

## **Commencement Matter 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

The need for the Minister of Education to provide an update on where Gaelscoil Áine, Drumcondra, Dublin 9 will be located for September 2022.

**Senator Mary Fitzpatrick**

### **Opening Statement**

I would like to thank the Senator for raising the matter as it provides me with the opportunity to clarify the current position relating to Gaelscoil Áine's school accommodation.

Gaelscoil Áine opened in 2019 and was established in vacant accommodation in the OPW building known as Coláiste Chaoimhín, St. Mobhí Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9. My Department facilitated refurbishment works in the building in 2019 to provide 3 classrooms along with some ancillary accommodation for the school.

The current enrolment in the school in September 2021 is 70 pupils.

As part of the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010 – 2030, my Department has committed to creating opportunities for expanding Irish-medium education outside the Gaeltacht in the context of the April 2018 announcement on the establishment of 42 new schools from 2019, which affords particular consideration to the establishment of Gaelscoileanna, Gaelcholáistí, and Aonad Lán-Ghaeilge as part of the patronage process. Since the April 2018 announcement, the number of new schools to be established over the period from 2019 to meet a demographic demand has increased to 47 schools. This includes 8 Gaelscoileanna and a Gaelcholáiste (arising from the transition of an Aonad into a standalone gaelcholáiste).

With regard to Scoil Áine's future accommodation, a permanent site for a new school has been identified and my Department is in advanced discussions with another public body to acquire a site. However, due to the confidential nature of these discussions, it is not possible to provide further information at this time. My Department will keep the patron informed of any key developments in advancing the permanent site for the school.

In tandem with the site acquisition, my Department has been working to put interim accommodation arrangements in place for the school for September 2022 and will be engaging with the patron of the school shortly in relation to this.

## **Conclusion**

I would once again like to thank the Senator for giving me an opportunity to outline the position in relation to Gaelscoil Aine to the House.