

<b>DP No.</b>	DP 237 (WELB)	
<b>School(s)</b>	St Eugene's PS, Knock, Lisnaskea 203-1888	
<b>Proposal</b>	Closure with effect from 31 August 2013	
<b>Minister's Decision</b>	Approve	
<b>Date of Decision</b>	09/05/2013	
<b>Minister's Comments</b>	Agreed	
<b>Additional notes</b>		
<b>Information redacted</b>	Some information and personal data may have been removed in line with the principles of the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Act.	
	<b>Key</b>	<b>Details</b>
	■	redaction
	*	refers to less than five cases where data is considered sensitive
	#	means figure has been suppressed to prevent disclosure of sensitive information under rules of disclosure

**FROM: ANGELA KANE**  
**Area Planning and Policy Team**

**DATE: May 2013**

**To: John O'Dowd, MLA** **see copy distribution list below**  
**Minister for Education**

**DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 237**

**Objective: To decide on Development Proposal Number 237**

**Issue: The closure of St Eugene's PS, Knocks, Lisnaskea**

**Timescale: Routine.**

**FOI Implications: The content of this submission is likely to be fully disclosable**

**Presentational Issues: Your decision will be of interest to the local community and a draft press release (PR) is attached for your agreement, the content of which has been agreed with the Communications Team.**

**Recommendation That you agree this proposal and the content of the PR.**

## Background

The Western Eastern Education and Library Board, at the request of the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools (CCMS), published Development Proposal No 237 on 21 January 2013 which proposes that St Eugene's Primary School, Knocks, shall close with effect from 31 August 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter. The statutory 2-month objection period ended on 22 March 2012.

### St Eugene's PS, Knocks

1. St Eugene's PS, in the townland of Knocks approximately 3 miles from Lisnaskea, opened in 1961. The school is one of 3 in the Parish of Aughalurcher – the other 2 primary schools being St Ronan's in Lisnaskea and St Mary's in Maguiresbridge.
2. Whilst the school building is in a good condition, there are some accommodation deficiencies including undersized classrooms, lack of indoor facilities for PE, drama, play and music, damp in some areas and windows in need of replacement.

## Development Proposal

3. A detailed examination of the key issues raised by the proposal is contained in **Appendix B**. The main points are summarised below:
  - Enrolments at the school have been low for a number of years and stand at only 20 for 2012/13.
  - No Year 1 pupils enrolled in the school for 2012/13.
  - The school has a capacity for 102 pupils.
  - There is surplus capacity of 294 places at alternative schools within 5 miles of St Eugene's PS.
  - The proposal is reflected in the primary area plan.
  - The proposal is supported by the ETI.

## **Consultation**

4. Both CCMS and the Western Education and Library Board have confirmed that they have fulfilled their statutory duties in relation to consultation.

## **Objections/Indications of Support**

5. No comments either in support or objection have been received.

## **Conclusions/Recommendation**

6. Enrolments in St Eugene's PS have been low for a number of years and have now deteriorated to the point that only 20 pupils are enrolled in the school - no pupils entered Year 1 for 2012/13.
7. There is considerable surplus capacity at other schools in the area and no objections have been received, which suggests that the local community has accepted the proposed closure.
8. It is recommended therefore that you agree the Development Proposal and issue of the draft Press Release.
9. Attached for your information are:
  - Appendix A – Published Development Proposal
  - Appendix B – Background
  - Appendix C – Maps of school, pupils' home addresses and alternative local provision
  - Appendix D – Draft Press Release

**Angela Kane**

### **Distribution**

**Ext. 59865**

Email: [angela.kane@deni.gov.uk](mailto:angela.kane@deni.gov.uk)

**Copy**

Paul Sweeney

John McGrath

Noelle Buick  
Faustina Graham  
Lorraine Finlay  
Roisin Lilley  
Press Office  
Scott Harbinson  
Mark Mullan  
aptpocorres

WESTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO. 237

ST EUGENE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, KNOCKS

Notice is hereby given that a proposal under Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986, as amended by Article 145 of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989, and as amended by Article 24 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003, has been submitted to the Western Education and Library Board by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools on behalf of the Trustees of the Parish of Aghalurcher.

The proposal is to the effect that:

**St Eugene's Primary School, Knocks, will close with effect from 31 August 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.**

In pursuance of Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 as amended by Article 145 of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989, and as amended by Article 24 of the Education and Libraries (NI) 2003, this proposal has been submitted by the Board to the Department of Education for approval.

A copy of this proposal can be inspected at the Headquarters Office of the Western Education and Library Board, 1 Hospital Road, Omagh and [www.welbni.org](http://www.welbni.org) (under publications).

Any comments or objections to this proposal should be made in writing, within a period of two months from this date, to the Area Planning Policy Team, Department of Education, Rathgael House, Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down, BT19 7PR.

The Department of Education and the Education and Library Boards operate a regime of openness under the Freedom of Information Act and letters of objection and information supplied to the Department are open to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, if requested. (A fee may be charged for supplying this information).

Barry Mulholland Cert Ed., DASE, M.Ed.  
Chief Executive  
Western Education & Library Board  
1 Hospital Road  
OMAGH  
Co Tyrone  
BT79 0AW

## Background

The background provided by CCMS advises that the rationale for bringing forward the Development Proposal for the closure of St Eugene's PS, Knocks is based on the decline in admissions and enrolments and the increasing school deficit.

The children at the school are taught in two classes; in 2012/13 this comprises one class of 10 Foundation and KS1 children and one KS2 class of 10 children.

## Historical Enrolments

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Reception pupils	*	*	*	*	*	*
Year 1	6	6	*	*	*	*
Year 2	*	6	6	*	*	*
Year 3	5	*	6	6	*	*
Year 4	8	5	*	6	5	*
Year 5	6	7	6	*	6	*
Year 6	*	6	6	5	*	5
Year 7	*	*	6	6	*	*
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>20</b>

2012/13 Approved Admission and Enrolment Numbers

Approved Admission Number	15
Approved Enrolment Number	102

## Enrolments in alternative primary schools

There are no schools within a 2-miles radius of St Eugene's PS, alternative schools (see maps at Appendix C) in the maintained sector within 5-miles (by road) are:

School	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Approved Enrolment	Spare Capacity
St Mary's PS, Brookeborough	80	65	62	56	55	138	83
St Mary's PS,	89	84	92	95			

Maguiresbridge					94	134	40
St Ronan's PS	245	225	228	251	256	406	150
Other Maintained							
Bunscoil an Traonaigh	31	36	37	31	37	58	21
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>736</b>	<b>294</b>

## Area Planning

The WELB draft primary area plan indicates the following proposals for other schools in the area:

St Mary's PS, Brookeborough – 'local area/parish solution to be explored'

St Mary's PS, Maguiresbridge - local area/parish solution to be explored'

St Ronan's PS, Lisnaskea – 'no change is proposed at present'

Bunscoil an Traonaigh – 'local area solution to be explored'

Even with the potential for further rationalisation/amalgamation in the area there will still be sufficient capacity at alternatives schools to cater for the pupils from St Eugene's PS.

## Analysis of Sustainability Criteria and Indicators

- **Quality Educational Experience**

See ETI comments below.

- **Stable Enrolment Trends**

As the table of historical enrolments, above, indicates, enrolments in St Eugene's PS have been extremely low for several years



- **Sound Financial Position**

St Eugene's PS had a deficit at March 2012 of -£3,824, or -2.15% of available delegated resources. Should the school stay open, it is estimated that the school deficit would increase to £26,998 by 2014/15. The WELB Funding Authority stated in August 2012 that this school is no longer financially viable, with a considerable fall in enrolment expected.

### **Other Financial Considerations**

Redundancy costs for both the teaching and non-teaching staff are estimated to be in the region of £200,000. Any closing deficit would be met from the Board's central costs. Should the school close, there are likely to be children from St Eugene's PS who will be entitled to transport assistance.

- **Strong Leadership and Management by Boards of Governors and Principals**

No issues identified in this respect.

- **Accessibility**

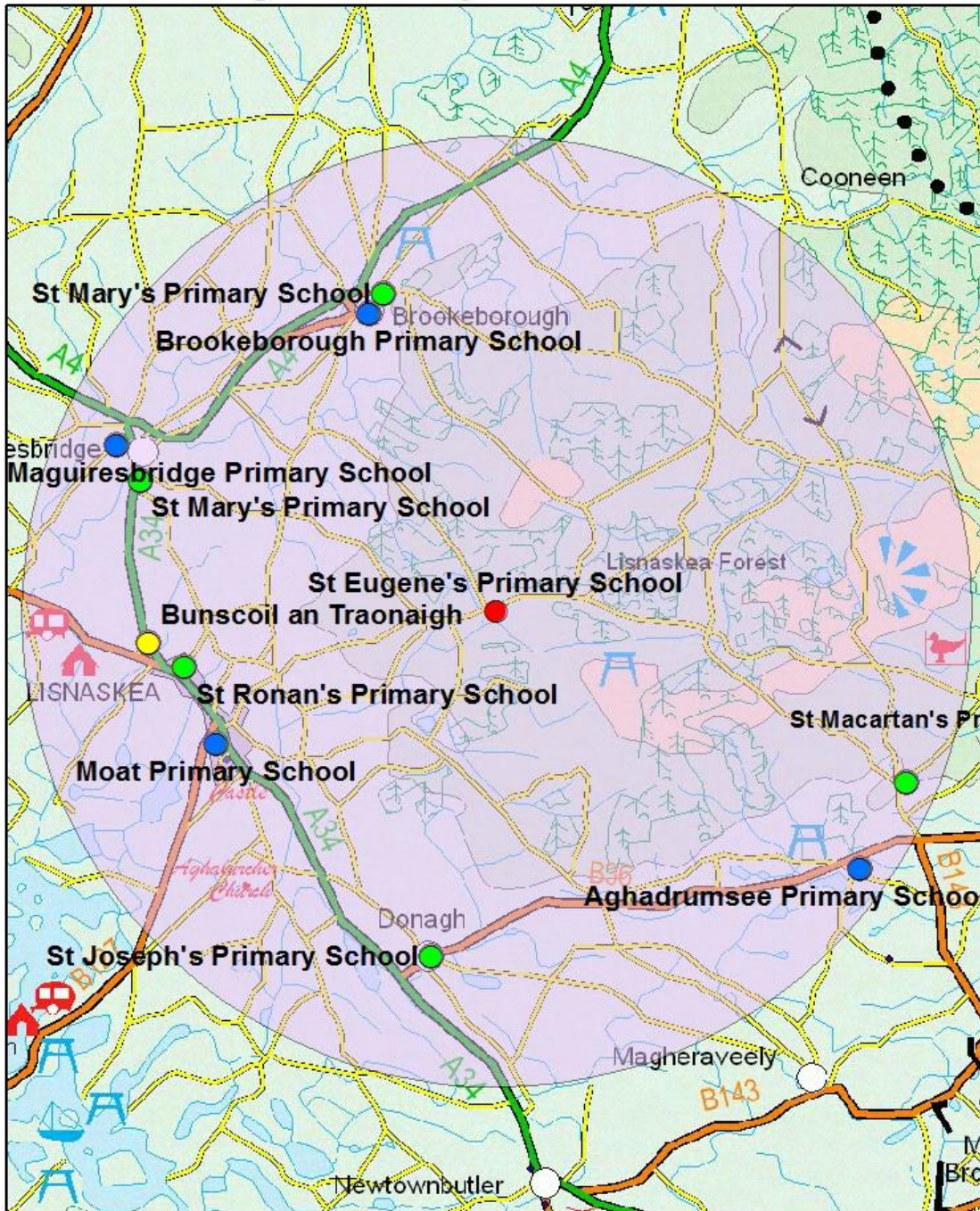
As the maps at Appendix C illustrate, St Eugene's PS is located in an isolated rural location. The nearest alternative primary school is St Ronan's PS, 4.2 miles from St Eugene's PS. Some of the children attending St Eugene's PS actually live closer to St Ronan's.

### **Education and Training Inspectors (ETI) Comment**

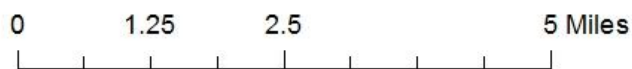
I am aware of the falling enrolment and the difficulty that the school has in terms of the provision of a broad and balanced educational experience for the children.

From an educational perspective, I support the proposed closure.

St Eugene's Primary School, Knocks

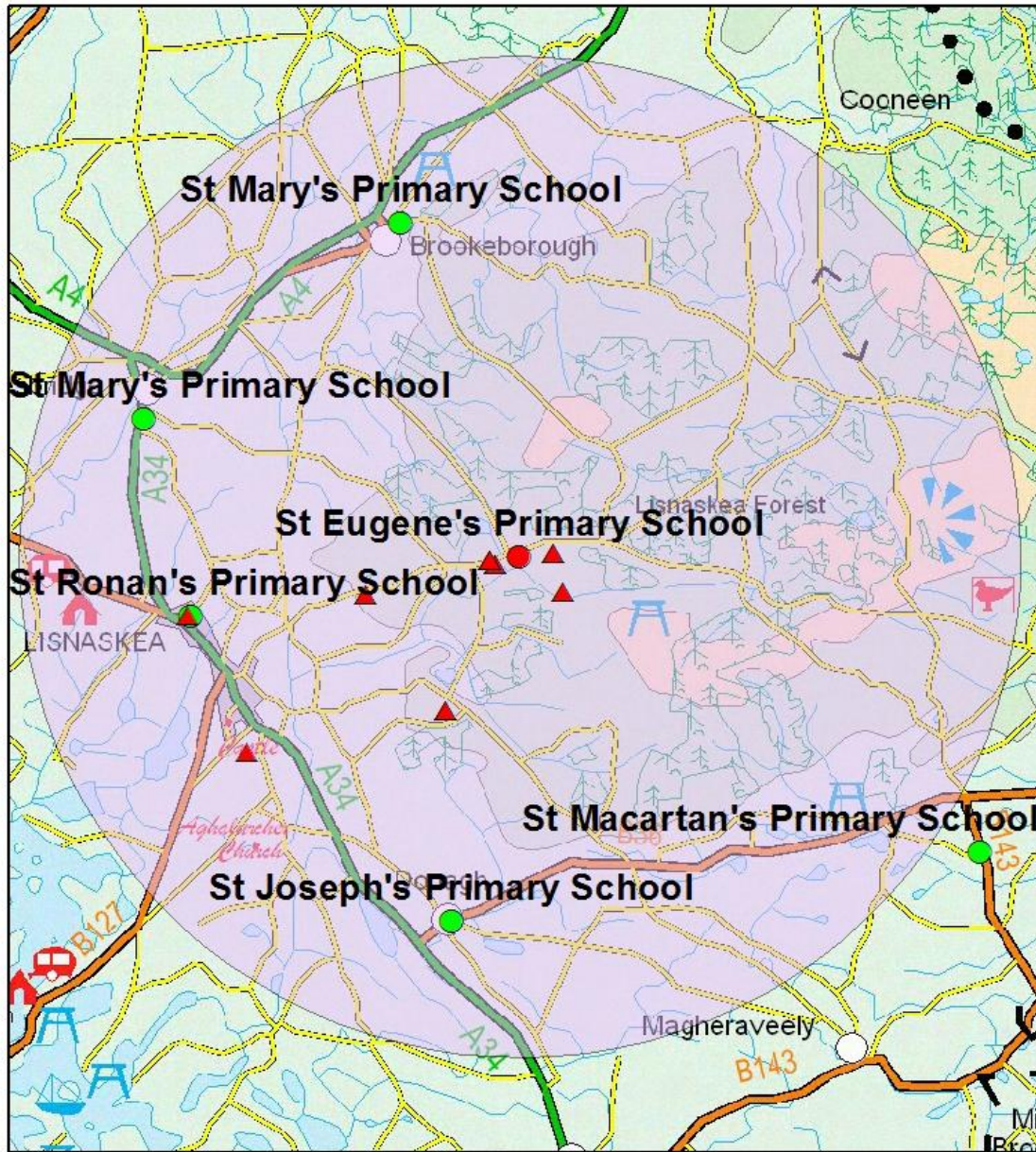


- Maintained PS selection
- St Macartan's PS
- St Eugene's PS
- Controlled PS
- IM PS
- 5 mile buffer



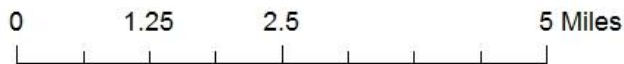
Note – St Joseph's PS is over 7 miles by road from St Eugene's PS

# St Eugene's Primary School, Knock - Pupils Home Addresses



- St Eugene's PS
- ▲ Pupils Addresses
- Maintained PS
- St Macartan's PS

5 Mile Buffer



**Note – St Joseph's PS is over 7 miles by road from St Eugene's PS**

## Draft Press Release

### **Education Minister agrees closure of St Eugene's Primary School, Knocks, County Fermanagh**

Education Minister John O'Dowd has agreed a Development Proposal for the closure of St Eugene's Primary School, Knocks, near Lisnaskea.

Commenting on his decision the Minister said: **“Enrolments at St Eugene's Primary School have been declining for a number of years. Indeed only 20 pupils are currently enrolled in the school, with none in Year 1. There is considerable surplus capacity at other schools nearby, where the children's educational needs can now be best met.**

**“The Western Education and Library Board published this proposal in January and no objections were received during the two-month public consultation period. It is important now that parents and education staff work hard to ensure a smooth transition for the children to their new schools. I wish the pupils all the best for the future and pay tribute to all those connected with St Eugene's Primary School who over many years showed their commitment and dedication to the education of local children.”**

The school will close with effect from 31 August 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.

#### Notes to editors:

- The Western Eastern Education and Library Board, at the request of the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools (CCMS), published Development Proposal No 237 on 21 January 2013 proposing that St Eugene's Primary School, Knocks, close with effect from 31 August 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter. The statutory two-month objection period ended on 22 March 2012.