



## Information Leaflet – Diversity of Patronage

The Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairí Quinn TD wants to hear your views on what type of primary school you would like your children to attend.

### What is this all about?

The vast majority (96%) of primary schools in Ireland are owned and under the patronage of religious denominations and approximately 90% of these schools are owned and under the patronage of the Catholic Church.

We all know that Irish Society has changed a lot in recent years. There are now families of many different nationalities, religions and beliefs living here. Our education system therefore needs to adapt to ensure that there is respect for all the different traditions and religions from which pupils come.

### How will this happen?

Earlier this year the Minister for Education & Skills, Ruairí Quinn, T.D. received and published the Report of the Advisory Group to the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector (see [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie).) As part of his response to the recommendations of that report, the Minister has started a new process to look at the possible transfer of some schools run by the Catholic Church to other school patron bodies in 44 areas around the country. This process will be undertaken initially on a pilot basis in the following areas: Arklow, Castlebar, Whitehall (including Kilmore West and Beaumont), Trim and Tramore.

The first step in this process involves asking all the parents/guardians of primary going children and pre-school children in these areas to tell us what type of school they would like their children to attend. The intention is to identify the level of demand from parents/guardians for a wider choice of school type in areas where that choice is currently limited. The responses of parents/guardians will be used to consider what changes, if any, could be made to widen the choice of primary schools in these areas.

With this in mind, your views on the patronage of schools in your area are now invited. An online survey is available on the Department of Education & Skills website at [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie). The survey contains links to explanations on what patronage means and information on each of the possible alternative forms of patronage available.

Should you experience any difficulty in completing the survey or in understanding what is being asked, you can contact a helpline for assistance at free-phone number 1800 303 621. This helpline will be open from 9.30am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm Monday to Friday.

All parents/guardians eligible to complete the survey are asked to do so online by Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2012. In the event that parents/guardians are unable to complete the survey online, a paper based survey will be made available. This can be requested by contacting the Department of Education & Skills, free-phone number 1800 303 621.

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