

<b>DP No.</b>	DP 238 (WELB)	
<b>School(s)</b>	St Dympna's PS, Dromore 203-6186	
<b>Proposal</b>	Increase Enrolment – admissions from 21 to 30 pupils and enrolment number from 145 to 210 with effect from 1 September 2013	
<b>Minister's Decision</b>	Not Approve	
<b>Date of Decision</b>	14/05/2013	
<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: 24 April 2013**

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

**DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 238 – INCREASE IN ENROLMENTS AND  
ADMISSIONS FOR ST DYMPNA'S PS, DROMORE, CO TYRONE**

**Objective:** To decide on Development Proposal Number 238

**Issue:** An increase in the admissions and enrolment of St Dympna's Primary School, Dromore

**Timescale:** Routine.

**Financial/Resource Implications:** If approved, there would be capital costs of between £190k - £250k plus additional teaching costs of approx. £42k.

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

**Presentational Issues:** Your decision will be of local interest and it is customary to release a Press Release (PR) to announce your decision.

**Recommendation** That you turn down this proposal until such time as there are firm proposals for the other small schools in the area and that you agree content of the PR.

## Background

At the request of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), the Western Education and Library Board published Development Proposal No 238 in local newspapers on 6 and 7 February 2013, which proposes that St Dympna's Primary School, Dromore, will increase its capacity number from 145 to 210 (in the 8 classbase category) and to increase the admissions number from 21 to 30 pupils with effect from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter. The statutory 2 month objection period ended on 8 April 2013.

## Development Proposal

1. A copy of the Development Proposal (DP) is attached at **Appendix A** and a detailed examination of the key issues raised by the proposal is in **Appendix B**.  
The main points are summarised below:
  - A new replacement 5-classbase school for St Dympna's PS was completed in 2007. An additional mobile classroom was added in 2011, providing a school capacity for a maximum of 175 pupils.
  - The current enrolment is 174.
  - The proposed maximum admissions figure of 210 is in the 8 classbase category. 8 classes can cater for a maximum of 230 pupils.
  - There are 6 schools within 5 miles of St Dympna's, 5 of which have enrolments below the Sustainable Schools threshold.
  - CCMS advise that the increase in approved enrolments is required because of a rise in the local population.
  - Whilst CCMS is considering the position of the other local schools, no proposals have been brought forward at this time.
  - The proposal is supported by the ETI.

## **Consultation**

2. Evidence of CCMS consultation has been supplied and the Western Education and Library Board has confirmed that it has fulfilled its statutory duty in relation to consultation.

## **Objections/Indications of Support**

3. 65 pro-forma letters of support have been received, primarily from parents of children attending St Dympna's PS.
4. 67 letters of objection have been received, primarily from parents of children attending the other local primary schools, including 1 letter from the Chair of the Board of Governors of Drumlish PS. These letters are similar in content; expressing concern about the potential impact on the other rural schools.

## **Conclusions/Recommendation**

5. Whilst there may be a case for increasing the capacity of St Dympna's Primary School, it can only be considered when viewed in the wider area context and in light of firm proposals for closure or rationalisation elsewhere.
6. A previous Economic Appraisal which determined rationalisation recommendations was not taken forward because of a lack of community support/agreement. Whilst there is again an intent identified in the WELB draft primary area plan for 'local area/parish solutions to be explored' with more definite proposals to review the position of another Parish school, St Macartan's, there is no certainty that early agreement will be reached. It is likely that any additional increase in the size of St Dympna's would have an adverse impact on enrolments elsewhere - in a 5-mile radius of St Dympna's PS, there are currently 176 surplus places in the maintained sector.
7. Therefore, until such time as firm proposals for the other small schools in the area are forthcoming it is recommended that this proposal is turned down.

8. Attached for your consideration:

Appendix A – Published Development Proposal

Appendix B – Background

Appendix C – Map of primary schools in the area

Appendix D – Draft Press Release



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WESTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO. 238

PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE ADMISSIONS AND ENROLMENT NUMBER AT  
ST DYMPNA'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, DROMORE

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 Dromore.

The proposal is to the effect that:

**St Dympna's Primary School, Dromore, increases its capacity number from 145 to 210. This would permit the school to increase the admissions number from 21 to 30 pupils with effect from 1 September 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.  
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## **Appendix B**

St Dympna's Primary School is located in Dromore, Co Tyrone. Dromore is classified as a Village and lies in the Omagh Local Government District. It is situated nine miles (15 km) south west of Omagh and sixteen miles (26 km) from Enniskillen.

### **Deprivation**

The NI Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010 (NIMDM) report published in 2010 identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across the North. On the Multiple Deprivation Measure at ward summary level, Dromore had an overall rank of 186 out of 582 (1 being the most deprived and 582 the least deprived).

### **Capital Development and Area Planning**

In 1992 an Economic Appraisal (EA) was produced that considered options for rationalisation of the (at that time) five primary schools within the Parish of Dromore. The recommended conclusion was for the closure of St Dympna's, St Columba's and Drumlish Primary schools and the provision of a new primary school at the St John's High School site plus the amalgamation of Tummery and St Macartan's Primary Schools on an extended Tummery Primary School site.

The rationalisation proposals did not proceed because of overwhelming local opposition. However, the condition of St Dympna's PS subsequently deteriorated to the extent that intervention was required and the Department prepared and agreed a revised EA for a new build replacement St Dympna's PS on land adjacent to St John's Business and Enterprise College. In August 2011 the Department approved the addition of a single storey portable classroom incorporating toilets, cloakroom and store, increasing the school capacity to 6 classbases (max 175 children).

One of the Parish Primary Schools, St Columba's subsequently closed due to declining enrolments. The remaining Parish schools, other than St Dympna's, have all experienced a continuing decline in enrolments – see table below - and do not meet the minimum recommended size for a rural primary school under the Sustainable Schools Policy. The

draft Western Education and Library Board primary area plan reflects the following proposals in relation to all other maintained schools in the Parish and wider area:

Drumlish – ‘Local area/parish solution to be explored’.

St Macartan’s – ‘CCMS is to progress a consultation on the future of the school’.

Tummery – ‘Local area/parish solution to be explored’

Knocknagor - ‘Local area/parish solution to be explored’

St Scire’s – ‘No change is proposed at present’.

All Saints – ‘Local area/parish solution to be explored’

Whilst it could be argued that a future decision to close St Macartan’s PS might lead to a demand for places at St Dympna’s, Drumlish PS is actually slightly closer to St Macartan’s and located near one of the main arterial routes to Omagh and as such might be a more attractive alternative choice for parents. However, until CCMS has consulted on the future of all these schools, there can be no certainty of the likely future pattern of provision in this area.

### **2012/13 Enrolment at St Dympna’s PS**

	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	<b>Total</b>
Number of pupils	31	32	28	27	20	13	23	174

Colleagues in School Access Team have agreed temporary variations to the school enrolment over the past few years, with the basis for the temporary variations being that all pupils for whom additional places were awarded do not live within reasonable travelling distance to other maintained primary schools.

### **Historical Enrolments at St Dympna’s PS**

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Number of pupils	101	122	137	158	174

The only other primary school within 2 miles of St Dympna’s PS is Dromore controlled primary school. Other maintained schools within 5 miles of St Dympna’s (including the three other Parish schools of Drumlish, St Macartan’s and Tummery) and their historical enrolments are:



## Historical Enrolments:

<b>Primary School</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>2012/13 Surplus</b>
Tummery	75	56	53	57	52	95	43
Knocknagor	53	52	53	55	56	65	9
Drumlish	52	56	57	54	52	51	0
St Macartan's	35	32	30	27	22	70	48
St Scire's	97	108	106	107	109	143	34
All Saints	21	32	40	56	69	111	42
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>535</b>	<b>176</b>

A map of the schools and the home addresses of pupils attending St Dympna's is shown at **Appendix C**.

## Needs Model

The WELB draft area plan for the primary sector examines need at a District Council (DC) level. The plan shows, for the Omagh DC area, a projected increase of 8% (393 pupils) in 2025 from the projections in 2013 - 2025. It is not possible to filter this increase to village level.

## Additional Accommodation and Staffing Requirements

CCMS are requesting the provision of a double mobile classroom at an estimated cost of £150,000 - £250,000. This would however be increasing the school capacity by 2 classbases into the 8 classbase category which would enable the school to cater for a maximum of 230 pupils. If this DP were to be approved, the position be monitored to ensure the approved enrolment figure was not exceeded.

An increase in enrolments would also require the appointment of an additional teacher, with a salary estimated at £42,384.

## Finance Team Comment

An increased number of pupils at St Dympna's would have minimal impact on the Aggregated Schools Budget, as it involves a redistribution of pupils, whose funding will follow them. School Finance Team supports expansion of existing schools, rather than the opening of new, small, stand-alone schools.

The school operates within budget.

### **Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) Comments**

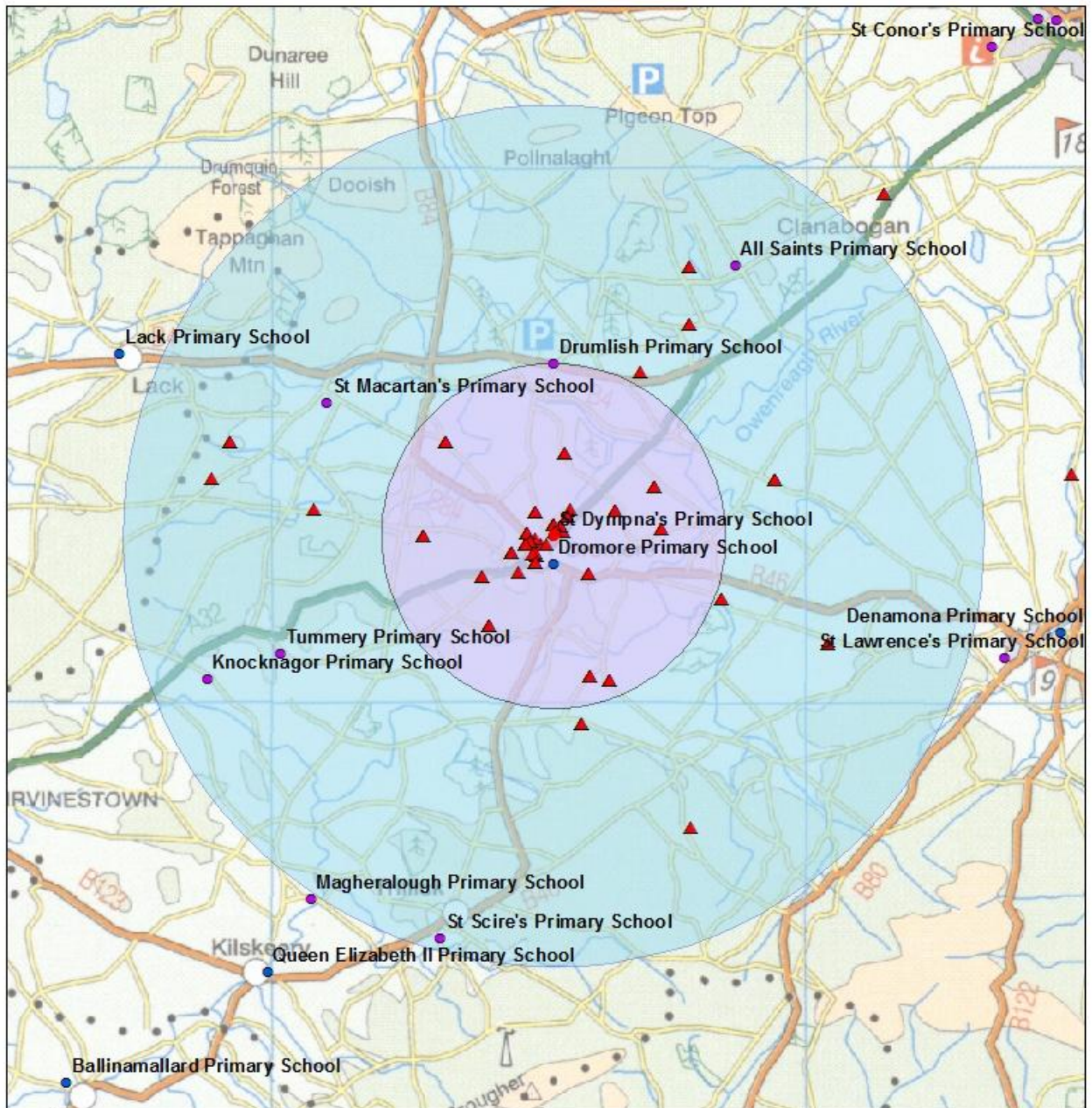
ETI would be in support of the proposal commenting:

From visiting the school and speaking to the principal, I am aware that St Dympna's is currently over capacity and that places are in ever increasing demand. This trend of growing enrolment is expected to continue into the future and is compounded by the possibility and accompanying enrolment implications of further rationalisation of provision within the wider parish, if and when this should occur.

The expansion of St Dympna's will almost inevitably (and may already have begun to) have a direct impact on the potential enrolment of other surrounding smaller schools and given the overall and ongoing demographic decline in the wider area, there appears to be little prospect of sufficient pupil numbers to fill all the school places available now and in the future.

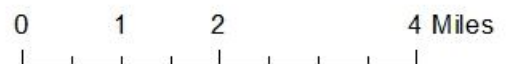
The accommodation in St Dympna's, though becoming challenged in size to best meet the school's current needs or allow for further significant growth in pupil numbers, was built recently and is of good quality. This contrasts with some of the other school accommodation in the wider area, though while well utilised and cared for, poses additional challenges in terms of age, space, layout and overall suitability.

# St Dympna's Primary School, Dromore



Key

- St Dympna's Primary School
- ▲ St Dymnas Pupils Addresses
- Maintained Primary
- Controlled Primary
- Controlled Integrated
- GM Integrated
- ◇ 2 mile Buffer St Dympna's Primary School
- ◇ 5 mile Buffer St Dympna's Primary School



DRAFT PRESS RELEASE

## **O'Dowd turns down proposal to increase capacity at St Dympna's PS, Dromore, Co Tyrone**

Education Minister, John O'Dowd, MLA, has turned down a development proposal to increase capacity at St Dympna's Primary School, Dromore, County Tyrone.

The Western Education and Library Board, on behalf of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, had proposed that St Dympna's PS increase its enrolment from 145 to 210 pupils and its admission number from 21 to 30 pupils with effect from 1 September 2013.

Commenting on his decision, the Minister said: **“St Dympna's is a popular rural primary school with a healthy enrolment. However there are several other small rural schools in the same area whose future is currently under review by the managing authorities. With this in mind, and given that within a five mile radius there is a surplus of places in the maintained sector and that five of the six schools in that area have enrolments below the Sustainable Schools threshold, I am unable to approve this proposal to expand St Dympna's.**

**“It would be premature to agree to the expansion of St Dympna's until such time as there is greater clarity on the picture of provision overall in the area. It is therefore important that anyone with an interest in education provision in the Dromore area makes their views known on the WELB draft primary area plan. The plan is out for public consultation until the end of June and can be viewed at [www.puttingpupilsfirst.info](http://www.puttingpupilsfirst.info).”**

Notes for Editors:

- At the request of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), the Western Education and Library Board published Development Proposal No 238 in local newspapers on 6 and 7 February 2013, which proposes that St Dympna's Primary School, Dromore, will increase its capacity number from 145 to 210 and to increase the admissions number from 21 to 30 pupils with effect from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter. The statutory 2 month objection period ended on 8 April 2013.