to classrooms*



*Outdoor classroom due to lack of space*



*Play area*



*Entrance/car park*



*Classroom*



*Classroom building*



*Car parking and adjacent Fair Hill Road*

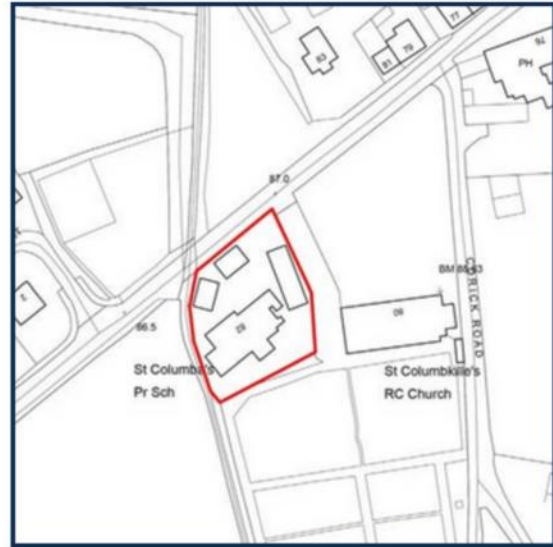


*Car parking and adjacent Fair Hill Road*



## County Derry

### Gaelscoil na Speiríní



## Introduction

Naíscoil na Speiríní was established in Ballinascreen, County Derry, in 1999 and it was followed by the establishment of Gaelscoil na Spéiríní in 2004. The Department of Education officially recognised the Gaelscoil in 2006. Despite the physical restrictions of its current site enrolments at the Gaelscoil have remained steady over recent years. Currently there are 84 children attending Gaelscoil na Speiríní.

## Overview

Gaelscoil na Speiríní is located on the former Straw Primary School site, outside Ballinascreen, Co. Derry. This is a very restricted site and inadequate for the future development of the school.

There is no in-curtilage parking or vehicular access, and all parking and drop-off is in a car parking area on the opposite side of the busy road.

In September 2024, Naíscoil na Speiríní will be located within the community owned and managed existing building, which is within the school site. Their projected numbers of 26 will mean that 110 children will be on site.

## Survey

Gaelscoil na Speiríní has an approved enrolment number at a lesser number than the 'Enrolment Number Category' in Appendix 2 of Section 3a of the Primary Schools Building Handbook. For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that a 4-class school is the base point for the spatial provision in this school, and as such we have used the Schedule of Accommodation for a 4-classroom school as provided in the Primary School Building Handbook.

The enrolment number category for Gaelscoil na Speiríní is, therefore, 91 – 120 pupils and as such the recommended site area is 0.63 ha (6,300sqm). The DE recommended site area includes 3,000sqm of grass play and 650sqm of hard play. Gaelscoil na Speiríní has no appropriate grass play, although it does have a very narrow strip of grass along the wall to the cemetery, (approximately 200sqm) and the school has 210sqm of hard play.

The community building, which has an external area of 379sqm, is located within the Gaelscoil na Speiríní site and in effect reduces the school site area from 1,743sqm to 1,364sqm. The community building is not accessed by the pupils of the Gaelscoil.

A general 4-classroom primary school LIA including services rooms and circulations, but excluding SMA, has a recommended area of 884sqm.

The teaching accommodation at Gaelscoil na Speiríní is provided within a cluster of prefabricated buildings along the main street of Draperstown. The 'mobile classroom' provision of separate blocks does not facilitate cross peer group learning and the lack of shared resources spaces restricts learning opportunities.

The following table indicates the under-provision of support spaces, resources, school hall /multi-purpose rooms, and storage areas. The total amount of net floor space not provided and, therefore, lost to the school, and the activities of the pupils, is 452sqm, of which 259sqm relates to the lack of multi-purpose hall and associated storage spaces.

## Assessment

Existing rooms /spaces classrooms were measured and compared with the required standards outlined in DE Schedules of Accommodation (see attached table on next page).

## Summary

Required informal grass play area of 3,000sqm. No functional grass play space is provided.

Under provision of hard play area of 440sqm

Under provision of Limit of Internal Area = 452sqm

The school site is 22% of the recommended area

The school floor area is 49% of the LIA

## General Observations

(Summary of findings compared to DE Schedules of Accommodation)

| Room/Space    | Findings   |
|---------------|------------|
| Classrooms    | Adequate   |
| Toilets       | Inadequate |
| Computer Area | Inadequate |
| Hall          | Inadequate |
| Play Areas    | Inadequate |

Schedule of Accommodation for a 4-classroom primary school and the accommodation provided at Gaelscoil na Speiríní (Category 91 – 120).

| No of Spaces | Area           | Description of Space                         | Total area recommended by DE | Provision at this school | Notes   |
|--------------|----------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 4            | 60sqm          | Classroom                                    | 240sqm                       | 231sqm                   | Two of the classrooms are marginally smaller than required  |
| 1            | 40sqm          | Resource Area                                | 40sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 160sqm         | Multi-Purpose Hall                           | 160sqm                       | NIL                      |   |
| 1<br>1       | 15sqm<br>15sqm | Multi-Purpose Room 2<br>Multi-Purpose Room 3 | 15sqm<br>15sqm               | NIL<br>NIL               |   |
| 1            | 30sqm          | Staff Room                                   | 30sqm                        | NIL                      | The staff space is in one of the classrooms                 |
| 1            | 15sqm          | Principal's Office                           | 15sqm                        | 5.4sqm                   |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | General Office                               | 15sqm                        | 12.2sqm                  |   |
| 4            | 5sqm           | Classroom Store                              | 20sqm                        | 21.8sqm                  | The classroom stores are marginally larger than recommended |
| 1            | 5sqm           | Resource Store                               | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | PE Equipment Store                           | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Mat Store                                    | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Adult Chair Store                            | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Stage Store                                  | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | External Play Store                          | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 9sqm           | Cleaner's Store                              | 9sqm                         | 2.2sqm                   |   |
| 1            | 6sqm           | Consumables Store                            | 6sqm                         | NIL                      |   |
| 4            | 15sqm          | Class Toilets and Coat Space                 | 60sqm                        | 25.8sqm                  | The toilet accommodation is completely unsatisfactory       |
| 2            | 12sqm          | Pupil's changing at Multi-Purpose Hall       | 24sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 13sqm          | Hygiene Room                                 | 13sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 2            | 6sqm           | Staff Toilets                                | 12sqm                        | 3.5sqm                   |   |
| 1            | 5sqm           | Computer Hub Room                            | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |   |

As noted in the table above, although the classrooms and their associated storage spaces are close in in area to the DE recommended floor areas, no other spatial provision is provided in this school. There is no school hall; there are no resources spaces; there is no staff room and there is a basic less than minimum provision of all internal and external spatial requirements.

The 'staff room' is confined to a few desks in the corner of a classroom, which is unsatisfactory.



These are major omissions at a school of this size, which are exacerbated by the constricted size of the site. And pupils have no communal indoor gathering, learning or play space.

The lack of a Hygiene Room and lack of a staff office and inadequate staff toilet provision is also a problem in the operation of the school.

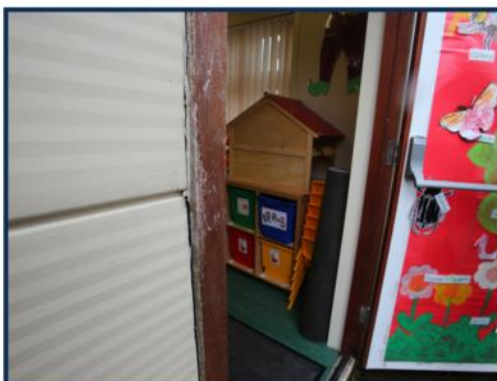
Classroom sizes at the school are: 54.2sqm, 61.4sqm, 61.4sqm, 54.1sqm.



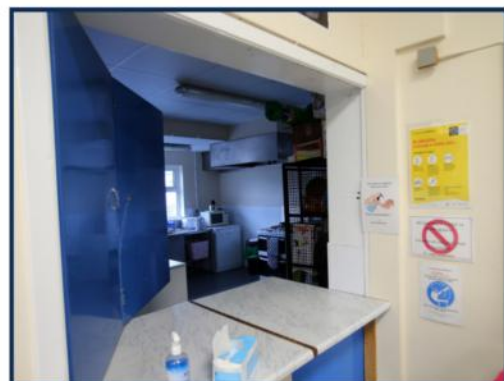
*School entrance from main road with no traffic control*



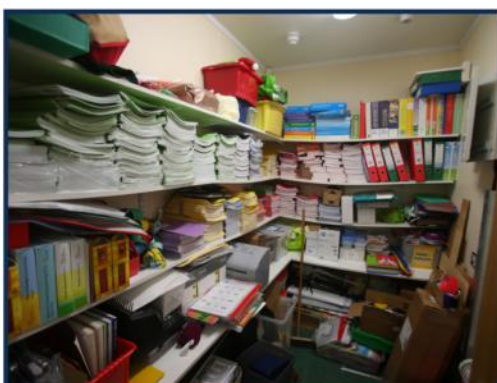
*Lack of space between buildings*



*Damage and rot on external doors of classrooms*



*School kitchen and dining facilities*



*School storage room*



*Cramped classroom due to lack of space*



*Play space/external area*



*Play space/external area*



*External hard play area*



*Community managed resource and naíscóil*



*Classroom*



*Grass play area*





## Introduction

Naíscoil Neachtain was established in Dungiven, County Derry, in 1996. Post 1996, children from the Dungiven area initially attended Bunscoil Naomh Bríd, Tirkane, to access Irish-medium primary education. This was followed by the establishment of Bunscoil Naomh Cainneach, an Irish-medium unit at a local primary school, in September 2002. Demand for Irish-medium primary education gradually outweighed capacity in the unit and Gaelscoil Neachtain, an Irish-medium controlled primary school, was established in September 2012. Gaelscoil Neachtain opened with an enrolment of 63 pupils, rang 1 – rang 7. Located initially in rented accommodation at Curragh Road, Dungiven, Gaelscoil Neachtain moved to refurbished premises at 8, Chapel Road Dungiven, the site of the former Dungiven Controlled Primary School, on 3rd June 2014.

As enrolment at the Gaelscoil continued to grow, the need for extra accommodation became urgent. In February 2019, work was completed on two new permanent classrooms - bringing the total number of classrooms to six - an ICT area and a multi-purpose room. The accommodation at Gaelscoil Neachtain also includes a multi-purpose hall and a staff room. There are currently 128 children enrolled at Gaelscoil Neachtain.

## Overview

In June 2018, the Department of Education approved a development proposal, with effect from 1 September 2018, to change the status of Naíscoil Neachtain from pre-school playgroup to statutory nursery unit under the management of Gaelscoil Neachtain. Naíscoil Neachtain is located at 55, Garvagh Road, Dungiven, and has an annual enrolment of twenty-six children.

## Survey

The enrolment number category for Gaelscoil Neachtain is 121 – 150 pupils and as such the recommended site area is 0.67 ha (6,700sqm). The DE recommended site area includes 3,000sqm of grass play and 800sqm of hard play. Gaelscoil Neachtain has no grass play area, but 1,000sqm of external play areas.

A general 5-classroom primary school LIA, including services rooms and circulations, but excluding SMA, has a recommended area of 1,032sqm.



The teaching accommodation at Gaelscoil Neachtain is provided in a new purpose-built single storey building, though the multi-purpose hall is less than the recommended floor area, and is primarily used as the dining room and, therefore, should not fall within the LIA.

The following table indicates the under-provision of support spaces, resources, school hall /multi-purpose rooms, and storage areas. The total amount of net floor space not provided and, therefore, lost to the school, and the activities of the pupils, is 290sqm, of which 166sqm relates to the lack of multi-purpose hall and associated storage spaces.

## Assessment

Existing rooms /spaces classrooms were measured and compared with the required standards outlined in DE Schedules of Accommodation (see attached table on next page).

## Summary

Required informal grass play area of 3,000sqm. No grass play space is provided.  
The provision of hard play area meets the requirements.  
Under provision of Limit of Internal Area = 290sqm

## General Observations

(Summary of findings compared to DE Schedules of Accommodation)

| Room/Space    | Findings   |
|---------------|------------|
| Classrooms    | Inadequate |
| Toilets       | Inadequate |
| Computer Area | Inadequate |
| Hall          | Inadequate |
| Play Areas    | Inadequate |

Schedule of Accommodation for a 5-classroom primary school and the accommodation provided at Gaelscoil Neachtain (Category 121 – 150).

| No of Spaces | Area           | Description of Space                         | Total area recommended by DE | Provision at this school | Notes   |
|--------------|----------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 5            | 60sqm          | Classroom                                    | 300sqm                       | 261.2sqm                 | Two of the classrooms are much smaller than required at 47sqm   |
| 2            | 40sqm          | Resource Area                                | 80sqm                        | 40sqm                    | This 'room' is outside two of the classrooms, but is effectively a wide corridor, with little opportunity for workspace or group activities |
| 1            | 160sqm         | Multi-Purpose Hall                           | 160sqm                       | 67sqm                    | Primarily used as the dining room   |
| 1<br>1       | 15sqm<br>15sqm | Multi-Purpose Room 2<br>Multi-Purpose Room 3 | 15sqm<br>15sqm               | 12.2sqm<br>NIL           | MP Room 2 is used as a resource/teaching space  |
| 1            | 30sqm          | Staff Room                                   | 30sqm                        | 38sqm                    | This room is used as a classroom  |
| 1            | 15sqm          | Principal's Office                           | 15sqm                        | 9.4sqm                   |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | General Office                               | 15sqm                        | 17.8sqm                  |   |
| 5            | 5sqm           | Classroom Store                              | 25sqm                        | 19sqm                    |   |
| 2            | 5sqm           | Resource Store                               | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | PE Equipment Store                           | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Mat Store                                    | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Adult Chair Store                            | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Stage Store                                  | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | External Play Store                          | 15sqm                        | 20sqm                    |   |
| 1            | 9sqm           | Cleaner's Store                              | 9sqm                         | 9sqm                     |   |
| 1            | 6sqm           | Consumables Store                            | 6sqm                         | NIL                      |   |
| 5            | 15sqm          | Class Toilets and Coat Space                 | 75sqm                        | 60sqm                    | The toilet accommodation is less than required.   |
| 2            | 12sqm          | Pupil's changing at Multi-Purpose Hall       | 24sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 13sqm          | Hygiene Room                                 | 13sqm                        | 12.95sqm                 |   |
| 2            | 6sqm           | Staff Toilets                                | 12sqm                        | 4sqm                     |   |
| 1            | 5sqm           | Computer Hub Room                            | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |   |

As noted in the table, the classrooms are considerably less than the recommended area, although their associated stores are at the recommended floor area. Rooms provided as general 'resource spaces are currently used as classrooms, such that each year group has their own dedicated teaching space. The corridors, therefore, have become ad hoc computer resource spaces.

As noted in the table, despite being a relatively new purpose-built school, all the classrooms are much smaller than the recommended area. The related resource spaces are less than recommended and although each classroom store is of the correct size, the school suffers from a lack of other support storage spaces.

The major lack of provision at this school is the undersized multi-purpose hall and all its associated storage spaces. This is a major omission at a school of this size and pupils have limited communal indoor gathering, learning or play space.

Classroom sizes at the school are: 45.2sqm, 45.8sqm, 44.1sqm, 45.6sqm, 44.6sqm.



*View of school entrance from main road*



*Cramped classroom due to lack of space*



*Multi-purpose hall used as dining facility*



*Lack of storage space for dining equipment*



*Cramped classroom*



*Lack of play space and view onto main road*





*External play area*



*External play area*



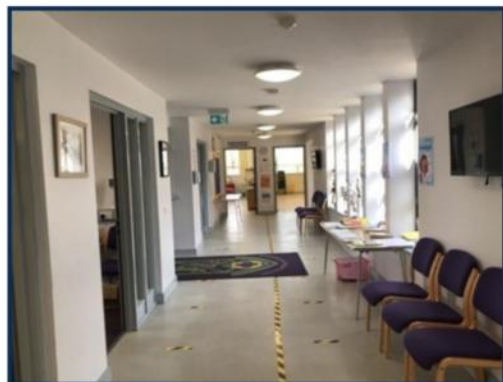
*Typical classroom*



*Typical classroom*



*Corridor as resource space/computer room*



*Overly wide corridor used as resource space*



## Introduction

Naíscoil an Iúir was established in 1983 with Bunscoil an Iúir following in 1988 as an Irish-medium primary school situated in Kilmorey Street, Newry, County Down. The Department of Education granted the school official recognition in 1997. The enrolments at the Bunscoil have increased steadily over recent years despite the limitations of its current site. Currently (24/25) there are 98 children attending the Bunscoil and a further 16 pupils attending Naíscoil an Iúir.

## Overview

The 1,602m<sup>2</sup> site is situated off a busy thoroughfare in Newry and located within a Business Enterprise Park. The school is housed within a former public administration building, a two-storey, masonry building, comprising several rooms, toilets, and resource area. There are major health and safety concerns with the current building and site that pose an ongoing risk to the children, staff, and school community. The current site and accommodation are inadequate and not fit for purpose.

The school has six parking spaces for 12 members of staff, and has no in-curtilage, or dedicated drop-off or pick-up area for parents and children.

## Survey

The enrolment number category for Bunscoil an Iúir is 121 - 150 pupils and as such the recommended site area is 0.67 ha (6,700sqm). The DE recommended site area includes 3,000sqm of grass play and 800sqm of hard play. Bunscoil an Iúir has 960sqm of external areas – slightly more than the recommended area but has no grass play or landscape areas, and only 400sqm of the play area is functional and not compromised by access ways and circulation.

The site (at 1,602sqm) is substantially below the DE recommended site area and see the note above on the hard play areas.

A general 5-classroom primary school LIA including services rooms and circulations, but excluding SMA, has a recommended area of 1,032sqm.



The teaching accommodation at Bunscoil an Iúir is provided in a two-storey stone-built structure which abuts the adjacent road level which provides fire exit from the upper floor level, and the school is accessed through the campus of a business park. See photographs. The first-floor fire exit opens directly – without guard rails – onto the road edge. Additionally, there is no signal crossing or traffic lights to assist pupils crossing the very busy main road, who then make their way through the Business Park, to the gates of the school.

The following table indicates the under-provision of support spaces, resources, school hall /multi-purpose rooms, and storage areas. The total amount of net floor space not provided and, therefore, lost to the school, and the activities of the pupils, is 297sqm, of which 159sqm relates to the lack of multi-purpose halls and associated storage spaces.

The overall loss of useful space to the pupils is, however, much larger than the calculation indicates, because of the unfunctional, impractical character of the hall, and the use of classrooms as circulations through to other teaching spaces. General storage is higher than the Handbook recommendations, because of the configuration of the old building.

## Assessment

Existing rooms /spaces classrooms were measured and compared with the required standards outlined in DE Schedules of Accommodation (see attached table on next page).

## Summary

Required informal grass play area of 3,000sqm. No grass play space is provided.  
 The provision of hard play area meets the recommended area, but only 400sqm is functional.  
 Under provision of Limit of Internal Area = 297sqm  
 The school site is 24% of the recommended area  
 The school floor area is 71% of the LIA

## General Observations

(Summary of findings compared to DE Schedules of Accommodation)

| Room/Space    | Findings   |
|---------------|------------|
| Classrooms    | Inadequate |
| Toilets       | Inadequate |
| Computer Area | Inadequate |
| Hall          | Inadequate |
| Play Areas    | Inadequate |



Schedule of Accommodation for a 5-classroom primary school and the accommodation provided at Bunscoil an Iúir (Category 121 – 150).

| No of Spaces | Area           | Description of Space                         | Total area recommended by DE | Provision at this school | Notes  |
|--------------|----------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 5            | 60sqm          | Classroom                                    | 300sqm                       | 242.8sqm                 | All but one of the classrooms are much lower than required, at an average of 45sqm   |
| 2            | 40sqm          | Resource Area                                | 80sqm                        | 90.8sqm                  |  |
| 1            | 160sqm         | Multi-Purpose Hall                           | 160sqm                       | 90.7sqm                  | Hall is less than the recommended area (with a low ceiling height) and provides through access to the staff room, principal's office, kitchen, and staff toilets and functions as dining space |
| 1<br>1       | 15sqm<br>15sqm | Multi-Purpose Room 2<br>Multi-Purpose Room 3 | 15sqm<br>15sqm               | NIL<br>NIL               |  |
| 1            | 30sqm          | Staff Room                                   | 30sqm                        | 10.3sqm                  | Staff use the EA staff facility  |
| 1            | 15sqm          | Principal's Office                           | 15sqm                        | 7.75sqm                  |  |
| 1            | 15sqm          | General Office                               | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 5            | 5sqm           | Classroom Store                              | 25sqm                        | 36sqm                    | The classroom stores are larger than recommended because of the configuration of the old building  |
| 2            | 5sqm           | Resource Store                               | 10sqm                        | 12.2sqm                  |  |
| 1            | 15sqm          | PE Equipment Store                           | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Mat Store                                    | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Adult Chair Store                            | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Stage Store                                  | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 15sqm          | External Play Store                          | 15sqm                        | 15sqm                    |  |
| 1            | 9sqm           | Cleaner's Store                              | 9sqm                         | 6sqm                     |  |
| 1            | 6sqm           | Consumables Store                            | 6sqm                         | NIL                      |  |
| 5            | 15sqm          | Class Toilets and Coat Space                 | 75sqm                        | 104sqm                   |  |
| 2            | 12sqm          | Pupil's changing at Multi-Purpose Hall       | 24sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 13sqm          | Hygiene Room                                 | 13sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 2            | 6sqm           | Staff Toilets                                | 12sqm                        | 6sqm                     | Due to the plan configuration, the staff toilets are also used by the children.  |
| 1            | 5sqm           | Computer Hub Room                            | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |  |

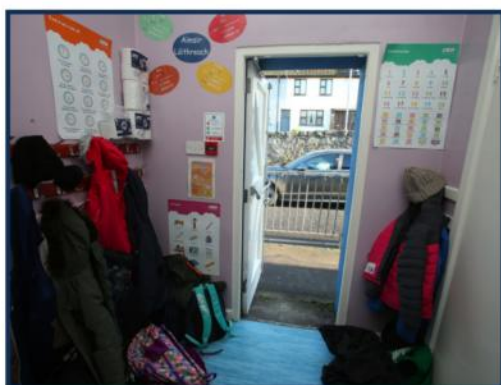
As noted in the table, all the classrooms are much smaller than the recommended area and only have natural light and ventilation on one wall. The upper floor level is only accessed by stairs with no lift provision and several classrooms are through rooms to other spaces. The school suffers lack of appropriate multi-purpose space and complete lack of adequate resource spaces and has insufficient support storage spaces.

The building has provided much needed space when first required but is not fit-for-purpose and suffers from lack of adequate and appropriate room areas for all the major required spaces.

The multi-Purpose Hall is less than the recommended area (with a low ceiling height) and provides through access to the staff room, principal's office, kitchen, and staff toilets. Its use is, therefore, restricted. Additionally, the column in the middle of the room reduces sightlines and compromises activities and functionality. There is also no provision of the recommended smaller multi-purpose rooms. This is a major omission at a school of this size. And pupils have no communal indoor gathering, learning or play space.

The lack of a Hygiene Room and overall lack of adequate provision of storage spaces is also a problem in the operation of the school.

Classroom sizes at the school are: 45.8sqm, 46.4sqm, 60.9sqm, 44.1sqm, 45.6sqm.



*Cloakroom and emergency exit onto main road*



*View from main road to the emergency exit*



*Entrance to the school on a busy main road*



*Through access via industrial estate car park*



*Internal stairs within main school building*



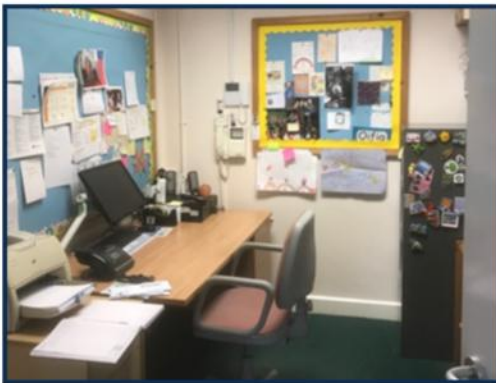
*Health and safety hazard below main stairway*



*School Hall*



*Staff using the EA staff facility*



*Principal's office*



*Typical classroom*

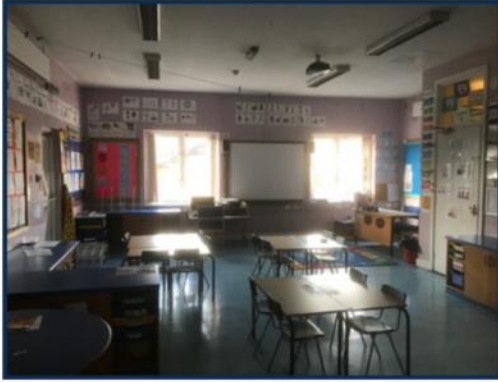


*Typical classroom*

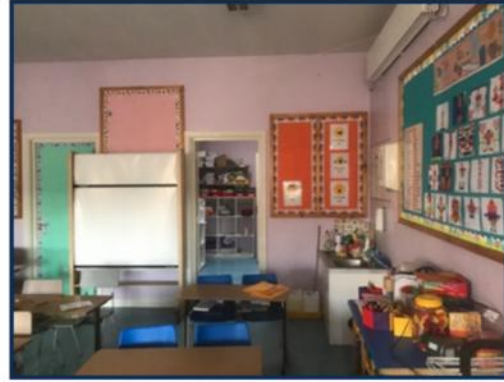


*Lack of adequate storage space*

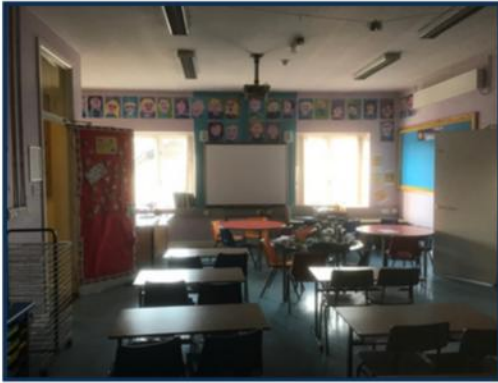




*Rang 2 (windows on one wall only and door to fire escape stair)*



*Classroom as through corridor*



*Access through store to fire escape*



*Timber shed as school store*



*Entrance steps from Chapel Street*



*Resource space in external unit*



*Toilets used as extra storage space*



*Play area from school entrance*



## Introduction

Naíscoil na mBeann was established in Kilkeel, County Down, in 2007 and it was followed by the establishment of Gaelscoil na mBeann as an Irish-medium Primary School in 2009. The school moved to its current site in January 2016. It is currently located in temporary accommodation at the rear of the St Columban's PS site. The school currently consists of 3 prefabricated classrooms and an aging mobile classroom block has recently been acquired from the former St Columban's HS site and added to the school lease.

As well as the sub-standard condition of the newly acquired mobile, the school currently shares a dining hall and playground area with St Columban's P.S. and does not have a school assembly/ sports hall.

Enrolments at the school have remained

steady in recent years and has exceeded the permitted enrolment number of 87. Currently there are 110 children attending Gaelscoil na mBeann including 5 SEN, with 26 pupils attending Naíscoil na mBeann on a part-time basis.

## Overview

Gaelscoil na mBeann is situated on the Newcastle Road, Kilkeel, County Down. The school is located at the rear of St. Columban's PS on a restricted site which is inadequate for the future development of the school. Playground, recreational space, and a dining hall is shared with St. Columban's PS. With a proposed move to a new site for St Columban's PS soon or potential for them to redevelop on the existing site, the future provision of school meals, for the pupils of Gaelscoil na mBeann, as well as the future of Gaelscoil na mBeann on this site is unclear.

## Survey

Gaelscoil na mBeann has an approved enrolment number at a lesser number than the 'Enrolment Number Category' in Appendix 2 of Section 3a of the Primary Schools Building Handbook. For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that a 4-class school is the base



point for the spatial provision in a primary school, and as such we have used the Schedule of Accommodation for a 4-classroom school as provided in the Primary School Building Handbook. However, the current increased enrolment indicates that this school should be considered as a 5-class base school. The approved enrolment category, should, therefore, be amended.

At this stage, however, the enrolment number category for Gaelscoil na mBeann is 91 – 120 pupils and as such the recommended site area is 0.63 ha (6,300sqm). The DE recommended site area includes 3,000sqm of grass play and 650sqm of hard play. Gaelscoil na mBeann has no grass play and has 297sqm of hard play for its own use and has shared access to 1,524sqm with the on-site existing school of St Columban’s College

A general 4-classroom primary school, LIA including services rooms and circulations, but excluding SMA, has a recommended area of 884sqm.

The teaching accommodation at Gaelscoil na mBeann is provided within five, prefabricated buildings. The ‘mobile classroom’ provision of separate blocks does not facilitate cross peer group learning and the lack of shared resources spaces restricts learning opportunities. In recent months renovation work has been undertaken, including replacement of windows, doors, and external wall panels.

The following table indicates the under-provision of support spaces, resources, school hall /multi-purpose rooms, and storage areas. The total amount of net floor space not provided and, therefore, lost to the school, and the activities of the pupils, is 352sqm, of which 229sqm relates to the lack of multi-purpose halls and associated storage spaces.

## Assessment

Existing rooms /spaces classrooms were measured and compared with the required standards outlined in DE Schedules of Accommodation (see attached table on next page).

## Summary

Required informal grass play area of 3,000sqm. No grass play space is provided. When the shared hard play is included in the assessment, the provision meets requirements, but the school only has 297sqm for its own use, which is 46% of the recommended hard play area.

Under provision of Limit of Internal Area = 352sqm

The school floor area is 61% of the LIA

## General Observations

(Summary of findings compared to DE Schedules of Accommodation)

| Room/Space    | Findings   |
|---------------|------------|
| Classrooms    | Inadequate |
| Toilets       | Inadequate |
| Computer Area | Inadequate |
| Hall          | Inadequate |
| Play Areas    | Inadequate |



Schedule of Accommodation for a 4-classroom primary school and the accommodation provided at Gaelscoil na mBeann (Category 91 – 120).

| No of Spaces | Area           | Description of Space                         | Total area recommended by DE | Provision at this school | Notes   |
|--------------|----------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 4            | 60sqm          | Classroom                                    | 240sqm                       | 215.6sqm                 | 2 of the classrooms are at the recommended area and one classroom is substantially smaller than recommended                                     |
| 1            | 40sqm          | Resource Area                                | 40sqm                        | NIL                      | 40sqm Space now used as a classroom due to increase in school population. No resource area/ multi-purpose space available in school as a result |
| 1            | 160sqm         | Multi-Purpose Hall                           | 160sqm                       | NIL                      |   |
| 1<br>1       | 15sqm<br>15sqm | Multi-Purpose Room 2<br>Multi-Purpose Room 3 | 15sqm<br>15sqm               | NIL<br>NIL               |   |
| 1            | 30sqm          | Staff Room                                   | 30sqm                        | 26sqm                    |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | Principal's Office                           | 15sqm                        | 16.8sqm                  |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | General Office                               | 15sqm                        | 10.4sqm                  |   |
| 4            | 5sqm           | Classroom Store                              | 20sqm                        | 21.14sqm                 |   |
| 1            | 5sqm           | Resource Store                               | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | PE Equipment Store                           | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Mat Store                                    | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Adult Chair Store                            | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Stage Store                                  | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | External Play Store                          | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 9sqm           | Cleaner's Store                              | 9sqm                         | 4sqm                     |   |
| 1            | 6sqm           | Consumables Store                            | 6sqm                         | NIL                      |   |
| 4            | 15sqm          | Class Toilets and Coat Space                 | 60sqm                        | 55sqm                    |   |
| 2            | 12sqm          | Pupil's changing at Multi-Purpose Hall       | 24sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 13sqm          | Hygiene Room                                 | 13sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 2            | 6sqm           | Staff Toilets                                | 12sqm                        | 8sqm                     |   |
| 1            | 5sqm           | Computer Hub Room                            | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |   |

As noted in the table, two of the classrooms meet the recommended floor areas and are well lit, given the nature of the timber frame construction and the narrow plan dimensions. There are, however, no resource spaces, or multi-purpose rooms and the general spatial provision is less than required.

As noted in the table, the classrooms are generally close in area to the recommended room floor area and their associated stores generally meet the recommended areas. A room provided as general 'resource space' was used as a library but now functions as a classroom space. There are no other resource spaces, and the spatial provision is less than required and desired.

The lack of a hygiene room and overall lack of adequate provision of storage spaces and toilet accommodation is also a problem in the operation of the school. The Building Handbook notes the class toilets and coats space as one singular space, which is in accordance with the layout of new schools, but within 'mobile' /timber frame narrow plan structures the 'coats space, is also the corridor to the classrooms. Provision of a staff toilet block is currently under feasibility check and- awaiting confirmation.

The 'mobile classroom' provision of separate blocks does not facilitate cross peer group learning and the lack of shared resources spaces restricts learning opportunities.

Based on current school population coupled with predicted intake for the 2025/26 academic year and beyond, the school will shortly be forced to turn away applicants and/or compromise educational standards in older classes by creating further composite classes etc. By September 2026, based on predicted intake numbers, the school will require at least one additional classroom.

Classroom sizes at the school are: 45.8sqm, 46.4sqm, 60.9sqm, 44.1sqm, 45.6sqm.



*Access problems at entrance and lack of parking facilities for staff & parents*



*Access problems at entrance and lack of parking facilities for staff & parents*



*Damage to external walls of classrooms*



*Damaged window with constant leak during rain*



*Internal damage during rainfall*



*Flood in classroom during rainfall*



*External areas - level access not provided to all classroom units*



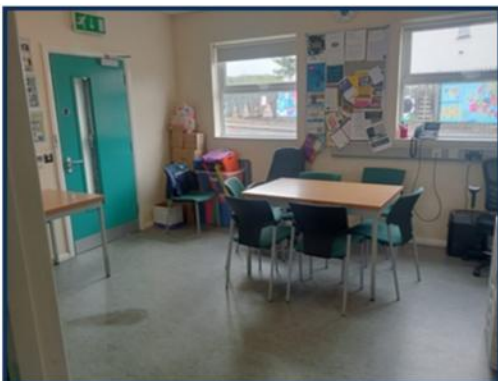
*External areas*



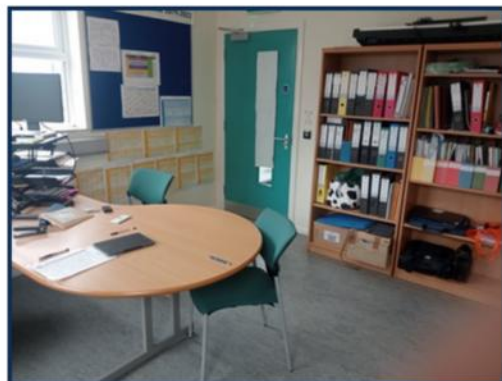
*Typical classroom*



*Typical classroom*



*Staff room*



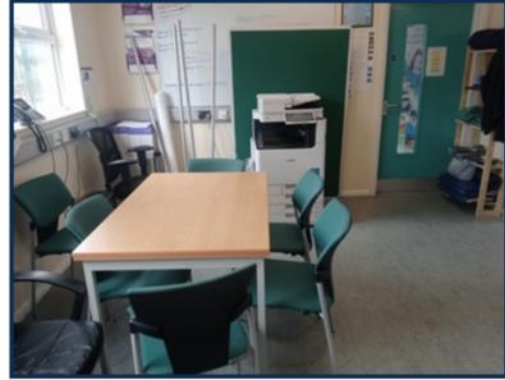
*Principal's office*





*Staff room*

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*Staff room*

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*Typical classroom*

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*Typical classroom*

---



*Shared play area*

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*School's own play area*

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## Introduction

Naíscoil Uachtar Tíre was established in Castlewellan, County Down, in 1997 and it was followed by the establishment of Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche as an Irish-medium Primary School in 1999. The school moved to its current site in 2010. Naíscoil Bheanna Boirche was established as a statutory nursery in 2018. Despite the physical limitations of the site, enrolments at the school have remained steady over recent years. Currently there are 131 children attending Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche which exceeds the sustainability threshold (105) making the Bunscoil eligible for the Department of Education's capital list.

## Overview

Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche have 8 teaching spaces in the school and one purpose-built Nursery classroom and 5 classrooms of the correct proportions.

Two of the classes are currently taught in the Resource rooms, which are smaller than normal classrooms. The school has no additional space in the school for any type of support service as all rooms are in full use. Therefore, counselling services, peripatetic support, etc. takes place in corridors, or, when available, in a cold and dilapidated canteen. (The canteen is also too small for the pupil numbers necessitating split lunches for pupils and staff).

The staff room and principal's office are both in use as teaching spaces. In the current climate, with emphasis on wellbeing (for pupils and staff as well as parents / school community) it is extremely difficult to offer proper support for this without any additional spaces within the school for such initiatives. The school also does not have a hall for sports or assemblies. Despite these glaring inadequacies Naíscoil and Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche continue to thrive and grow their numbers and is now one of the larger schools in the district.

## Survey

The enrolment number category for Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche is 121 – 150 pupils and as such the recommended site area is 0.67 ha (6,700sqm). The DE recommended site area includes 3,000sqm of grass play and 800sqm of hard play. Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche has 2,000sqm grass play and has 900sqm of hard play.



A general 5-classroom primary school, LIA including services rooms and circulations, but excluding SMA, has a recommended area of 1,032sqm.

The teaching accommodation at Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche is provided within a cluster of separate prefabricated buildings. The 'mobile classroom' provision of separate blocks does not facilitate cross peer group learning and the lack of shared resources spaces restricts learning opportunities.

The following table indicates the under-provision of support spaces, resources, school hall /multi-purpose rooms, and storage areas. The total amount of net floor space not provided and, therefore, lost to the school, and the activities of the pupils, is 394sqm, of which 229sqm relates to the lack of multi-purpose halls and associated storage spaces.

## Assessment

Existing rooms /spaces classrooms were measured and compared with the required standards outlined in DE Schedules of Accommodation (see attached table on next page).

## Summary

Required informal grass play area of 3,000sqm. Approximately 2,000sqm grass play space is provided, including a sloped bank.

The provision of hard play exceeds requirements.

Under provision of Limit of Internal Area = 394sqm

The school site is 85% of the recommended area

The school floor area is 62% of the LIA

## General Observations

(Summary of findings compared to DE Schedules of Accommodation)

| Room/Space    | Findings   |
|---------------|------------|
| Classrooms    | Inadequate |
| Toilets       | Inadequate |
| Computer Area | Inadequate |
| Hall          | Inadequate |
| Play Areas    | Inadequate |



Schedule of Accommodation for a 5-classroom primary school and the accommodation provided at Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche (Category 121 – 150).

| No of Spaces | Area           | Description of Space                         | Total area recommended by DE | Provision at this school | Notes                        |
|--------------|----------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 5            | 60sqm          | Classroom                                    | 300sqm                       | 242.8sqm                 |                              |
| 2            | 40sqm          | Resource Area                                | 80sqm                        | 41.5sqm                  |                              |
| 1            | 160sqm         | Multi-Purpose Hall                           | 160sqm                       | NIL                      |                              |
| 1<br>1       | 15sqm<br>15sqm | Multi-Purpose Room 2<br>Multi-Purpose Room 3 | 15sqm<br>15sqm               | 53sqm<br>NIL             |                              |
| 1            | 30sqm          | Staff Room                                   | 30sqm                        | NIL                      |                              |
| 1            | 15sqm          | Principal's Office                           | 15sqm                        | 11.88sqm                 | Now used as a teaching space |
| 1            | 15sqm          | General Office                               | 15sqm                        | 15.4sqm                  | Now used as a teaching space |
| 5            | 5sqm           | Classroom Store                              | 25sqm                        | 19.6sqm                  |                              |
| 2            | 5sqm           | Resource Store                               | 10sqm                        | 5.1sqm                   |                              |
| 1            | 15sqm          | PE Equipment Store                           | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |                              |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Mat Store                                    | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |                              |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Adult Chair Store                            | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |                              |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Stage Store                                  | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |                              |
| 1            | 15sqm          | External Play Store                          | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |                              |
| 1            | 9sqm           | Cleaner's Store                              | 9sqm                         | 6sqm                     |                              |
| 1            | 6sqm           | Consumables Store                            | 6sqm                         | NIL                      |                              |
| 5            | 15sqm          | Class Toilets and Coat Space                 | 75sqm                        | 60sqm                    |                              |
| 2            | 12sqm          | Pupil's changing at Multi-Purpose Hall       | 24sqm                        | NIL                      |                              |
| 1            | 13sqm          | Hygiene Room                                 | 13sqm                        | NIL                      |                              |
| 2            | 6sqm           | Staff Toilets                                | 12sqm                        | 8sqm                     |                              |
| 1            | 5sqm           | Computer Hub Room                            | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |                              |

As noted in the table, all the classrooms meet the recommended floor areas and are well lit, given the nature of the timber frame construction and the narrow plan dimensions. There are, however, no multi-Purpose Rooms and the spatial provision is less than required.

A room provided as general 'resource space' is currently used as a classroom, such that each year group has their own dedicated teaching space. There are, however, no other resource spaces, and the general spatial provision is less than required and desired.

The lack of a Hygiene Room is also a problem in the operation of the school.

The 'mobile classroom' provision of separate blocks does not facilitate cross peer group learning and the lack of shared resources spaces restricts learning opportunities.

Classroom sizes at the school are: 62.4sqm, 62.4sqm, 59sqm, 59sqm.



*Main corridor used for storage & library*



*Main corridor, storage, and access to toilet*



*Quiet room off main classroom and emergency exit*



*Principal's office and storage room*



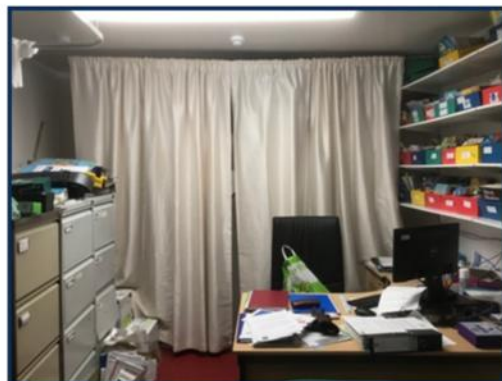
*Main school office, staff room and kitchen*



*Damp on the ceiling of main school corridor*



*School office*



*Principal's office - now teaching space*



*Grass play area*



*School entrance and hard play area*



*Typical classroom*



*Typical classroom*



*Typical classroom*



*Typical classroom*





## Introduction

Naíscoil Eoghain was established in 2010 and it was followed by the establishment of Gaelscoil Eoghan in 2012, an Irish-medium Primary School located in Cookstown, County Tyrone. The Department of Education officially recognised the school in 2012 despite the physical limitations of its current site. Enrolments at the Gaelscoil have increased over recent years. Currently there are 107 children attending the Gaelscoil which exceeds the sustainability threshold (105) and makes it eligible for the Department of Education's capital list.

## Overview

Gaelscoil Eoghain is located, via a shared access road, at the rear of the fire station making it less visible and, more difficult for the community to access. There are major health and safety concerns with the current site, in terms of access, that pose an ongoing risk to the children, staff, and school community. The current site is inadequate and not fit for purpose.

## Survey

The enrolment number category for Gaelscoil Eoghain is 121 – 150 pupils and as such the recommended site area is 0.67 ha (6,700sqm). The DE recommended site area includes 3,000sqm of grass play and 800sqm of hard play. Gaelscoil Eoghain has no grass play and has only 290sqm of hard play.

The site (at 3,238sqm) is smaller the DE recommended site area, and the hard play area is significantly less than requirements.

A general 5-classroom primary school, LIA including services rooms and circulations, but excluding SMA, has a recommended area of 1,032sqm.

The teaching accommodation at Gaelscoil Eoghain is provided within four, relatively new, prefabricated buildings ('double mobiles'), built over several phases of construction. The 'mobile classroom' provision of separate blocks does not facilitate cross peer group learning and the lack of shared resources spaces restricts learning opportunities.

The following table indicates the under-provision of support spaces, resources, school hall /multi-purpose rooms, and storage areas. The total amount of net floor space not provided and, therefore, lost to the school, and the activities of the pupils, is 379sqm, of which 229sqm relates to the lack of multi-purpose halls and associated storage spaces.

## Assessment

Existing rooms /spaces classrooms were measured and compared with the required standards outlined in DE Schedules of Accommodation (see attached table on next page).

## Summary

Required informal grass play area of 3,000sqm. No grass play space is provided.

Under provision of hard play area of 510sqm

Under provision of Limit of Internal Area = 379sqm

The school site is 48% of the recommended area

The school floor area is 63% of the LIA

## General Observations

(Summary of findings compared to DE Schedules of Accommodation)

| Room/Space    | Findings   |
|---------------|------------|
| Classrooms    | Adequate   |
| Toilets       | Inadequate |
| Computer Area | Inadequate |
| Hall          | Inadequate |
| Play Areas    | Inadequate |

Schedule of Accommodation for a 5-classroom primary school and the accommodation provided at Gaelscoil Eoghain (Category 121 – 150).

| No of Spaces | Area           | Description of Space                         | Total area recommended by DE | Provision at this school | Notes   |
|--------------|----------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 5            | 60sqm          | Classroom                                    | 300sqm                       | 293.4sqm                 | The classrooms are marginally smaller than required     |
| 2            | 40sqm          | Resource Area                                | 80sqm                        | 54sqm                    | There is one Resource Area which is used as a classroom |
| 1            | 160sqm         | Multi-Purpose Hall                           | 160sqm                       | NIL                      |   |
| 1<br>1       | 15sqm<br>15sqm | Multi-Purpose Room 2<br>Multi-Purpose Room 3 | 15sqm<br>15sqm               | NIL<br>NIL               |   |
| 1            | 30sqm          | Staff Room                                   | 30sqm                        | 54sqm                    |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | Principal's Office                           | 15sqm                        | 4.2sqm                   |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | General Office                               | 15sqm                        | 8sqm                     |   |
| 5            | 5sqm           | Classroom Store                              | 25sqm                        | 27sqm                    |   |
| 2            | 5sqm           | Resource Store                               | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | PE Equipment Store                           | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Mat Store                                    | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Adult Chair Store                            | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Stage Store                                  | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | External Play Store                          | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 9sqm           | Cleaner's Store                              | 9sqm                         | 8.3sqm                   |   |
| 1            | 6sqm           | Consumables Store                            | 6sqm                         | NIL                      |   |
| 5            | 15sqm          | Class Toilets and Coat Space                 | 75sqm                        | 57.36sqm                 |   |
| 2            | 12sqm          | Pupil's changing at Multi-Purpose Hall       | 24sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 13sqm          | Hygiene Room                                 | 13sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 2            | 6sqm           | Staff Toilets                                | 12sqm                        | 8sqm                     |   |
| 1            | 5sqm           | Computer Hub Room                            | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |   |

As noted in the table, all the classrooms meet the recommended floor areas and are well lit, given the nature of the timber frame construction and the narrow plan dimensions. A room provided as general 'resource space is currently used as a classroom, such that each year group (with one exception) has their own dedicated teaching space. There are, however, no other resource spaces, and the spatial provision is less than required and desired.

The major lack of provision at this school is the multi-purpose hall and all its associated storage spaces. And there is also no provision of the recommended smaller multi-purpose rooms. This is a major omission at a school of this size. And pupils have no communal indoor gathering, learning or play space.



The lack of a hygiene room and overall lack of adequate provision of storage spaces and toilet accommodation is also a problem in the operation of the school. The Building Handbook notes the class toilets and coats space as one singular space, which is in accordance with the layout of new schools, but within 'mobile' /timber frame narrow plan structures the 'coats space, is also the corridor to the classrooms.

The 'mobile classroom' provision of separate blocks does not facilitate cross peer group learning and the lack of shared resources spaces restricts learning opportunities.

Classroom sizes at the school are: 60.3sqm, 60.3sqm, 59.4sqm, 59.4sqm, 54sqm.



*View of school site looking at fire station*



*Lack of external play space*



*Damage and rot to all external classroom walls*



*Damage to external classroom walls*



*Close up of external rot*



*Storage, school library, and access to toilet*



*Site entrance and parking area*



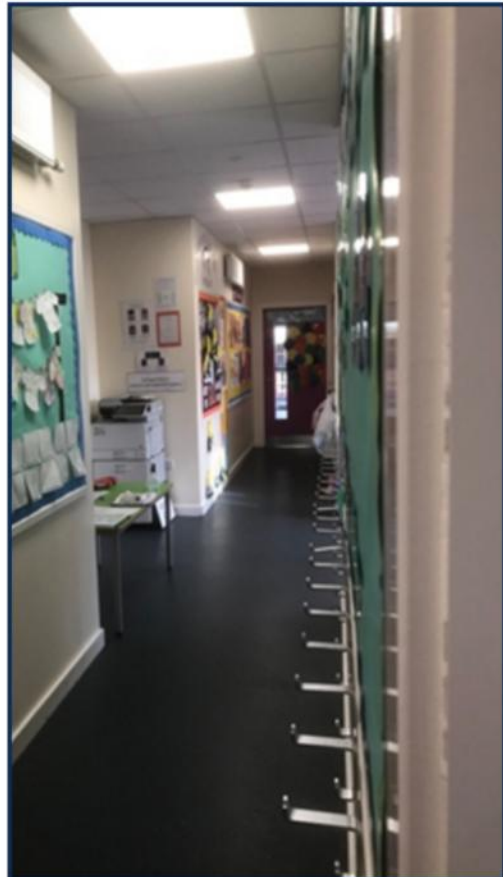
*Typical classroom*



*Corridor, coat storage and toilets*



*Later phases of classroom provision*



*Corridor access to general office*



*External play and circulation areas*



## County Fermanagh

### Bunscoil an Traonaigh



The land shaded pink is owned by the school, but is screened off by 2.4 metre fencing, without gates.

## Introduction

Naíscoil an Traonaigh was established in 2002 and it was followed by the establishment of Bunscoil an Traonaigh as an Irish-medium primary school in 2004. The Department of Education officially recognised the school in 2004 despite the physical limitations of its current site enrolments at the school have remained steady over recent years. Currently there are 64 children attending Bunscoil an Traonaigh.

## Overview

Bunscoil an Traonaigh is situated at Drumbrughas North, off the Maguiresbridge Road in Lisnaskea, County Fermanagh. The school is located on a very restricted site that includes Naíscoil an Traonaigh, though adjacent lands are available. The Department of Education has agreed to relocate Bunscoil an Traonaigh to the former Lisnaskea High School site from its current site.

## Survey

Bunscoil an Traonaigh has approved enrolment numbers at a lesser number than the 'Enrolment Number Category' in Appendix 2 of Section 3a of the Primary Schools Building Handbook. For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that a 4-class school is the base point for the spatial provision in a primary school, and as such we have used the Schedule of Accommodation for a 4-classroom school as provided in the Primary School Building Handbook.

The enrolment number category for Bunscoil an Traonaigh is assumed at 91 – 120 pupils and as such the recommended site area is 0.63 ha (6,300sqm). The DE recommended site area includes 3,000sqm of grass play and 650sqm of hard play. Bunscoil an Traonaigh has very limited grass play (385sqm) and has 80sqm of hard play, including external circulation.

The available site (at 3,434sqm) is less than the DE recommended site area, though contiguous additional land is owned, by the Trustees, and with new fencing and site-levelling and drainage works could be used by the school. The hard play area meets the DE requirements.



A general 4-classroom primary school, LIA including services rooms and circulations, but excluding SMA, has a recommended area of 884sqm.

The teaching accommodation at Bunscoil an Traonaigh is provided within relatively new, prefabricated buildings ('double mobiles'), built over several phases of construction. The 'mobile classroom' provision of separate blocks does not facilitate cross peer group learning and the lack of shared resources spaces restricts learning opportunities.

The following table indicates the under-provision of support spaces, resources, school hall /multi-purpose rooms, and storage areas. The total amount of net floor space not provided and, therefore, lost to the school, and the activities of the pupils, is 346sqm, of which 229sqm relates to the lack of multi-purpose hall and associated storage spaces.

## Assessment

Existing rooms /spaces classrooms were measured and compared with the required standards outlined in DE Schedules of Accommodation (see attached table on next page).

## Summary

Required informal grass play area of 3,000sqm. Limited grass play space is provided.  
The provision of hard play meets the requirements.  
Under provision of Limit of Internal Area = 346sqm  
The available school site is 55% of the recommended area  
The school floor area is 61% of the LIA

## General Observations

(Summary of findings compared to DE Schedules of Accommodation)

| Room/Space    | Findings   |
|---------------|------------|
| Classrooms    | Adequate   |
| Toilets       | Inadequate |
| Computer Area | Inadequate |
| Hall          | Inadequate |
| Play Areas    | Inadequate |

Schedule of Accommodation for a 4-classroom primary school and the accommodation provided at Bunscoil an Traonaigh (Category 91 – 120).

| No of Spaces | Area   | Description of Space                   | Total area recommended by DE | Provision at this school | Notes   |
|--------------|--------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 4            | 60sqm  | Classroom                              | 240sqm                       | 234.4sqm                 |   |
| 1            | 40sqm  | Resource Area                          | 40sqm                        | 58.5sqm                  | The resource space is used as a teaching space        |
| 1            | 160sqm | Multi-Purpose Hall                     | 160sqm                       | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 15sqm  | Multi-Purpose Room 2                   | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 15sqm  | Multi-Purpose Room 3                   | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 30sqm  | Staff Room                             | 30sqm                        | 17.4sqm                  |   |
| 1            | 15sqm  | Principal's Office                     | 15sqm                        | 11.6sqm                  |   |
| 1            | 15sqm  | General Office                         | 15sqm                        | 17.4sqm                  |   |
| 4            | 5sqm   | Classroom Store                        | 20sqm                        | 5.2sqm                   |   |
| 1            | 5sqm   | Resource Store                         | 5sqm                         | 6sqm                     |   |
| 1            | 15sqm  | PE Equipment Store                     | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm  | Mat Store                              | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm  | Adult Chair Store                      | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm  | Stage Store                            | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 15sqm  | External Play Store                    | 15sqm                        | 10sqm                    |   |
| 1            | 9sqm   | Cleaner's Store                        | 9sqm                         | 3.9sqm                   |   |
| 1            | 6sqm   | Consumables Store                      | 6sqm                         | NIL                      |   |
| 4            | 15sqm  | Class Toilets and Coat Space           | 60sqm                        | 39.6sqm                  | The toilet accommodation is completely unsatisfactory |
| 2            | 12sqm  | Pupil's changing at Multi-Purpose Hall | 24sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 13sqm  | Hygiene Room                           | 13sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 2            | 6sqm   | Staff Toilets                          | 12sqm                        | 3.8sqm                   |   |
| 1            | 5sqm   | Computer Hub Room                      | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |   |

As noted in the table, all the classrooms meet the recommended floor areas and are well lit, given the nature of the timber frame construction and the narrow plan dimensions. A room provided as general 'resource space is currently used as a classroom, such that each year group (with one exception) has their own dedicated teaching space. There are, however, no other resource spaces, and the spatial provision is less than required and desired.

The major lack of provision at this school is the multi-purpose hall and all its associated storage spaces. And there is also no provision of the recommended smaller multi-purpose rooms. This is a major omission at a school of this size. And pupils have no communal indoor gathering, learning or play space.

The lack of a hygiene room and overall lack of adequate provision of storage spaces and toilet accommodation is also a problem in the operation of the school.

The 'mobile classroom' provision does not facilitate cross peer group learning and the lack of shared resources spaces restricts learning opportunities.

Classroom sizes at the school are: 4 x 58.6sqm.



*Entrance and car parking area*



*Typical classroom*



*Staff toilet also used as store*



*Classroom toilets*



*External play area*





*External play area*



*Access - Naíscoil to the right*



*Naíscoil*



*Grass play area*



*Access to grass play area*



*Contiguous lands*



*External area*



*Hard play area and border fence*



The land shaded pink is owned by the school, but is screened off by 2.4 metre fencing, without gates.

## Introduction

Naíscoil an Chaistil was established in Ballycastle, County Antrim in 2000 and it was followed by the establishment of Gaelscoil an Chaistil as an Irish-medium primary school in 2001. DE officially recognised the school in 2003, it was then vested by the department in 2009. Enrolments at the school have remained steady over recent years. Currently there are 87 children attending Gaelscoil an Chaistil.

## Overview

Gaelscoil an Chaistil is located on the edge of the town and housed on a re-claimed site. The school is sited with 4 modern modular classrooms. It also has an office and resources block and a multi-purpose hall which does not, however, fully comply with the DE Building Handbook. The site also houses a purpose-built nursery building, consisting of 2 classrooms and office. The nursery achieved statutory status in 2012 and is part of Gaelscoil an Chaistil. It offers 26 full-time pre-school places.

## Survey

The enrolment number category for Gaelscoil an Chaistil is 91 – 120 pupils and as such the recommended site area is 0.63 ha (6,300sqm). The DE recommended site area includes 3,000sqm of grass play and 650sqm of hard play. Gaelscoil an Chaistil is adjacent to a large grass play within the site confines (1270sqm), which is safely accessible to the school children, past the top of the car parking area with safe marshalling by teachers and assistants. The school has 650sqm of hard play, including external circulation.

The site meets the DE recommended site area, though almost 50% of the site area is contaminated land. The entrance road bisects the site, with the Naíscoil opposite the gates and the Bunscoil to the left of the approach. The car parking and grass play area are to the right of the entrance gates. Steeply sloped and planted areas are fenced off from the useable areas of the site. The hard play area meets the requirements.

A general 4-classroom primary school, LIA including services rooms and circulations, but excluding SMA, has a recommended area of 884sqm.



The teaching accommodation at Gaelscoil an Chaistil is provided within relatively new, prefabricated buildings ('double mobiles'), built over several phases of construction. The 'mobile classroom' provision of separate blocks does not facilitate cross peer group learning and the lack of shared resources spaces restricts learning opportunities.

The following table indicates the under-provision of support spaces, resources, school hall /multi-purpose rooms, and storage areas. The total amount of net floor space not provided and, therefore, lost to the school, and the activities of the pupils, is 253sqm.

## Assessment

Existing rooms /spaces classrooms were measured and compared with the required standards outlined in DE Schedules of Accommodation (see attached table on next page).

## Summary

Required informal grass play area of 3,000sqm. An area of grass play space is provided.

The provision of hard play area meets the requirements.

Under provision of Limit of Internal Area = 253sqm

The available school site is 95% of the DE recommended area

The school floor area is 71% of the LIA

## General Observations

(Summary of findings compared to DE Schedules of Accommodation)

| Room/Space    | Findings   |
|---------------|------------|
| Classrooms    | Adequate   |
| Toilets       | Adequate   |
| Computer Area | Inadequate |
| Hall          | Inadequate |
| Play Areas    | Inadequate |



Schedule of Accommodation for a 4-classroom primary school and the accommodation provided at Gaelscoil an Chaistil (Category 91 – 120).

| No of Spaces | Area   | Description of Space                   | Total area recommended by DE | Provision at this school | Notes |
|--------------|--------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| 4            | 60sqm  | Classroom                              | 240sqm                       | 235.7sqm                 |       |
| 1            | 40sqm  | Resource Area                          | 40sqm                        | NIL                      |       |
| 1            | 160sqm | Multi-Purpose Hall                     | 160sqm                       | 113.1sqm                 |       |
| 1            | 15sqm  | Multi-Purpose Room 2                   | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |       |
| 1            | 15sqm  | Multi-Purpose Room 3                   | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |       |
| 1            | 30sqm  | Staff Room                             | 30sqm                        | 25sqm                    |       |
| 1            | 15sqm  | Principal's Office                     | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |       |
| 1            | 15sqm  | General Office                         | 15sqm                        | 28sqm                    |       |
| 4            | 5sqm   | Classroom Store                        | 20sqm                        | 26.4sqm                  |       |
| 1            | 5sqm   | Resource Store                         | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |       |
| 1            | 15sqm  | PE Equipment Store                     | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |       |
| 1            | 10sqm  | Mat Store                              | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |       |
| 1            | 10sqm  | Adult Chair Store                      | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |       |
| 1            | 10sqm  | Stage Store                            | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |       |
| 1            | 15sqm  | External Play Store                    | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |       |
| 1            | 9sqm   | Cleaner's Store                        | 9sqm                         | 15sqm                    |       |
| 1            | 6sqm   | Consumables Store                      | 6sqm                         | NIL                      |       |
| 4            | 15sqm  | Class Toilets and Coat Space           | 60sqm                        | 65.6sqm                  |       |
| 2            | 12sqm  | Pupil's changing at Multi-Purpose Hall | 24sqm                        | NIL                      |       |
| 1            | 13sqm  | Hygiene Room                           | 13sqm                        | NIL                      |       |
| 2            | 6sqm   | Staff Toilets                          | 12sqm                        | 16.8sqm                  |       |
| 1            | 5sqm   | Computer Hub Room                      | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |       |

As noted in the table, all the classrooms meet the recommended floor areas and are well lit, given the nature of the timber frame construction and the narrow plan dimensions. There are, however, no resource spaces, or multi-purpose rooms and the spatial provision is less than required.

The multi-purpose hall is approximately 80% size of the recommended area and does provide a good space for pupils and staff, but it suffers from lack of its associated storage spaces. And there is also no provision of the recommended smaller multi-purpose rooms. This is a major omission at a school of this size.

The lack of a hygiene room and lack of adequate provision of changing spaces for pupils is also a problem in the operation of the school. The 'mobile classroom' provision does not facilitate cross peer group learning and the lack of shared resources spaces restricts learning opportunities

Classroom sizes at the school are: 58.3sqm, 58.3sqm, 59.9sqm, 59.2sqm.



*Approach to school*



*Play area*



*Staff room*



*Reception and office*



*Pedestrian access from road*



*Outside classroom adjacent to grass play area*



*External play area*



*External play area*



*Typical classroom*



*Typical classroom*



*Resource area/store*



*Grass play area*



*Grass play area*



*Multi-Purpose Hall*





## Introduction

Naíscoil na Móna was established in Belfast, County Antrim, in 1990 and it was followed by the establishment of Gaelscoil na Móna as an Irish-medium Primary School in 2000. The school was awarded grant aided status in 2004. Naíscoil na Móna was established as a statutory nursery in 2017. Despite the physical limitations of its current site enrolments at the school have remained steady over recent years. Currently there are 26 children attending Naíscoil na Móna and 87 attending Gaelscoil na Móna.

## Overview

Gaelscoil na Móna is situated on the Mona Link, Belfast, County Antrim. The school is

housed in 3 modular buildings, comprising of: 5 classrooms, 1 communal resource area, 1 small canteen, 12 pupils' toilets, 3 disabled toilets which double up as adult toilets and cleaning stores, 1 office – divided into separate spaces for the secretary and principal, and 1 small extra support room in the lower building.

The school has no multi-purpose hall, ICT rooms or library spaces. It has inadequate storage areas throughout the school. It has no vehicular access to the upper site which houses 3 classrooms and a resource area. There is no extra support room/ area in the upper building for Rang 3-7 pupils. Parking is limited to 6 cars for over 20 staff, there is no space for parents' drop-off, or for bus turning within the curtilage of the site.

## Survey

The enrolment number category for Gaelscoil na Móna is 91 - 120 pupils and as such the recommended site area is 0.63 ha (6,300sqm). The DE recommended site area includes 3,000sqm of grass play and 650sqm of hard play. Gaelscoil na Móna has approximately 500sqm grass play and has 334sqm of hard play.

The site is less than the DE recommended site area, and the hard play area is 326sqm less than requirements.

A general 4-classroom primary school, LIA including services rooms and circulations, but excluding SMA, has a recommended area of 884sqm.

The teaching accommodation at Gaelscoil na Móna is provided within a cluster of relatively new, prefabricated buildings, grouped around a change in level from the school entrance to the upper-level hard play area.

The following table indicates the under-provision of support spaces, resources, school hall /multi-purpose rooms, and storage areas. The total amount of net floor space not provided and, therefore, lost to the school, and the activities of the pupils, is 299sqm, of which 229sqm relates to the lack of multi-purpose hall and associated storage spaces.

## Assessment

Existing rooms /spaces classrooms were measured and compared with the required standards outlined in DE Schedules of Accommodation (see attached table on next page).

## Summary

Required informal grass play area of 3,000sqm. 500sqm grass play space is provided.

Under provision of hard play area of 326sqm

Under provision of Limit of Internal Area = 299sqm

The available school site is 66% of the DE recommended area

The school floor area is 66% of the LIA

## General Observations

(Summary of findings compared to DE Schedules of Accommodation)

| Room/Space    | Findings   |
|---------------|------------|
| Classrooms    | Adequate   |
| Toilets       | Adequate   |
| Computer Area | Inadequate |
| Hall          | Inadequate |
| Play Areas    | Inadequate |

Schedule of Accommodation for a 4-classroom primary school and the accommodation provided at Gaelscoil na Móna (Category 91 – 120).

| No of Spaces | Area           | Description of Space                         | Total area recommended by DE | Provision at this school | Notes |
|--------------|----------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| 4            | 60sqm          | Classroom                                    | 240sqm                       | 302.7sqm                 |       |
| 1            | 40sqm          | Resource Area                                | 40sqm                        | 68sqm                    |       |
| 1            | 160sqm         | Multi-Purpose Hall                           | 160sqm                       | NIL                      |       |
| 1<br>1       | 15sqm<br>15sqm | Multi-Purpose Room 2<br>Multi-Purpose Room 3 | 15sqm<br>15sqm               | NIL<br>NIL               |       |
| 1            | 30sqm          | Staff Room                                   | 30sqm                        | 31sqm                    |       |
| 1            | 15sqm          | Principal's Office                           | 15sqm                        | 14.7sqm                  |       |
| 1            | 15sqm          | General Office                               | 15sqm                        | 15sqm                    |       |
| 4            | 5sqm           | Classroom Store                              | 20sqm                        | 22.56sqm                 |       |
| 1            | 5sqm           | Resource Store                               | 5sqm                         | 5.9sqm                   |       |
| 1            | 15sqm          | PE Equipment Store                           | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |       |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Mat Store                                    | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |       |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Adult Chair Store                            | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |       |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Stage Store                                  | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |       |
| 1            | 15sqm          | External Play Store                          | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |       |
| 1            | 9sqm           | Cleaner's Store                              | 9sqm                         | 4sqm                     |       |
| 1            | 6sqm           | Consumables Store                            | 6sqm                         | NIL                      |       |
| 4            | 15sqm          | Class Toilets and Coat Space                 | 60sqm                        | 75sqm                    |       |
| 2            | 12sqm          | Pupil's changing at Multi-Purpose Hall       | 24sqm                        | NIL                      |       |
| 1            | 13sqm          | Hygiene Room                                 | 13sqm                        | NIL                      |       |
| 2            | 6sqm           | Staff Toilets                                | 12sqm                        | 8sqm                     |       |
| 1            | 5sqm           | Computer Hub Room                            | 5sqm                         | 2sqm                     |       |

As noted in the table, all the classrooms and their associated stores meet the recommended areas. The school suffers lack of all multi-purpose spaces and their associated support storage spaces. This is a major omission at a school of this size. And pupils have no communal indoor gathering, learning or play space.

The building is on a very constricted site with level access issues and suffers from lack of adequate provision of hard paly and amenity space.

The lack of a Hygiene Room and overall lack of adequate provision of storage spaces is also a problem in the operation of the school.

Classroom sizes at the school are: 60sqm, 60sqm, 61sqm, 60sqm, 61.7sqm.





*General view of school accommodation*



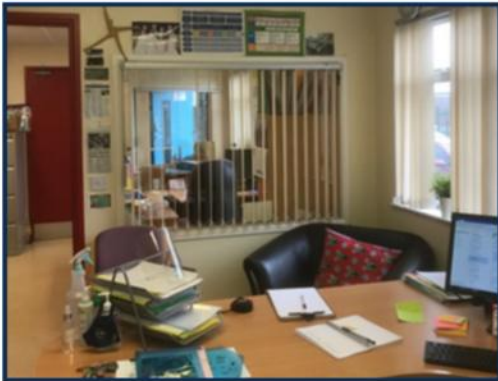
*Damage to internal classroom ceilings*



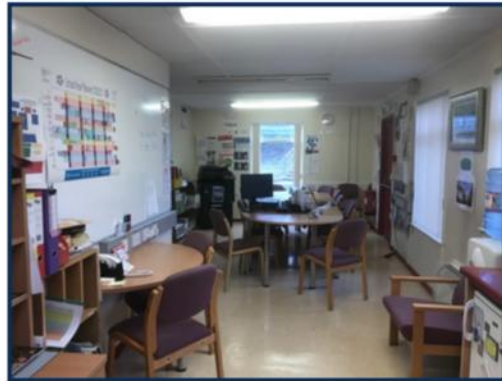
*Internal damp and rot in classroom*



*Corridor used for storage due to lack of space*



*General/Principal's office*



*Staff room*



*Typical classroom*



*Typical classroom*



*Typical classroom*



*Typical classroom*



*Shared play area between junior school and Naiscoil*



*Shared access way*



*Ramp access to school admin building*



*Access via steps*



*Sloped grass play area at upper-level*



*Hard play area*





## Introduction

Naíscoil Ghleann Darach was established in Crumlin, County Antrim, in 2002 and it was followed by the establishment of Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach as an Irish-medium Primary School in 2006. The Department of Education officially recognised the school in 2007. Despite the physical limitations of its current site, enrolments at the school have remained steady over recent years. Currently there are 99 children attending Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach.

## Overview

Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach is situated on Glenavy Road, Crumlin, County Antrim and was established by parents from the area. It is situated on a rural site with an adjacent supporting Ionad Teaghlaigh (Irish-medium Family Centre) which houses the Naíscoil, Caife Gaelach, evening classes, and events.

At present the school has four classrooms and a circulation, that widens to form 'resource' areas. The school urgently requires a school multi-purpose hall for dining, sports, and assembly as per the Department of Education's School Accommodation Handbook for the school's population.

## Survey

The enrolment number category for Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach is 91 – 120 pupils and as such the recommended site area is 0.63 ha (6,300sqm). The DE recommended site area includes 3,000sqm of grass play and 650sqm of hard play. Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach has 3,000sqm grass play and has 684sqm of hard play.

The site is less than the DE recommended site area, though contiguous additional land is owned, by the Trustees, and with new fencing, site-levelling and drainage works could be used by the school. The hard play area meets the requirements.

A general 4-classroom primary school, LIA including services rooms and circulations, but excluding SMA, has a recommended area of 884sqm.

The teaching accommodation at Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach is provided within a relatively new purpose-built building.



The following table indicates the under-provision of support spaces, resources, school hall /multi-purpose rooms, and storage areas. The total amount of net floor space not provided and, therefore, lost to the school, and the activities of the pupils, is 257sqm, of which 205sqm relates to the lack of multi-purpose halls and associated storage spaces. As noted in the schedule of accommodation, the school has partitioned the multi-purpose rooms to function as a space for the Senco work and as an additional sensory learning support space.

The multi-Purpose Rooms are both larger than the areas recommended in the DE handbook.

## Assessment

Existing rooms /spaces classrooms were measured and compared with the required standards outlined in DE Schedules of Accommodation (see attached table on next page).

## Summary

Required informal grass play area of 3,000sqm. 500sqm grass play space is provided.

The provision of hard play area meets requirements.

Under provision of Limit of Internal Area = 257sqm

The available school site is larger the DE recommended area

The school floor area is 71% of the LIA

## General Observations

(Summary of findings compared to DE Schedules of Accommodation)

| Room/Space    | Findings   |
|---------------|------------|
| Classrooms    | Adequate   |
| Toilets       | Adequate   |
| Computer Area | Inadequate |
| Hall          | Inadequate |
| Play Areas    | Inadequate |

Schedule of Accommodation for a 4-classroom primary school and the accommodation provided at Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach (Category 91 – 120).

| No of Spaces | Area           | Description of Space                         | Total area recommended by DE | Provision at this school | Notes   |
|--------------|----------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 4            | 60sqm          | Classroom                                    | 240sqm                       | 240.7sqm                 |   |
| 1            | 40sqm          | Resource Area                                | 40sqm                        | 35.3sqm                  | The defined 'resource space is really a widened corridor which provides access to a number of rooms                                       |
| 1            | 160sqm         | Multi-Purpose Hall                           | 160sqm                       | NIL                      |   |
| 1<br>1       | 15sqm<br>15sqm | Multi-Purpose Room 2<br>Multi-Purpose Room 3 | 15sqm<br>15sqm               | 38sqm<br>44sqm           | 2 rooms are provided, one of which is used as the SENCO teaching space and the other as a more formal resource and learning support space |
| 1            | 30sqm          | Staff Room                                   | 30sqm                        | 29sqm                    |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | Principal's Office                           | 15sqm                        | 14.8sqm                  |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | General Office                               | 15sqm                        | 15.5sqm                  |   |
| 4            | 5sqm           | Classroom Store                              | 20sqm                        | 20sqm                    |   |
| 1            | 5sqm           | Resource Store                               | 5sqm                         | 8.5sqm                   |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | PE Equipment Store                           | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Mat Store                                    | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Adult Chair Store                            | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Stage Store                                  | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | External Play Store                          | 15sqm                        | 8.5sqm                   |   |
| 1            | 9sqm           | Cleaner's Store                              | 9sqm                         | 4sqm                     |   |
| 1            | 6sqm           | Consumables Store                            | 6sqm                         | 8sqm                     |   |
| 4            | 15sqm          | Class Toilets and Coat Space                 | 60sqm                        | 60sqm                    |   |
| 2            | 12sqm          | Pupil's changing at Multi-Purpose Hall       | 24sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 13sqm          | Hygiene Room                                 | 13sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 2            | 6sqm           | Staff Toilets                                | 12sqm                        | 8sqm                     |   |
| 1            | 5sqm           | Computer Hub Room                            | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |   |

The school suffers lack of a multi-purpose hall and its associated storage spaces. This is a major omission at a school of this size. And pupils have no communal indoor gathering, learning or play space. The building is on a constricted site and suffers from lack of adequate provision of soft play and amenity space, though see note above on contiguous land.

The lack of a hygiene room and overall lack of adequate provision of storage spaces is also a problem in the operation of the school.

As noted in the table, all the classrooms and their associated stores meet the recommended areas. Classroom sizes at the school are: 58.3sqm, 58.3sqm, 59.9sqm, 59.2sqm.



*Corridor used for dining facilities and table storage*



*Resource area in use, and functioning as corridor*



*Typical classroom*



*Main school corridor*



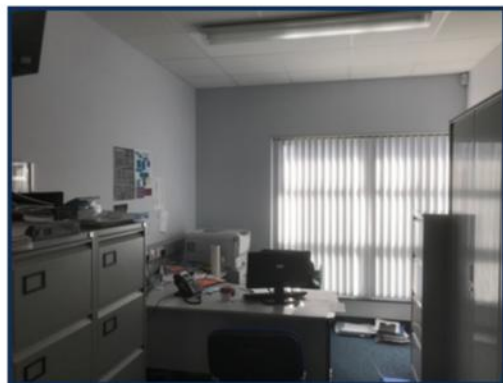
*Lack of storage for classroom equipment*



*General office*



*Staff room*

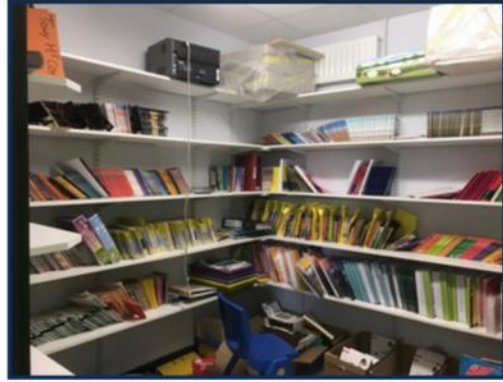


*Principal's office*





*Multi-purpose room used as sensory space*



*General storage*



*Resource space now used as classroom*



*Typical classroom*



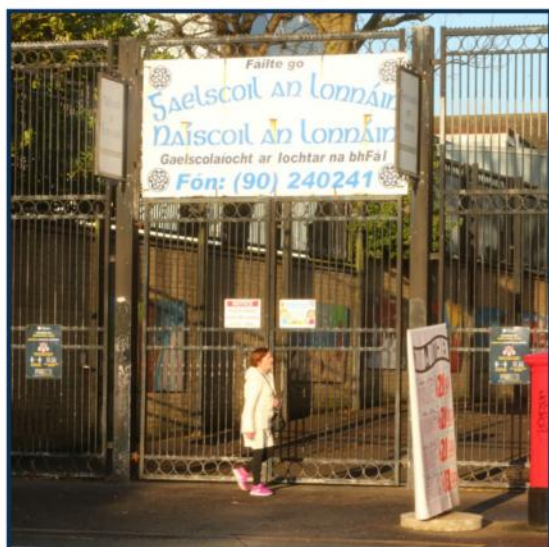
*Typical classroom*



*External play area*



*Resource space in use as a corridor*



## Introduction

Naíscoil an Lonnáin was established on Barrick Street, Belfast, in 1999 and it was followed by the establishment of Gaelscoil an Lonnáin as an Irish-medium Primary School in early 2000s. The school moved to its current site in 2005 and the physical limitations of its current site have negatively impacted on school enrolments and a new site is required to ensure future sustainability. Currently there are 46 children attending Gaelscoil an Lonnáin.

## Overview

Gaelscoil an Lonnáin is situated on the Falls Road, Belfast, County Antrim. The school is located at the rear of local shops on a very restricted site which is inadequate for the future development of the school.

From December 2023 to April 2024, DE undertook repair works, including, toilets, replacement windows, doors, flooring, and an upgrade to the play area to the rear of the school.

## Survey

The enrolment number category for Gaelscoil an Lonnáin is 91 – 120 pupils and as such the recommended site area is 0.63 ha (6,300sqm). The DE recommended site area includes 3,000sqm of grass play and 650sqm of hard play. Gaelscoil an Lonnáin has no grass play and has 190sqm hard play to the rear of the building. The site area includes vehicular access and limited car parking to the front of the school.

The site is much less than the DE recommended site area, and none of the external spaces meet the requirements.

A general 4-classroom primary school, LIA including services rooms and circulations, but excluding SMA, has a recommended area of 884sqm.

The teaching accommodation at Gaelscoil an Lonnáin is provided within an older school building on the Falls Road and the teaching spaces are provided over two floor levels, without any lift access. All the accommodation is much smaller than the recommended areas.



The following table indicates the under-provision of support spaces, resources, school hall /multi-purpose rooms, and storage areas. The total amount of net floor space not provided and, therefore, lost to the school, and the activities of the pupils, is 418sqm, of which 229sqm relates to the lack of a multi-purpose hall and associated storage spaces.

## Assessment

Existing rooms /spaces classrooms were measured and compared with the required standards outlined in DE Schedules of Accommodation (see attached table on next page).

## Summary

Required informal grass play area of 3,000sqm. No grass play space is provided.

There is no provision of hard play areas. Lack of 650sqm

Under provision of Limit of Internal Area = 418sqm

The available school site is 19% of the DE recommended area

The school floor area is 53% of the LIA

## General Observations

(Summary of findings compared to DE Schedules of Accommodation)

| Room/Space    | Findings   |
|---------------|------------|
| Classrooms    | Inadequate |
| Toilets       | Inadequate |
| Computer Area | Inadequate |
| Hall          | Inadequate |
| Play Areas    | Inadequate |



Schedule of Accommodation for a 4-classroom primary school and the accommodation provided at Gaelscoil an Lonnáin (Category 91 – 120).

| No of Spaces | Area           | Description of Space                         | Total area recommended by DE | Provision at this school | Notes   |
|--------------|----------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 4            | 60sqm          | Classroom                                    | 240sqm                       | 182.6sqm                 | All but one of the classrooms are much smaller than required and the level of natural light is also very poor |
| 1            | 40sqm          | Resource Area                                | 40sqm                        | 44.25sqm                 | This space is used as an SEN teaching space   |
| 1            | 160sqm         | Multi-Purpose Hall                           | 160sqm                       | NIL                      |   |
| 1<br>1       | 15sqm<br>15sqm | Multi-Purpose Room 2<br>Multi-Purpose Room 3 | 15sqm<br>15sqm               | NIL<br>NIL               |   |
| 1            | 30sqm          | Staff Room                                   | 30sqm                        | 8.84sqm                  |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | Principal's Office                           | 15sqm                        | 15.75sqm                 |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | General Office                               | 15sqm                        | 10.84sqm                 |   |
| 4            | 5sqm           | Classroom Store                              | 20sqm                        | 16.45sqm                 |   |
| 1            | 5sqm           | Resource Store                               | 5sqm                         | 6sqm                     |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | PE Equipment Store                           | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Mat Store                                    | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Adult Chair Store                            | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Stage Store                                  | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 15sqm          | External Play Store                          | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 9sqm           | Cleaner's Store                              | 9sqm                         | 6.5sqm                   |   |
| 1            | 6sqm           | Consumables Store                            | 6sqm                         | 7.6sqm                   |   |
| 4            | 15sqm          | Class Toilets and Coat Space                 | 60sqm                        | 30sqm                    |   |
| 2            | 12sqm          | Pupil's changing at Multi-Purpose Hall       | 24sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 1            | 13sqm          | Hygiene Room                                 | 13sqm                        | NIL                      |   |
| 2            | 6sqm           | Staff Toilets                                | 12sqm                        | 4sqm                     |   |
| 1            | 5sqm           | Computer Hub Room                            | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |   |

As noted in the table, all the classrooms are below the recommended floor areas, and all are very poorly lit. There are no multi-Purpose Rooms, and the spatial provision is demonstrably less than required.

External space is shared between cars – parking and turning - and occasional play space and is not acceptable.

Classroom sizes at the school are: 44sqm, 35.7sqm, 59sqm, 43.8sqm.



*View of school entrance from main road*



*Stairs in main school building*



*Damp on ceilings*



*Staff room and kitchen facilities*



*Damp on walls and ceilings*



*Poorly lit classroom*



*School entrance and external area*



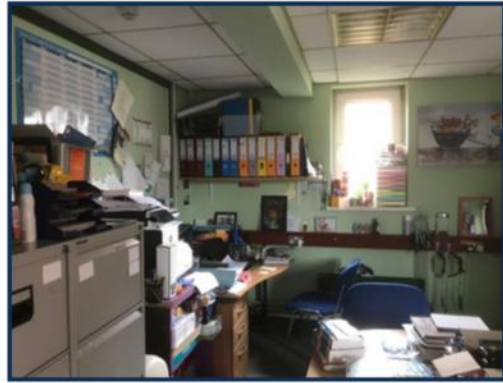
*Classroom*



*Classroom*



*Classroom*



*Principal's office and store room*



*Store to be converted to sensory room*



*Hard play area at rear of building*



*Scarce storage space*





## Introduction

Naiscoil an Loiste Úir was established in the New Lodge area of north Belfast in 1989. Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain was established on the Antrim Road, Belfast, in 1999 and after several years in temporary accommodation, moved to Lancaster Street in 2005. The school is a 'Controlled School', and, as such, is managed by the Education Authority

The current school building is an important part of the built and architectural heritage in the neighbourhood, but its physical limitations and restrictive site area negatively impact on the school learning and working environment and place limits on enrolments and school growth. A new site is required to ensure future sustainability. Currently there are 51 children attending Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain.

## Overview

Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain is situated on Lancaster Street, York Road, Belfast, County Antrim, close to the city centre.

The school is in a residential neighbourhood on a restricted site which is inadequate for the future development of the school.

There is a semi-derelict 'mobile' classroom adjacent to the external play, which, if removed, would increase the play area by 54sqm.

As can be seen from the photographs, staff park their cars in the neighbourhood street and the street system is used as the drop-off for children travelling by car. The building needs external maintenance, particularly to remove plants growing from the roof valley gutters and external downpipes /walls.

The complex of buildings that is the school grounds contains a two-storey former dwelling which currently houses the staff facilities for Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain, and although it has advantage of a separate access, the upper floor is inaccessible due to safety concerns about the structural integrity /robustness of the upper floor.

## Survey

The enrolment number category for Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain is 91 – 120 pupils and as such the recommended site area is 0.63 ha (6,300sqm). The DE recommended site area includes 3,000sqm of grass play and 650sqm of hard play. Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain has no grass play and approximately 50% of the recommended hard play area.

The site is much less than the DE recommended site area, and none of the external spaces meet the requirements. There is, however, a small garden space 30 metres from the school which is accessed from the street and is used on occasion by the pupils as recreational green open space.

A general 4-classroom primary school, LIA including services rooms and circulations, but excluding SMA, has a recommended area of 884sqm.

The teaching accommodation at Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain is provided within an older school building on Lancaster Street and the teaching spaces are provided over two floor levels, without any lift access. All the accommodation is much smaller than the recommended areas.

The following table indicates the under-provision of support spaces, resources, school hall /multi-purpose rooms, and storage areas. The total floor area and LIA of the existing school premises is distorted by the extent of circulation and corridor space which amounts to 27% of the floor area. The overly long and wide corridors, and the restrictive size and capacity of the actual teaching spaces have resulted in the school using the corridor spaces as teaching /resource spaces, which is problematic from a fire safety perspective. The total amount of net floor space not provided and, therefore, lost to the school and the activities of the pupils, is 368sqm, of which 229sqm relates to the lack of a multi-purpose hall and associated storage spaces.

## Assessment

Existing rooms /spaces classrooms were measured and compared with the required standards outlined in DE Schedules of Accommodation (see attached table on next page).

## Summary

Required informal grass play area of 3,000sqm. No grass play space is provided.

There is under provision of hard play areas.

Under provision of Limit of Internal Area = 368sqm

The available school site is 20% of the DE recommended area

The school floor area is 58% of the LIA

## General Observations

| Room/Space    | Findings   |
|---------------|------------|
| Classrooms    | Inadequate |
| Toilets       | Inadequate |
| Computer Area | Inadequate |
| Hall          | Inadequate |
| Play Areas    | Inadequate |

Schedule of Accommodation for a 4-classroom primary school and the accommodation provided at Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain (Category 91 – 120).

| No of Spaces | Area           | Description of Space                         | Total area recommended by DE | Provision at this school | Notes  |
|--------------|----------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 4            | 60sqm          | Classroom                                    | 240sqm                       | 205.4sqm                 | Although there are 5 teaching spaces, all classrooms are much smaller than required and the level of natural light is also very poor |
| 1            | 40sqm          | Resource Area                                | 40sqm                        | 45sqm                    | This space is used as a teaching space   |
| 1            | 160sqm         | Multi-Purpose Hall                           | 160sqm                       | NIL                      |  |
| 1<br>1       | 15sqm<br>15sqm | Multi-Purpose Room 2<br>Multi-Purpose Room 3 | 15sqm<br>15sqm               | NIL<br>NIL               |  |
| 1            | 30sqm          | Staff Room                                   | 30sqm                        | 23sqm                    |  |
| 1            | 15sqm          | Principal's Office                           | 15sqm                        | 14.6sqm                  |  |
| 1            | 15sqm          | General Office                               | 15sqm                        | 9.7sqm                   |  |
| 4            | 5sqm           | Classroom Store                              | 20sqm                        | 10.85sqm                 | The stores are not adjacent to the classrooms and are located along corridors  |
| 1            | 5sqm           | Resource Store                               | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 15sqm          | PE Equipment Store                           | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Mat Store                                    | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Adult Chair Store                            | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 10sqm          | Stage Store                                  | 10sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 15sqm          | External Play Store                          | 15sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 9sqm           | Cleaner's Store                              | 9sqm                         | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 6sqm           | Consumables Store                            | 6sqm                         | NIL                      |  |
| 4            | 15sqm          | Class Toilets and Coat Space                 | 60sqm                        | 27.35sqm                 |  |
| 2            | 12sqm          | Pupil's changing at Multi-Purpose Hall       | 24sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 1            | 13sqm          | Hygiene Room                                 | 13sqm                        | NIL                      |  |
| 2            | 6sqm           | Staff Toilets                                | 12sqm                        | 21.35sqm                 | The wc /shower room is used as the cleaner's store and store for equipment   |
| 1            | 5sqm           | Computer Hub Room                            | 5sqm                         | NIL                      |  |

As noted in the table, all the classrooms are below the recommended floor areas, and all are very poorly lit. There are no multi-purpose rooms, and the spatial provision is demonstrably less than required. There is a small SMA (47.0sqm) and an adjacent kitchen (10.5sqm).

The building suffers from poor insulation levels, poor ventilation, single glazing, and a general level of spatial under-provision that results in the corridors being used for housing computer hardware, teaching space, and storage.



There was a former fire escape from the larger first floor classroom, but this is now inaccessible because of health & safety concerns.

Classroom sizes at the school are: 45sqm, 47.6sqm, 44.9sqm, 57.9sqm.



*View of school entrance from street*



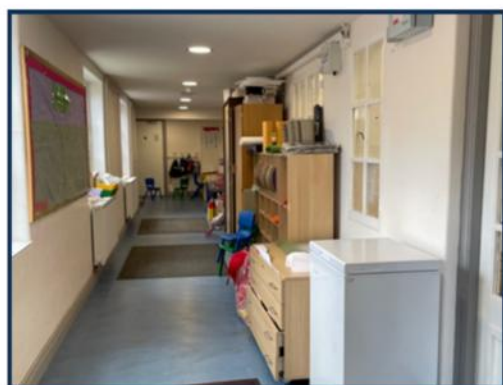
*View of adjacent green space*



*Entrance and reception*



*Entrance lobby*



*Corridors used for storage space*



*Ground floor classroom*



*First floor corridor & resource space*



*Classroom and resource space separated by partition*



*Ground floor classroom*



*Staff room*



*Classroom and resource space separated by partition*





*Towards school entrance*



*External play area*



*Play area (mobile to be removed to the rights)*



*External play area*



## List of Abbreviations

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| IM    | Irish-Medium                               |
| IME   | Irish-medium Education                     |
| DE    | Department of Education (NI)               |
| NIC   | Northern Ireland Curriculum                |
| SEN   | Special Educational Needs                  |
| EA    | Education Authority                        |
| SPiMS | Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools |
| CnaG  | Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta               |
| LIA   | Limit of Internal Area                     |
| SMA   | School Meals Accommodation                 |

## Sector-Specific Bodies, Organizations and Terminology

*Bunscoil / Gaelscoil / Scoil*  
Irish-medium Primary School.

*Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG)*  
Set up in 2000 by the Department of Education with the following aims:

1. To promote, facilitate and encourage Irish-medium Education and Irish-medium schools;
2. To do this in a planned, educationally efficient, and cost-effective way

**Nótaí**

**Nótaí**





**Seoladh: Fón:**

Áras na bhFál  
200-202 Bóthar  
na bhFál,  
Béal Feirste  
BT12 6AH

028 9032 1475

**R-phost:**

eolas@comhairle.org

**Na meáin  
shóisialta:**

