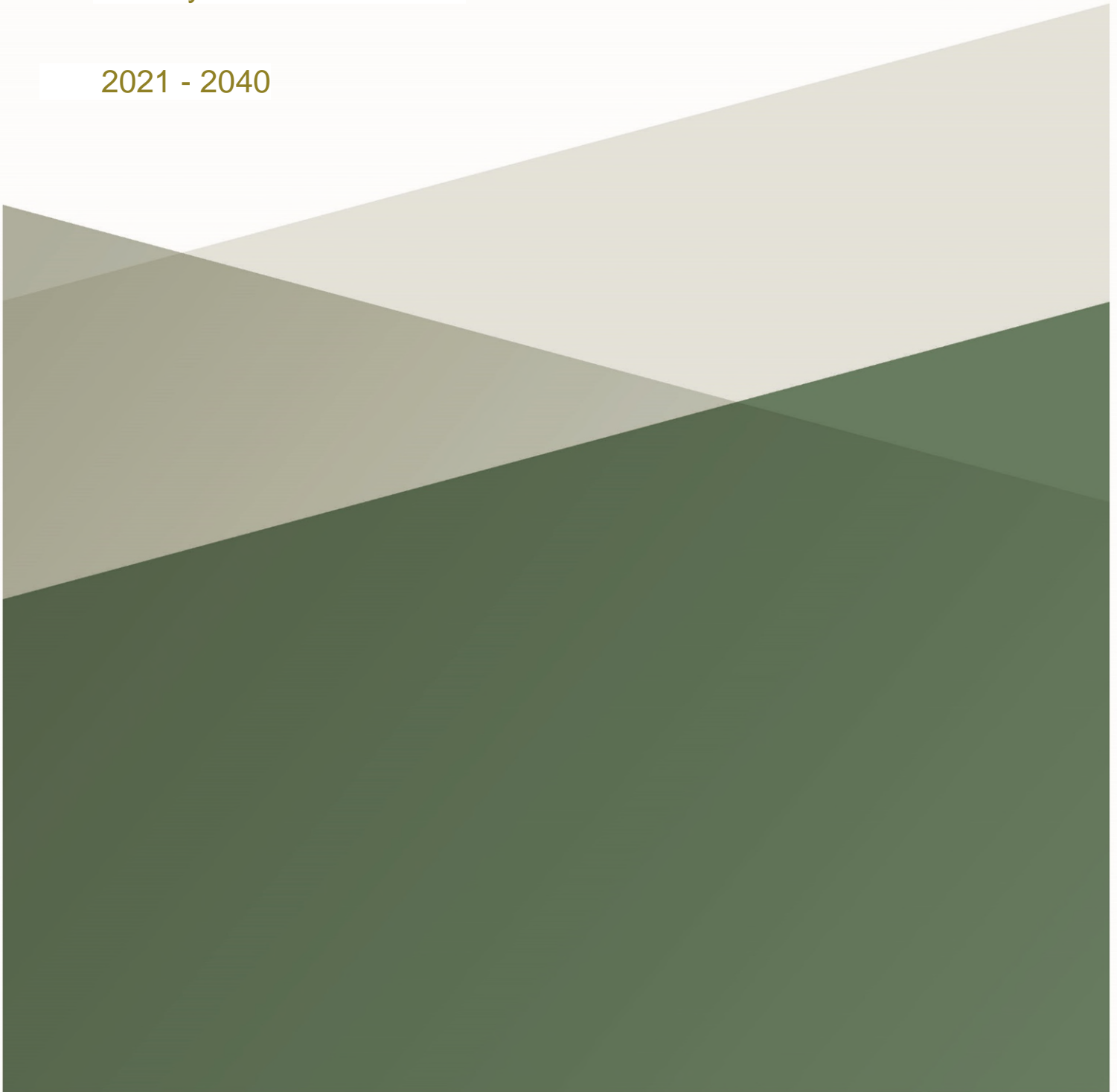An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Projections of full-time enrolment

Primary and Second Level

2021 - 2040

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Statistics Section, Department of Education

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

This report provides the latest set of projections of full-time enrolment in primary and post-primary schools aided[1] by the Department of Education. This report updates the previous set of projections published in November 2020 [1].

Note that this is the second set of projections to be developed in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the ongoing uncertainty around the impact of the pandemic on future migration and fertility patterns this report should be viewed as interim and will be updated again in 2022.

2. Background

Projections of pupil enrolments are an important input into the planning of the education system in Ireland and provide vital information on the likely evolution of school attendance over the coming twenty years.

This report is one of a series of reports published regularly by the Department covering projections of enrolments at primary and post-primary level, projections of enrolments at third level, and regional projections of enrolments at primary and post-primary level.

This report updates the previous report published in 2020, and the regional projections report published in 2019. The results in this report will be used in the areas of teacher demand and supply modelling, and forward planning of school buildings.

3. Assumptions

This report has traditionally presented results under two fertility and three migration scenarios, giving six sets of tables. This multiple scenario approach is more suited to projections models that are run every five years (so that the user can select the scenario that is arising in between reports). While this report presents results for all 6 scenarios the M3 (zero) migration is presented for illustrative purposes (to show the impact of migration) while F1 (rising fertility) is thought to be highly unlikely. Accordingly this report focusses on M1F2 and M2F2 only and indicates M1F2 as the most likely. These M1F2 results will now be taken on board for the next iteration of Teacher Demand report.

---

[1] Aided means state-funded. For the primary sector this includes religious schools, non-denominational schools, multi-denominational schools and Gaelscoileanna (Irish-medium schools). A small number of private primary schools (38 in 2020) are not state-funded and they are excluded from this analysis. In the post-primary sector fee charging schools are included but not private 'grind' colleges.

Table 1 Migration assumptions into Primary

M1	M2	M3
HIGH	MODERATE	ZERO
1,500	700	zero

For post-primary pupils data on inflows is extracted from the post-primary pupil database; these inflows comprise inward migration, movers from Northern Ireland, and transfers from home tutored and private schools. The current (2020) inflow at each programme is taken and held steady for the lifetime of the model under the M2 migration scenario (see Appendix 1), M1 is set at (+)50 per cent of this rate, while M3 is set at (-)50 per cent of this rate. Flows out of the system are estimated based on the results of the annual retention report.

Table 2 Migration and other inflow assumptions into Post-Primary

M1	M2	M3
HIGH	MODERATE	LOW
6,840	4,560	2,280

The fertility assumptions used in the official Population and Labour Force Projections published by the CSO in June 2018 set the high fertility assumption, F1, at 1.8 for the lifetime of the projections, and set F2 as fertility falling steadily to 1.6 by 2031 [2]. These assumptions are now out of date as fertility is falling faster than projected. Births in 2020 fell to 55,959 down from 59,796 in 2019, and the TPFR (total period fertility rate) in Ireland for 2020 was 1.6 [3]. As 2020 was a 'COVID year' and the impact of the pandemic on both short-term and long-term fertility is unknown the following assumptions have been used in this report; F1 has been set at the average of the past three years giving a rate of 1.7 while F2 has been set at 1.6 and held steady for lifetime of the model.

Table 3 Fertility assumptions

F1	F2
HIGH	LOW
1.7	1.6

Further detail on both migration and fertility assumptions can be found in Appendix 1.

Results

4.1. Primary level

While the results are presented for all six scenarios the Department believes that the M1F2 scenario is the most likely outcome. This assumes slightly higher than current rates of migration, and fertility to remain at 1.6. A return to higher fertility, the F1 assumption, is now thought to be highly unlikely while the low migration assumption, M3 (zero net migration) is presented for completeness only.

The following tables present results for just these two (M1F2 and M2F2) of the six scenarios while the full set of tables is presented in Appendix 2.

Enrolments in primary schools in Ireland in 2020 stood at 561,411 down by almost 6,000 on 2019 (567,716). Enrolments are now projected to fall over the coming years under all scenarios, and under the M1F2 scenario will reach a low point of 440,551 by 2033. This is 120,860 lower than today's figure. Enrolments will rise again thereafter and are projected to stand at 474,888 by 2040, a rise of some 34,300 over the seven years 2033 to 2040.

Table 4 Projected enrolments in primary schools (M1F2, M2F2), 2021-2040

	M1F2	M2F2
2020	561,411	561,411
2021	552,491	551,668
2022	542,192	540,662
2023	530,683	528,562
2024	519,526	516,932
2025	506,325	503,377
2026	492,180	488,994
2027	478,548	475,243
2028	467,373	464,065
2029	457,970	454,662
2030	450,345	447,037
2031	444,224	440,917
2032	440,781	437,473
2033	440,551	437,244
2034	442,368	439,061
2035	445,545	442,237
2036	449,881	446,574
2037	455,193	451,885
2038	461,280	457,972
2039	467,922	464,614
2040	474,888	471,581

Note: ☐ indicates the low point in the series

4.1.1. Annual rises and falls

Table 5 presents projected annual changes in enrolments out to 2040. As can be seen the sharpest falls will be in the early period and will average 12,000 pupils per year between 2022 and 2028.

Following the low point in 2033 enrolments will rise more slowly in 2034-2036 before accelerating in 2040 (+6,967).

Table 5 Absolute annual change in primary enrolments (M1F2, M2F2), 2021-2040

	M1F2	M2F2
2021	-8,920	-9,743
2022	-10,299	-11,006
2023	-11,510	-12,100
2024	-11,157	-11,630
2025	-13,201	-13,555
2026	-14,145	-14,383
2027	-13,632	-13,751
2028	-11,175	-11,178
2029	-9,403	-9,403
2030	-7,625	-7,625
2031	-6,120	-6,120
2032	-3,444	-3,444
2033	-229	-229
2034	1,817	1,817
2035	3,177	3,177
2036	4,336	4,336
2037	5,312	5,312
2038	6,087	6,087
2039	6,642	6,642
2040	6,967	6,967

4.1.2. Projections by standard

Table 6 shows the projected intake into junior infants and their progression through all standards of primary school out to 2040 under the M1F2 scenario. Intake into junior infants is projected to fall from the 2020 level of 63,427 down to 52,494 by 2029 before starting to rise again. In 2026 it is projected there will be some 8,500 fewer children entering junior infants than in September 2021.

Table 6 Projected enrolments in primary schools (M1F2), by standard, 2021-2040, (Excel file)

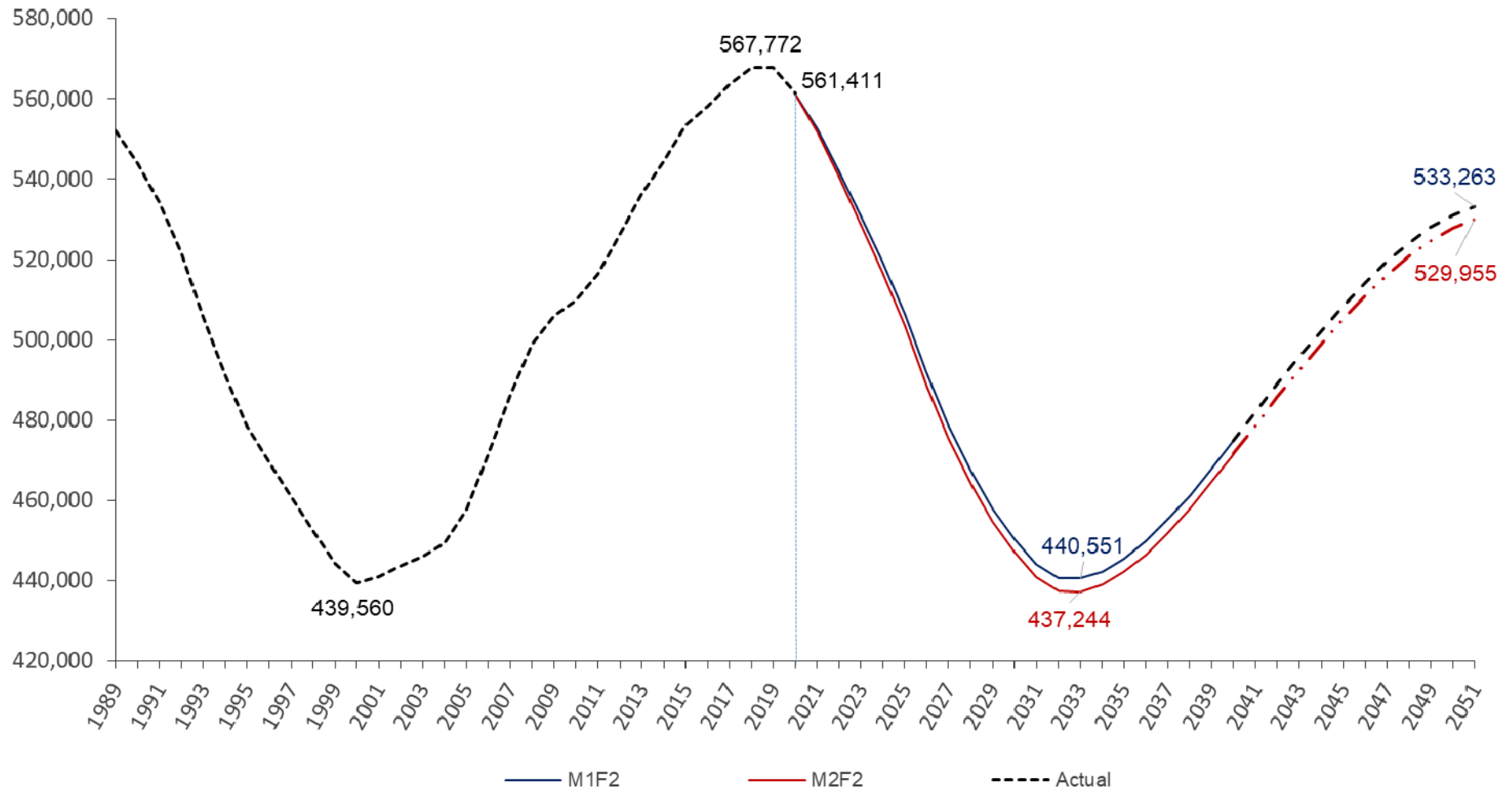|	Junior Inf	Senior Inf	1st Std	2nd Std	3rd Std	4th Std	5th Std	6th Std & higher
2020	63,427	65,931	66,932	67,359	68,213	70,930	71,160	71,541
2021	61,671	63,301	66,006	67,121	67,528	68,449	71,218	71,303
2022	60,083	61,551	63,387	66,198	67,290	67,759	68,744	71,361
2023	58,959	59,971	61,638	63,582	66,368	67,520	68,048	68,895
2024	56,838	58,851	60,061	61,831	63,757	66,599	67,807	68,196
2025	54,356	56,746	58,942	60,254	62,005	63,990	66,888	67,954
2026	53,175	54,279	56,843	59,134	60,428	62,235	64,283	67,037
2027	52,745	53,099	54,383	57,038	59,307	60,656	62,524	64,439
2028	52,531	52,668	53,201	54,580	57,214	59,534	60,944	62,680
2029	52,494	52,453	52,769	53,394	54,758	57,442	59,818	61,101
2030	52,643	52,416	52,554	52,960	53,570	54,986	57,729	59,976
2031	52,982	52,563	52,517	52,745	53,134	53,794	55,272	57,891
2032	53,503	52,898	52,663	52,707	52,919	53,355	54,075	55,438
2033	54,179	53,415	52,996	52,852	52,881	53,139	53,634	54,240
2034	54,978	54,086	53,511	53,185	53,024	53,100	53,417	53,796
2035	55,863	54,881	54,180	53,699	53,356	53,243	53,377	53,579
2036	56,780	55,761	54,973	54,368	53,870	53,575	53,519	53,540
2037	57,698	56,672	55,851	55,159	54,538	54,088	53,851	53,681
2038	58,603	57,583	56,760	56,036	55,328	54,755	54,364	54,012
2039	59,481	58,483	57,669	56,945	56,205	55,546	55,031	54,524
2040	60,316	59,357	58,568	57,854	57,114	56,423	55,822	55,190

Note: ☐ indicates the low point in the series

Figure 1 presents projected enrolments under the two scenarios outlined on the previous pages, and also includes extended projections out to 2051.

These longer-term projections sharply illustrate how the projected falls in enrolments will be temporary in nature. The graph clearly demonstrates the cyclical nature of the rises and falls in projected pupil numbers in Ireland for the coming thirty years.

Figure 1 Actual and projected enrolments in primary schools, 1989-2051

4.2.   Post-primary level

Enrolments in post-primary schools have risen by 26,923 (8%) over the past five years and are projected to continue rising over the short term. Under M1F2 they are projected to peak in 2024 with 408,794 pupils, some 29,610 higher than in 2020.

Under the M2F2 scenario (whereby inflows are set at a current rate) enrolments will peak with in 2024 with 401,584 pupils, 7,210 less pupils than under the high migration scenario. This difference between the high and medium migration scenarios in post-primary illustrates the importance of migration in the model.

Table 7 Projected enrolments in post-primary schools (M1F2, M2F2), 2021-2040

	M1F2	M2F2
2020	379,184	379,184
2021	390,317	388,037
2022	397,837	393,286
2023	405,156	398,973
2024	408,794	401,584
2025	408,208	400,035
2026	405,297	396,324
2027	401,003	391,404
2028	394,329	384,104
2029	386,621	375,881
2030	379,192	368,051
2031	371,287	359,858
2032	361,856	350,246
2033	351,438	339,753
2034	342,109	330,423
2035	334,043	322,357
2036	327,240	315,554
2037	321,817	310,131
2038	318,625	306,939
2039	317,696	306,010
2040	318,169	306,484

Note: ☐ indicates the high point in the series

4.2.1. Annual rises and falls

Table 8 presents projected annual rises and falls in enrolments out to 2040.

Enrolments are projected to rise sharply over the coming years as illustrated in the table; there will be 11,133 more pupils in 2021 than in 2020, a further additional 7,520 in 2022 and by the peak year of 2024 it is projected there will be 29,600 more pupils in post-primary schools than today.

The fall in pupil numbers after 2024 will be more gradual with numbers falling by 2,900 in 2026 and by 7,700 in 2029.

Table 8 Absolute annual change in post-primary enrolments (M1F2, M2F2), 2021-2040

	M1F2	M2F2
2021	11,133	8,853
2022	7,520	5,249
2023	7,319	5,687
2024	3,638	2,611
2025	-586	-1,550
2026	-2,912	-3,711
2027	-4,294	-4,920
2028	-6,673	-7,300
2029	-7,708	-8,222
2030	-7,429	-7,830
2031	-7,905	-8,193
2032	-9,432	-9,612
2033	-10,418	-10,493
2034	-9,329	-9,330
2035	-8,066	-8,066
2036	-6,803	-6,803
2037	-5,423	-5,423
2038	-3,192	-3,192
2039	-929	-929
2040	474	474

4.2.2. Projections by programme type

Table 9 presents projections for each year by programme type. The number of pupils entering first year is projected to rise by 996 in 2021, and then will begin to fluctuate slightly in 2022 and 2023 with a greater fall from 2024. By the end of the projection period there will be 17,000 fewer pupils entering first year than in 2021. Looking at LC2, Leaving Certificate, there will be 63,401 pupils enrolled in the 2021/22 academic, some 3,227 more than in 2020 while the projected peak year for Leaving Certificate sits is 2026 with 70,547 pupils.
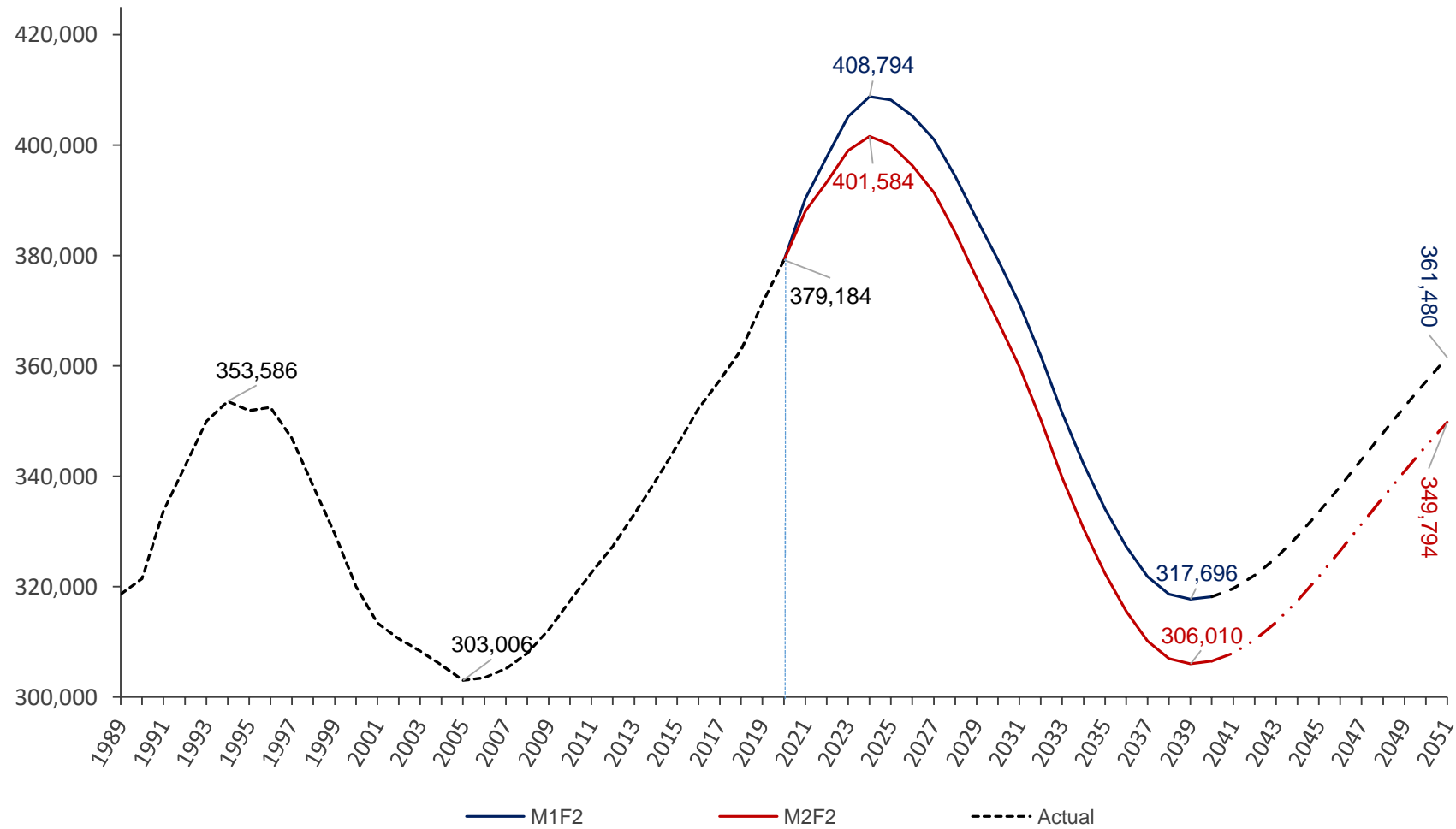
Table 9 Projected enrolments in post-primary schools (M1F2), by standard, 2021-2040, (Excel file)

	JC1	JC2	JC3	TYO	LC1	LC2 (including repeats)
2020	71,816	69,199	65,060	47,544	65,391	60,174
2021	72,812	72,023	69,206	47,446	65,429	63,401
2022	72,575	73,014	72,013	50,336	66,421	63,479
2023	72,631	72,779	72,998	52,292	70,028	64,428
2024	70,168	72,835	72,766	52,979	72,164	67,883
2025	69,469	70,393	72,821	52,817	72,742	69,967
2026	69,221	69,697	70,396	52,855	72,582	70,547
2027	68,298	69,450	69,703	51,165	71,985	70,401
2028	65,698	68,535	69,458	50,682	70,126	69,830
2029	63,938	65,956	68,549	50,511	69,620	68,047
2030	62,358	64,208	65,988	49,878	69,221	67,541
2031	61,231	62,639	64,250	48,093	67,922	67,153
2032	59,147	61,520	62,691	46,881	65,708	65,908
2033	56,697	59,452	61,580	45,795	64,135	63,778
2034	55,501	57,021	59,526	45,020	62,791	62,249
2035	55,060	55,833	57,110	43,589	61,505	60,946
2036	54,845	55,394	55,929	41,905	59,466	59,702
2037	54,807	55,180	55,492	41,082	57,517	57,739
2038	54,951	55,142	55,280	40,778	56,622	55,852
2039	55,284	55,285	55,242	40,629	56,281	54,973
2040	55,799	55,616	55,384	40,603	56,131	54,637

Note: The ☐ indicates the high point in the series

The extended (2051) projections for high and moderate migration assumptions are shown in Figure 2. As with the primary long term projections results, the second level enrolment projection results also show a likely increase in future enrolments.

Figure 2 Actual and projected enrolments in post-primary schools, 1989-2051

M1F2 —— M2F2 ----- Actual

5. Review of 2020 Projections

This section presents a short review of the last published projections and outlines the updates to the projected figures that have been made for the 2020 iteration.

The percent error of a prediction can be defined as follows:

$$\frac{|Predicted\ Value - Actual\ Value|}{Actual\ Value} * 100$$

Table 10 shows the actual enrolment for 2020 at primary and second level compared to the projected enrolments under both scenarios (M1F2 and M2F2), and gives the percentage error for each level. As can be seen, the error is less than 0.5% per year for each level by M2F2 scenario. It is less than 0.5% for primary by M1F2 but slightly higher for second level by same scenario. Note that previous set of projections also had been developed in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the enormous uncertainty around migration during pandemic period results of both scenarios should be considered. These errors were mainly due to migration assumptions set-up being too low and too high for corresponding scenarios, where the real migration fell between both values. In order to incorporate the latest available migration data the new model has been updated accordingly.

Table 10 Comparisons with 2020 projections

Year	2020	
Education level	Primary Level	Second Level
Actual enrolment	561,411	379,184
Most likely scenario (M1F2)	562,589	381,485
Difference	1,178	2,301
Percent error	0.21%	0.61%
Most likely scenario (M2F2)	561,047	378,109
Difference	-364	-1,075
Percent error	-0.06%	-0.28%

There was very little difference between the projected and the actual figure in 2020 by M2F2, i.e., an under-projection of 364 pupils at primary level and of 1,075 pupils at second level. At primary level this difference is mainly due to the combination of two factors: the inward migration of 0-4 year olds was higher than projected, while the number of children participating in the ECCE scheme increased leading to a fall in the enrolment rate of 4 year olds in school (down from 0.46 in 2018 to 0.44 in 2019) [4]. As a result, the actual enrolment figures were slightly higher compared to the projected ones. The model has been updated accordingly.

At post-primary level there is an increasing number of pupils choosing to do Transition Year; in 2019/20, almost 70% of Junior Cycle Year 3 pupils went on to do Transition Year, compared to 68% and 69% in 2017/18 and 2018/19, respectively. In 2020/21 this figure reached almost 71%. This higher proportion has been carried through the model, increasing the numbers expected to remain in the system over time.

However, as shown in Table 10, the migration assumptions by M2F2 scenario under-projected the enrolments for both levels, where the opposite happened by M1F2 scenario. As a result, the M1F2 has been lowered from 1,800 to 1,500 and M2F2 has been increased from 300 to 700 in the current model.

Appendix 1

Methodology and assumptions

Migration

The most recent estimates of migration published by the CSO[2] show net inward migration of 11,200 in the year to April 2021, down from 28,900 in April 2020 [5]. Notwithstanding this recent dip in migration, no doubt arising from the pandemic, this is the seventh consecutive year to show strong net inward migration and follows a period of outward migration between 2010 and 2014.

The 2020 report had two migration assumptions, M1 at 1,800 and M2 at 300/600/900. The most recent data shows that in the year to the end of June 2021 net migration was 1,137, in June 2020 it was 1,995 and in June 2019 it was 1,191 (pre-pandemic). For the 2021 report the M1 scenario has been set at 1,500 (slightly higher than recent levels to allow for some contingency) and M2 at 700. Inward migration is fed into pupil enrolments evenly across all standards.

Table A.1.1 Projected net migration at primary level under each migration assumption

M1	1,500	Representing steady inward migration for the lifetime of the model
M2	700	Representing moderate inward migration following the COVID-19 pandemic
M3	zero	Representing the scenario of no inward or outward migration

At post-primary level, it is difficult to determine the true number of immigrants and emigrants from the education system based on the data available, given the higher numbers of departures from the second-level system compared to those from first level, particularly after the ending of compulsory school age.

At post-primary level therefore data on inflows is extracted from the post-primary pupil database; these inflows comprise inward migration, movers from Northern Ireland, and transfers from home tutored and private schools. Under M2 the current inflow from the year 2020 (4,560) is taken and held steady for the lifetime of the model, and fed into each programme type as appropriate (See Table A.1.2). Under M1 the rate is increased by 50 per cent of the M2, where M3 rate is decreased by 50

---

[2] https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-pme/populationandmigrationestimatesapril2021/mainresults/

per cent of the M2 rate. Inward migration is by far the most important component of these inflows and the report presents three scenarios for post-primary inflows. Note that this is a change on the previous methodology when the most recent inflows were converted to an inflow-rate and this rate was applied into the future under all scenarios. (The effect of this was to increase and decrease inflows depending on demographics rather than hold it as a fixed amount regardless of rising and falling pupils' numbers).

For outflows the retention rate, as published by the Department annually, is used; it is not possible to separate emigrants out from other leavers and so a single retention rate is applied, by programme [6].

Table A.1.2 Actual 2020 and projected inflows, by programme

Programme	2020	M1	M2 (as 2020)	M3
JC1	768	1,152	768	384
JC2	492	738	492	246
JC3	303	454	303	151
TY	1,401	2,101	1,401	700
LC1	1,469	2,204	1,469	735
LC2 (including repeats)	127	191	127	64
Total	4,560	6,840	4,560	2,280

Fertility

The most recent evidence shows the TPFR in Ireland fell sharply from the 2010 level of 2.09 to 1.6 in 2020 [3].

The following fertility scenarios are used:

F1: TPFR to remain at the average of 2017-2019 level of 1.7 for the lifetime of the projections.

F2: TPFR as 1.6 is used for the lifetime of the projections in line with the latest CSO data.

Note: The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on births is unknown and has not been factored into this iteration of the model.

Table A.1.3 shows the projected births under each fertility assumption for the period 2021 to 2040 where the lowest values per each assumption are outlined accordingly.

Table A.1.3 Projected births under each fertility assumption, 2021-2040

	F1	F2
2021	58,081	55,029
2022	57,673	54,642
2023	57,400	54,384
2024	57,333	54,321
2025	57,460	54,441
2026	57,795	54,758
2027	58,335	55,270
2028	59,051	55,948
2029	59,901	56,753
2030	60,863	57,665
2031	61,862	58,611
2032	62,852	59,550
2033	63,839	60,485
2034	64,794	61,389
2035	65,711	62,258
2036	66,560	63,063
2037	67,364	63,824
2038	68,115	64,536
2039	68,822	65,206
2040	69,466	65,816

Note: ☐ indicates the low point in the series

Deaths

Assumptions on deaths are taken directly from the CSO projections for each single year of age [7]. The effect of deaths on the overall projections is negligible given the small number of deaths (about 110 every year) involved.

Primary Level Other Factors

A number of other factors which have a smaller impact on overall figures at primary level are included in the model, including transfers to and from the private sector and special education, as well as repeat rates in junior infants and 6th class in primary school.

Special pupils in both mainstream and special schools

Special pupils, being a sub-set of the total demographics, are estimated as a percentage of projected total enrolments. In earlier reports this percentage was held steady at the most recent level. In effect, the real percentage of special pupils has been steadily increasing in recent years (see Table A.1.4) meaning there has been a tendency to under-estimate this cohort in previous reports. To correct for this, and in line with the 2020 report, the percentage of special pupils is slowly increased from the current rate of 2.84% in 2020 to 3.00% in 2024 and then held steady for the remainder of the model. The rising trend in this cohort is being kept under close appraisal and will be reviewed again in next year's report. The impact on numbers of special pupils for all scenarios is shown in Table A.1.5.

Table A.1.4 Enrolments in primary schools and Special Education as % of total, 2016-2020

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Special classes & schools	12,950	13,780	14,453	15,173	15,918
Ordinary classes	545,364	549,679	553,319	552,543	545,493
Total	558,314	563,459	567,772	567,716	561,411
Special Education as % of total enrolment	2.32%	2.45%	2.55%	2.67%	2.84%

Table A.1.5 Projected enrolments in Special Education, 2021-2030

	% of total enrolment	M1F1	M1F2	M2F1	M2F2	M3F1	M3F2
2020	2.84%	15,918	15,918	15,918	15,918	15,918	15,918
2021	2.88%	15,893	15,893	15,869	15,869	15,848	15,848
2022	2.92%	15,819	15,819	15,775	15,775	15,736	15,736
2023	2.96%	15,702	15,702	15,639	15,639	15,584	15,584
2024	3.00%	15,586	15,586	15,508	15,508	15,440	15,440
2025	3.00%	15,218	15,190	15,130	15,101	15,052	15,024
2026	3.00%	14,872	14,765	14,776	14,670	14,692	14,586
2027	3.00%	14,553	14,356	14,454	14,257	14,367	14,171
2028	3.00%	14,308	14,021	14,209	13,922	14,122	13,835
2029	3.00%	14,117	13,739	14,018	13,640	13,931	13,553
2030	3.00%	13,979	13,510	13,879	13,411	13,793	13,324

PLC

The projected enrolments refer to the school-based enrolments up to Leaving Certificate only and do not include PLC (Post Leaving Certificate) students.

Statistics Section, Department of Education

Appendix 2

Detailed results at Primary level

The projected enrolments for all scenarios are shown in Table A.2.1, where the lowest values for each scenario are outlined accordingly. The annual changes for all scenarios are shown in Table A.2.2.

Table A.2.1 Projected enrolments in primary schools, 2021-2040, ([Excel file](#))

	M1F1	M1F2	M2F1	M2F2	M3F1	M3F2
2020	561,411	561,411	561,411	561,411	561,411	561,411
2021	552,491	552,491	551,668	551,668	550,947	550,947
2022	542,192	542,192	540,662	540,662	539,322	539,322
2023	530,683	530,683	528,562	528,562	526,706	526,706
2024	519,526	519,526	516,932	516,932	514,663	514,663
2025	507,276	506,325	504,328	503,377	501,748	500,797
2026	495,717	492,180	492,532	488,994	489,744	486,207
2027	485,109	478,548	481,804	475,243	478,912	472,351
2028	476,950	467,373	473,642	464,065	470,748	461,171
2029	470,561	457,970	467,253	454,662	464,359	451,768
2030	465,957	450,345	462,650	447,037	459,756	444,143
2031	462,879	444,224	459,571	440,917	456,677	438,022
2032	462,506	440,781	459,199	437,473	456,304	434,579
2033	464,465	440,551	461,157	437,244	458,263	434,350
2034	466,900	442,368	463,592	439,061	460,698	436,166
2035	470,273	445,545	466,965	442,237	464,071	439,343
2036	474,850	449,881	471,543	446,574	468,648	443,679
2037	480,457	455,193	477,150	451,885	474,255	448,991
2038	486,883	461,280	483,575	457,972	480,681	455,078
2039	493,894	467,922	490,586	464,614	487,692	461,720
2040	501,248	474,888	497,941	471,581	495,046	468,687

Note: ☐ indicates the low point in the series

Table A.2.2 Absolute annual change in primary enrolments, 2021-2040

	M1F1	M1F2	M2F1	M2F2	M3F1	M3F2
2021	-8,920	-8,920	-9,743	-9,743	-10,464	-10,464
2022	-10,299	-10,299	-11,006	-11,006	-11,624	-11,624
2023	-11,510	-11,510	-12,100	-12,100	-12,616	-12,616
2024	-11,157	-11,157	-11,630	-11,630	-12,044	-12,044
2025	-12,250	-13,201	-12,605	-13,555	-12,915	-13,866
2026	-11,559	-14,145	-11,796	-14,383	-12,003	-14,590
2027	-10,608	-13,632	-10,727	-13,751	-10,832	-13,856
2028	-8,159	-11,175	-8,162	-11,178	-8,164	-11,180
2029	-6,389	-9,403	-6,389	-9,403	-6,389	-9,403
2030	-4,603	-7,625	-4,603	-7,625	-4,603	-7,625
2031	-3,079	-6,120	-3,079	-6,120	-3,079	-6,120
2032	-372	-3,444	-372	-3,444	-372	-3,444
2033	1,958	-229	1,958	-229	1,958	-229
2034	2,435	1,817	2,435	1,817	2,435	1,817
2035	3,372	3,177	3,372	3,177	3,372	3,177
2036	4,578	4,336	4,578	4,336	4,578	4,336
2037	5,607	5,312	5,607	5,312	5,607	5,312
2038	6,426	6,087	6,426	6,087	6,426	6,087
2039	7,011	6,642	7,011	6,642	7,011	6,642
2040	7,354	6,967	7,354	6,967	7,354	6,967

Detailed results at Post-primary level

The projected enrolments for all scenarios are shown in Table A.2.3, where the highest enrolments are outlined accordingly. The annual changes for all scenarios are shown in Table A.2.4.

Table A.2.3 Projected enrolments in post-primary schools, 2021-2040, (Excel file)

	M1F1	M1F2	M2F1	M2F2	M3F1	M3F2
2020	379,184	379,184	379,184	379,184	379,184	379,184
2021	390,317	390,317	388,037	388,037	385,757	385,757
2022	397,837	397,837	393,286	393,286	388,749	388,749
2023	405,156	405,156	398,973	398,973	392,833	392,833
2024	408,794	408,794	401,584	401,584	394,459	394,459
2025	408,208	408,208	400,035	400,035	392,002	392,002
2026	405,297	405,297	396,324	396,324	387,561	387,561
2027	401,003	401,003	391,404	391,404	382,094	382,094
2028	394,329	394,329	384,104	384,104	374,246	374,246
2029	386,621	386,621	375,881	375,881	365,573	365,573
2030	379,192	379,192	368,051	368,051	357,392	357,392
2031	371,287	371,287	359,858	359,858	348,946	348,946
2032	361,856	361,856	350,246	350,246	339,176	339,176
2033	352,372	351,438	340,687	339,753	329,553	328,618
2034	345,504	342,109	333,818	330,423	322,682	319,287
2035	340,338	334,043	328,652	322,357	317,516	311,221
2036	336,392	327,240	324,706	315,554	313,571	304,419
2037	333,743	321,817	322,058	310,131	310,922	298,995
2038	333,028	318,625	321,342	306,939	310,207	295,803
2039	333,555	317,696	321,869	306,010	310,733	294,874
2040	334,374	318,169	322,689	306,484	311,553	295,348

Note: ☐ indicates the high point in the series

Table A.2.4 Absolute annual change in post-primary enrolments, 2021-2040

	M1F1	M1F2	M2F1	M2F2	M3F1	M3F2
2021	11,133	11,133	8,853	8,853	6,573	6,573
2022	7,520	7,520	5,249	5,249	2,992	2,992
2023	7,319	7,319	5,687	5,687	4,085	4,085
2024	3,638	3,638	2,611	2,611	1,626	1,626
2025	-586	-586	-1,550	-1,550	-2,457	-2,457
2026	-2,912	-2,912	-3,711	-3,711	-4,441	-4,441
2027	-4,294	-4,294	-4,920	-4,920	-5,467	-5,467
2028	-6,673	-6,673	-7,300	-7,300	-7,848	-7,848
2029	-7,708	-7,708	-8,222	-8,222	-8,673	-8,673
2030	-7,429	-7,429	-7,830	-7,830	-8,181	-8,181
2031	-7,905	-7,905	-8,193	-8,193	-8,446	-8,446
2032	-9,432	-9,432	-9,612	-9,612	-9,770	-9,770
2033	-9,484	-10,418	-9,558	-10,493	-9,623	-10,558
2034	-6,869	-9,329	-6,870	-9,330	-6,870	-9,331
2035	-5,166	-8,066	-5,166	-8,066	-5,166	-8,066
2036	-3,946	-6,803	-3,946	-6,803	-3,946	-6,803
2037	-2,649	-5,423	-2,649	-5,423	-2,649	-5,423
2038	-715	-3,192	-715	-3,192	-715	-3,192
2039	527	-929	527	-929	527	-929
2040	819	474	819	474	819	474

Statistics Section, Department of Education

References

[1]   https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/projections/

[2]   https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-plfp/populationandlabourforceprojections2017-2051/

[3]   https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-vsys/vitalstatisticsyearlysummary2020/

[4]   https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2459ee-early-childhood-care-and-education-programme-ecce/

[5]   https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-pme/populationandmigrationestimatesapril2021/mainresults/

[6]   https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/retention/

[7]   https://data.cso.ie/#