

# **Sixteenth draft of the Education Model of Proposed Amalgamated School(s)**

## **Introduction**

This paper intends to detail the preferred educational model for a new amalgamated school(s) providing education to Deaf and hard of hearing students in Cabra. The paper will summarise the current model which accommodates 114 students supported by 48 teaching staff and 21 special needs assistants and compares that to the proposed new model to accommodate 150 students, with 45 teaching staff, and 18 special needs assistants. In the longer term the new amalgamated school(s) would hope to accommodate up to 180 students by 2017, and CIDP will base its buildings, accommodation needs and designs on this number. That said the Amalgamation Steering Committee is clear that in any negotiations with the Department of Education and Skills regarding an amalgamation the figures used in setting the pupil teacher ratio are the current figures not future projected figures. One of the critical aspects to this amalgamation is that the services and facilities post amalgamation should be better than the pre amalgamation situation. This implies that the infrastructure of the new school(s) will be enhanced and that sufficient funds will be available to ensure this happens. It is on this basis that any amalgamation will be finally agreed.

## **Current education model**

The schools currently offer the full primary education programme and a comprehensive second level programme to Leaving Certificate and applied Leaving Certificate levels. One of the schools also offers a Transition year and a Post Leaving Certificate programme see appendix 2 for detail on the academic outcomes achieved by both schools in the last ten years. There are 114 students (61 in St. Mary's and 53 in St. Joseph's) currently supported by 48 teaching staff (24 in each school including both Principals), 20 special needs assistants (8 in St. Mary's and 12 in St. Joseph's), 4 administrative staff, 6 cleaning staff and 2 maintenance and security staff between both schools. Of the 48 teaching staff 36 are post primary qualified teachers and 10 are primary qualified teachers plus the two Principal teachers. Currently 6 of the teaching staff are on temporary whole time teaching contracts. Of the 114 students, 35 are Primary school students and 79 are Second and PLC level students. One of the key issues faced by St. Mary's and St. Joseph's currently is that of the 114 students 27% are students with disabilities apart from their deafness and 22% of the students originate from countries outside Ireland; both of which add considerably to the complexity of the teaching and care environment. A detailed analysis of the disability categories are set out in appendix 1 and the countries of origin in appendix 4. This requires the provision of detailed Individual Education Plans (IEP) to ensure that the needs of each student are identified, met and regularly monitored at meetings between teachers, parents and the students, as well as involvement from other professionals, all of which adds to the contact time outside of the classroom for teaching staff. In order to meet the complex needs of the students given their various abilities and disabilities, additional supports both staffing and infrastructural are essential, to ensure that each student is given an opportunity to develop to their capacity. This involves a considerable amount of work on a one to one or one to two basis and is undertaken by teaching and SNA staff. A critical and unique

aspect from a special school perspective of the current model is that a full Junior and Leaving Certificate curriculum is available to cater for the needs of all students and to offer appropriate choices to enable the students meet their potential. The schools are therefore providing courses which enable student's access third level education as well as courses for students with multiple disabilities. Within the current provision of teaching staff there are 4 teachers operating in a non teaching support role (home school liaison and one deputy principal teacher and the two Principal teachers, a second deputy principal teacher has some teaching hours). There are 4 teachers acting ex quota, Career Guidance (x 1), Speech and language support (x 2) and a Woodwork teacher (x 1). Also there is one part time ISL tutor in St. Mary's and one SNA acting as the ISL coordinator in St. Joseph's. The Department of Health provide a shared Speech and Language therapist and an additional Home School Liaison post is currently funded via the HSE which is not included in the current overall figures.

The current educational model is one which places a significant emphasis on ensuring that the students attain fluency in spoken and written English and Irish Sign Language (ISL). This is important and is reflected in the language support programmes offered by the schools. The school aims to provide a service to meet the needs of each child individually and requires additional human and technical resources to do so given that the student population has varying degrees of deafness ranging from profound to hard of hearing, varying abilities and, (27%) disabilities (27%) other than deafness. Circa 22% of the students originate from various countries other than Ireland, all leading to a highly complex and unique teaching environment requiring pupil teacher ratios of 2, 3, and 4 to 1, together with significant support from SNA's without whom the schools could not function to their current high standard. The role of the SNA's in both schools is a care role but a significant aspect of this care is in relation to the communication needs of the students as is evidenced by the fact that the key ISL person in St. Joseph's is an SNA.

The method of communication in the school is bilingual (total communication) ensuring that each students language, communication and development needs are met. This has entailed the staff of St. Mary's and St. Joseph's participating in extensive training beyond their normal teaching qualifications. At present most of the staff of both schools are competent ISL users many with recognised ISL qualifications and some staff with higher levels of fluency. 90% of the teaching staff in St. Mary's have qualified (or are in training) as teachers of the Deaf or have diplomas in special education and 72% of staff in St. Joseph's have also attained or are in training for these qualifications a further 25% have a special education needs qualification. In respect of the overall qualifications of the current staff 61% of the St. Joseph's teaching staff and 74% of the St. Mary's teaching staff have their primary degree plus at least one other post graduate qualification.

Of the 48 teaching staff 6 are Deaf and of the 20 SNA's 12 are Deaf. In terms of the staffing of the schools there is a commitment by the schools to employing the best staff with the appropriate qualifications with as many as possible coming from the Deaf community .The current compulsory Irish language requirement to enter Primary teacher training college has blocked the employment of Deaf teachers at Primary level. In terms of administration staff (4) non are Deaf while of the 6

cleaning staff and 2 maintenance staff 3 are Deaf. Most of these staff have long service records with the schools and use sign language with the students.

On reviewing the length of service of the staff of both schools it is evident that there is considerable experience available in both St. Mary's and St. Joseph's schools currently namely;

<b>St. Joseph's</b>			<b>St. Mary's</b>		
	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>SNA's</b>		<b>Teachers</b>	<b>SNA's</b>
<b>1-5 years</b>	5	2	1-5 years	4	0
<b>6-10 years</b>	8	5	6-10 years	6	4
<b>11-15 years</b>	4	3	11-15 years	6	3
<b>Over 15</b>	7	2	Over 15	8	1

The 2009 report to the NCSE from Marc Marschark (Evidence of best practice Models and Outcomes in the Education of Deaf and hard of hearing children' – an international review) shows that the availability of qualified teachers of the Deaf is critical in enabling Deaf children learn. Marschark also identified the important role to be played by teachers of the Deaf who sign and or are Deaf themselves. St. Mary's and St. Joseph's provide teachers with these qualifications as well as teachers and SNA's who are Deaf themselves. It is a current and future concern that some of these staff are employed for 3-4 years and remain on temporary contracts. Their continued involvement is critical to the schools remaining centres of excellence.

The focus on the individual needs of the students has enabled the current staff of both schools provide a comprehensive educational service that is appropriate both academically and developmentally. A crucial aspect of this educational model is that it is delivered in a manner which is at the pace of each student and is cognisant of the social needs of each student in respect of their ability to build relationships, and their future participation in both the hearing world and the Deaf community. Both schools have enabled Deaf and hard of hearing students to meet successfully the standards set by State examinations in respect of Junior and Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Applied and various FETAC level 4 and 5 awards. Each year a number of students from both schools move to third level education. This is unique in Ireland among special schools; see Appendix 2 for a table of the academic results of both schools.

Looking at the current educational model a number of concerns have arisen around the facilities and technology on offer to the students in both schools. While the buildings themselves are dated and need upgrading they are for the next three to five years adequate, but will require significant resources to ensure that the buildings are viable into the future. What is grossly inadequate is the ICT infrastructure in respect of the flexibility of the wiring in the schools, the availability of hardware, white boards and sound field systems. The schools have recently undergone an audiology review of

the premises and it is clear that the existence of a poor acoustic environment is seriously undermining both schools ability to provide the best support to pupils. Both the Acoustic and IT reviews are available to the Department of Education and Skills.

## **Proposed education model**

### Management and Structure

In respect of the Management model for the school(s) discussions to date have favoured a situation where there would be one special Primary school with its own Principal and one Secondary (top) school with its own Principal. It is planned that CIDP would remain as trustees of the school under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin and that the Primary and Secondary (top) would be managed by a single Board of Management (as is currently the case individually in both schools). This means that the outcome from the favoured management model is one special school but divided into Primary and Secondary sections each with a separate Principal teacher. This proposal may raise some technical concerns regarding the Education Act, which envisages one Principal attending each Board of Management meeting with that Principal having the authority to act on behalf of the Board of Management. It is also at odds with the Department position on School Principals in an amalgamation setting. The Department position envisages one Principal with the remaining Principal having the status of privileged assistant and retaining the Principals allowance. While the Steering Committee acknowledges the Departments official stance, it still maintains that the only recommended change to the current educational model is that the Primary and the Secondary top school would be amalgamated to cater for girls and boys together, each school section having a separate Principal, both of whom would be part of a single Board of Management with a single administrative structure. The figures used for the model set out below are on the basis of the understanding that there would be circa 45 Primary students and 105 Post Primary and PLC students by September 2014, rising to a combined total of 180 by 2017.

### Location

#### **Context**

In discussions to date with the Amalgamation Review Committee regarding the location of any amalgamated school(s) current thinking has favoured the separation of the buildings housing the Primary and the Secondary sections of any amalgamated school(s). This has evolved in the context of the importance of the Primary school being viewed by parents as a separate entity, and with a view to having the Primary school beside a proposed Preschool and the new Centre for Deaf Education. In addition the Primary school would be located at a remove from the Deaf Village and so convey the idea of students progressing from one level to another which would be clearer if the sites are separate. The Committee also view the Deaf Village educational facilities as being focused on life-long learning such as Community development, Personal development, Post Leaving Certificate and FETAC courses i.e. a more adult-focused campus. The Committee also are open to the Primary and Secondary schools being on one campus if this was in the context of a complete new

build and at a remove from the Deaf Village. The staff from St. Joseph's school are themselves of the view that one campus is better than separating the Primary and Secondary students from a positive role modal perspective and for parents to see the continuity of the educational model

The CIDP Board has had informal Board discussions and expressed its preferred view that all of the schools, residences, social, administration, religious and sports etc facilities would be housed on the same site. This, it believes would give more full and concrete expression to the idea of a Deaf Village. . From a positive view the CIDP Board believes that such proximity of all facilities is very positive. The Board also acknowledges however that some may view this more negatively as a ghettoisation of the Deaf Community. The CIDP Board view is not their final view but one which has emerged upon discussion on the vision set out in the Philip Ryan report.

To facilitate this range of views arising from the Amalgamation Consultation process a number of options have been explored and costed. (See below). In addition a formal 'Buildings Survey' of the current schools and their respective locations was also commissioned. This survey has identified the extent of new facilities, modernisation and upgrading that would be required for the re use / continual use of each of the current school buildings. It also included the cost of additional accommodation required in the context of accommodating both girls and boys in the one building e.g. toilets. The Survey also costed new build options. Another important factor to note is that two preliminary advisory meetings have taken place with the Department of Education building section in relation to these matters in order to inform the thinking from a practical perspective. The outcomes from these meetings are noted later in this section.

At the same time the Residences associated with the schools are being reviewed in the context of both an amalgamation of the two residences and a necessary upgrading of the accommodation to meet new HIQA standards as well as the other essential standards now set out in the Department of Health and Children's National Standards for Children's Residential Centres (2008). A critical new aspect contained in these standards is the provision of single room accommodation with en-suite facilities for the students. The residences will need to accommodate boys in one building and girls in the other although both buildings would be side by side and share common facilities and staff. The cost of this initiative (i.e. the provision of 40 single en-suite rooms plus four rooms accommodating 3 students each with an en-suite toilet and shower facility associated), is €1.2 million using the St. Joseph's residence or €2 million using the St. Mary's residence. This will now be discussed with the HSE to ensure it meets current and future requirements and standards and that there is a commitment to fund this development. Given the physical structure of the current residences it is likely that any amalgamation of the residences would take place on the St. Joseph's site. Any amalgamation of the residences is a separate decision from the amalgamation of the schools and is likely to pre-date any school(s) amalgamation.

## Options

Bearing in mind the above context, the various options for the location of proposed amalgamated schools are set out below.

**Option one;** the upgrading and expansion of St. Joseph's school as an amalgamated second level school costing €2.2 million together with the upgrading of the Marian school as an amalgamated primary school at a cost of €1.2 million. This would mean that CIDP would surrender the usage of the current St. Mary's second level school site and would require a 'deal' with the Dominican Sisters whereby CIDP would be offered the freehold of the Marian site. The advantage to CIDP of this arrangement is that some of the Marian site could then be sold to the Department of Education (possibly worth €500,000). These funds could then assist with the cost of the amalgamation. Clearly, the remainder of the monies for this and all the options below, is expected to come from the Department of Education.

**Option two;** the upgrading and expansion of the St. Mary's second level school as the amalgamated second level school (€3.3 million) and the upgrading of the Marian school (€1.2 million) as the amalgamated primary school. This would involve an efficient use of land which is leased and not in the ownership of CIDP. It would also leave CIDP in a position to sell the St. Joseph's school site and building to the Department of Education or another institutional type provider of services with a possible value of €1.3 million.

**Option three;** this option suggests the building of a new build second level school on the St. Mary's second level site combined with an upgrading of the Marian site for all primary students. This would cost €4.5 million for the new school in St. Mary's and €1.2 million for the upgraded school in the Marian site and would leave the St. Joseph's school site available for disposal (€1.3 million).

**Option four;** this is an option focused on keeping the primary and secondary schools together on one site which, given the numbers of students currently (114,) may be considered more pragmatic. There are three possible ways of delivering this option:

The first possibility is an upgraded primary school beside a new build secondary school on the Marian site. The cost of this model is €5.5 million leaving St. Joseph's school and site available for disposal (€1.3 million).

The second possibility involves placing a combined secondary and primary school on the St. Mary's Rosary site at a cost of €6.1 million again leaving St. Joseph's available for disposal (€1.3 million). This would entail a complete new build primary and secondary school.

Thirdly there is an option to provide this combined primary and secondary school on the St. Joseph's site, reusing, upgrading and expanding the current buildings at a combined cost of €4.1 million. This would free up the entire Marian site for CIDP to dispose of (€1.1 million), if the Dominican Sisters were to give the site to CIDP as a direct swap for vacating the St. Mary's Rosary site.

## Advantages / Disadvantages

The above options are analysed below with a list of the advantages and disadvantages of each option;

### Option one;

St. Joseph's as a second level school upgraded and expanded	-€2.2 million
Marian school as a primary school upgraded	-€1.2 million
Possible financial benefits: sale of portion of the Marian site to Department of Education	+€500,000

### Net total cost

**€2.9 million**

The first advantage of Option one is that, from a policy perspective, the secondary and the primary would be separated. Secondly there is a strong possibility that the Department of Education would be keen to purchase a portion of the Marian site for another school and that the second level school would be on the same site as the new Sports, Life-long learning, heritage centre and Social centres etc. Such proximity to the sports facilities is a significant advantage in terms of social outlet and cross curricular activities. There is also close access to the public library across the road. Given the cost of the refurbishment of the residences and the condition of both residences it is likely that the St. Joseph's residence will be used as the location of any future amalgamated residence. This represents a further advantage with the residence being beside the schools for the second level pupils. There are financial advantages here also in that this is the least costly option of the four and there is still land available around the school for expansion. The disadvantages of option one are that the school will not be seen as part of a school campus (although Colaiste Mhuire is on the site and St. Declan's beside the site). In addition, some feel that there remains a legacy issue with St. Joseph's from the past. Some parents too may be fearful of that previously referred to idea of ghettoisation of the Deaf Community given that the school would be located on the same site as the Village There would also be the loss of the St. Mary's swimming pool, although this would be more than compensated for by the gain of access to the new pool.

### Option two;

St. Mary's school as second level school upgraded and expanded	-€3.3 million
Marian school as a primary school upgraded	-€1.2 million
Possible financial benefits: sale of St. Joseph's school or site to Department of Education or another institution	+€1.3 million

### Net total cost

**€3.2 million**

The advantages of option two are that the primary and secondary level schools are located on what is already designated as an educational campus. While the area around the second level school is not substantial there is enough space for modest yard / play activities and the school is located beside a sports hall and pitches. From a reputation perspective this move would break the direct connection with the past. The other advantage is that the schools would be located on land that CIDP has a right to occupy but not own and financially would allow CIDP to sell the current St. Joseph's school to the Department of Education or another institutional service provider. Disadvantages include the fact that the locations are some distance away from the Deaf Village Project. In addition, the current St. Mary's secondary building is largely a high grade prefabricated building and even the upgrade would not significantly improve that aspect of the building. Conducting new building works on the second level site may not be to the liking of the Dominican Sisters as owners of the land and whose main house is across the road. Finally, the residences are likely to be on the St. Joseph's site, some distance away from the schools.

### Option three;

New second level school on St. Mary's site	-€4.5 million
Marian school as a primary school upgraded	-€1.2 million
Possible financial benefit: Sale of St. Joseph's school to Department of Education or another institution	+€1.3 million

**Net total cost** **€4.4 million**

This has all the advantages of option two with the addition of the second level building being a new building with the added advantages a new build would bring in terms of delivering the required specifications and all to a higher standard. It would also be a cut with the past in terms of both St. Mary's and St. Joseph's and be seen as a new beginning. While this is an expensive option it would be one that might meet more acceptance from the current staffs and Boards of Management. The disadvantages are the same as those identified in option two above.

### Option four

<b>A</b> New build combined secondary school and an upgraded primary school on the Marian site	-€5.5 million
Possible financial benefit: Sale of St. Joseph's school to Department of Education or another institution	+€1.3 million

**Net total cost** **€4.2 million**

The advantage of having all the education services on one site is clearly better from a management perspective and a resource perspective. The site would also be identified as only an education site. It

would be seen as an entirely new beginning as in option 3 and would meet with the likely approval of the staffs and Boards of Management. Another advantage is that this site would be placed in the ownership of CIDP giving security of tenure (although it must be said that the current lease gives good security in this area anyway). It has the advantages of being seen as part of an education campus even if it is somewhat removed. The disadvantages relate to the distance from the Deaf Village and the residences and the lack of access to immediate sports facilities although it is fair to say that they are close by. The amount of space available is not substantial but is more than sufficient for all the required facilities including the Centre for Deaf Education, Preschool and limited on site play areas. The other disadvantages are that it does not meet the current thinking on separating the primary and secondary schools although this may not be a major concern given the current student numbers. Finally, it is a costly option and would result in the loss of the St. Mary's Rosary site.

<b>B</b>	New build combined primary and secondary school on the St. Mary's site	-€6.1 million
	Possible financial benefit: Sale of St. Joseph's school to Department of Education or another institution	+€1.3 million
	<b>Net total cost</b>	<b>€4.8 million</b>

This has all the advantages of option 4 A above and removes some of the disadvantages given that there is more space available (nearly 2 acres) for outside play areas and the site is beside other sporting facilities and part of an educational campus. The disadvantages relate to the high cost of this option, possible disturbance of the Dominican Sisters, the loss of the Marian site and the audiology clinic which would have to be handed back. Finally it would mean the Primary and Secondary schools being located on the same site (which was not initially the policy preference of the Amalgamation Review Committee) and that location being quite separate from the residences and the Deaf Village.

<b>C</b>	Combined upgraded and expanded primary and secondary school in St. Joseph's school	-€4.1 million
	Possible financial benefit: Sale of entire Marian site	+€1.1 million
	<b>Net total cost</b>	<b>€3 million</b>

The main advantage of this option is that it is positioned beside the planned amalgamated residence and the Deaf Village with the sports etc facilities. The disadvantages relate to the retention of the connection with the old St. Joseph's image, the association in the minds of some parents of a ghetto mentality and the lack of an association with an educational campus (although, as stated earlier, Colaiste Mhuire and St. Declan's are close by). Clearly, the policy of separating the primary and

secondary schools is also undermined in this option and while this option could be supported by the sale of the Marian site, the St. Mary's site would be lost. Of course the Dominican Sisters may not give the Marian site to CIDP in the context of a complete move from Dominican lands. Also it is unlikely that the Department of Education would sanction the demolition of St. Joseph's in that it is still a structurally sound building.

### **Discussions with the Department of Education building section**

The preliminary discussions with the Department of Education Buildings Section took place in late June and September 2011. The Department reviewed the various options with CIDP at a high level and expressed some interest -off the record- in acquiring land and or buildings for other schools apart from the Deaf schools. They reiterated the possibility of using the summer grants scheme over a two year period to deliver new and upgraded facilities as the best option in the short term. They indicated that the provision of a new school and or a substantial upgrading, while good options, especially in the context of a possible land/building 'quid pro quo', would take up to three years from start to finish to deliver. They also mentioned that the new government programme promises 40 new schools by 2016, so a new school for Deaf children would not be considered until after this timeframe. That said exceptions have been made in the past to meet particular needs e.g. Colaiste Mhuire. They also recommended that we consult with the SENO and John Murphy Inspector before we submit the final plans.

### **Recommendations**

It is evident from consultation with the staff in both schools that the preferences for St. Mary's staff are option 2 or option 3 while for St. Joseph's staff the preferences is for option 4c.

Given the informal views of the Department of Education personnel, the views of the Amalgamation Review Committee and the Board of CIDP there are three options which would seem to have a significant chance of being delivered namely Options one, four B and four C.

Option one is attractive because the net cost to the Department of Education is €2.9 million. This could be delivered over a two year period via the summer works scheme or via a direct grant and would be conditional on CIDP being given the Marian site in lieu of the St. Mary's site and releasing a portion of that site to the Department of Education for another school.

Option four B is attractive because it would deliver the new facilities and is likely to be supported by both staffs. The net cost to the Department of Education at €4.8 million, would make it less attractive than option one or four C below but in terms of a new beginning it could clearly be seen as the best option.

Option four C is an attractive option since CIDP would not lose further land on the main site at St. Joseph's to another provider and could instead give the land at the Marian site to the Department of Education and the cost at €3 million is one of the least expensive options. The strong possibility that

the residences will be on this site together with the Village Project makes this option worthy of consideration especially given the current student numbers. Understandably many view this option as one which could cause the numbers attending such a new amalgamated school to plummet further given that it could be perceived as a ghetto and remain associated with the an image from the past, and in this scenario the Dominican Sisters may not give the Marian site to CIDP at all.

The Department of Education may also take the view that given the circa €3 million expenditure on the updating of the schools in question as set out in option one and four C, the cost of building a new school on the St. Mary's site for circa €5 – €6 million might make more sense and deliver better long term cost effectiveness. Again the concern about this would be the level of expenditure required given that the current numbers have dropped so low.

## **Staffing Requirements**

Within the Primary section 8 assistant teachers plus the Principal teacher (9) would be required together with 6 special needs assistants (dependent on the needs of individual children and the assessment of the SENO), 1 ex quota teacher for speech and language development and one ex quota Home School Liaison teacher. Given the number of students (45), eight assistant teachers is a minimum given the fact that 27% of the students have disabilities other than deafness requiring that individual classes will have to be divided to ensure that the students receive support, care and education appropriate to their needs. The Primary section will also require an Administration support person and if the school is situated on a separate site such as the Marian site two part time Cleaning staff and a shared Maintenance person. While the number of ex quota staff in the Primary section is 2 (Speech and Language Teacher and Home School Liaison teacher), there will also be a shared Physical Education teacher, a Shared Sound Perception teacher and a shared Speech and Language Therapist (HSE funded) available. The intention is that the assistant teachers operating in the Primary section would be qualified Primary teachers with additional training as either a teacher of the Deaf or in Special Education with either English or ISL as a second language to at least level three of the National standard

The Post Primary section allocation of teaching staff is based on 22 class groups requiring 27 assistant teachers (@ 30 class periods per teacher per week) including the Principal but with 7 ex quota teachers for Home School Liaison (x 1), Speech and Language Teacher (x1), ISL (x 1), Woodwork (x 1), Career Guidance (x 1), Sound Perception (x1) (shared with primary school) and Physical Education (x 1) (shared with Primary school). In the Post Primary section the number of class periods per teacher is 34 as per the Department of Education and Skills, but the suggested model uses 30 class periods plus 1 for ISL training, 1 for meetings and 2 for individual tuition sessions with students with particular needs adding up to the 34 required. The number of SNA's required to meet the complex needs of the students based on 105 students would be 12 although any final decision on the number of SNA's is dependent on the needs of the students and the decision of the SENO. The Post Primary section if located separately from the Primary section will require one administrative support person, two part time cleaning staff, and a shared maintenance person (with the Primary section). One of the critical

needs for the Post Primary section of the school is that in order to provide the best education model for Deaf and hard of hearing students the standard range of subjects for Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied, as well as Transition year, FETAC and Post Leaving Certificate courses will be on offer. This will mean having available assistant teachers with the various specified disciplines as set out in Appendix 3. It is critical that the assistant teachers operating in this environment are qualified Post Primary teachers, have been trained as teachers of the Deaf and or in Special Education and have either English or ISL as a second language to at least level three of the approved National standard for bilingual schools in England (via Signature) see appendix 5. It is also important given that 27% of the students have disabilities other than deafness that specialist teachers and SNA's are available to work with students individually and in small groups to meet their needs.

Looking at the total of 45 teaching staff of which 9 are ex quota teachers this leaves the proposed school(s) with a pupil teacher ratio of 3.2 to 1 using current pupil numbers (114), 4.2 to 1 with 150 pupils by September 2014 and a 5 to 1 ratio if the schools reach 180 pupils by September 2017. The special school ratio agreed by the Department of Education and Skills currently is 7 to 1, but given that so many students have additional disabilities apart from their deafness the ratio in any new amalgamated school should be 6 to 1 at a minimum. If 6 to 1 becomes the norm for any new amalgamated school it would imply a staff of 19 teachers with the current 114 students plus 9 ex quota teachers (32) and 25 teachers with 150 students plus 9 ex quota teachers (34). While the ex quota staff are crucial to this proposal and do not affect the pupil teacher ratio, the key change from the current situation is that three new ex quota positions would need to be provided i.e. Physical Education, Sound Perception and Home School Liaison. Both schools are unique within the special school system in that they provide a full academic programme and offer specialist one to one services for students with multiple disabilities and the model presented here recommends that a 5 to 1 ratio is what is required into the future. This is not an unrealistic target especially if it was to be delivered by 2017 with 180 students (36 assistant teachers plus 9 ex quota teachers). The increase in numbers underpinning this proposal is already evident due to increased awareness of the work of the schools, and the reduction in support services to mainstream schools due to recent cutbacks. The increase is occurring at second level due to concerns parents and the students themselves are having about the isolation of Deaf students in mainstream settings. The other area of expansion is at PLC level with students from within the schools and from mainstream school seeking specialist PLC courses over and above those already on offer in the schools. The view presented in this model is that the new school be treated as a green field school. The number of students will be expanded in that context and while 5 to 1 is the target no decision need be made at this stage.

Within the current allocation system there is a transitional arrangement as set out in circular 0038 which allows schools whose allocation has been reduced retain the allocation for a period of time especially if some of that allocation is associated with the needs of individual students. The information to hand now is that primary teachers not required would go officially on the teaching panel for redeployment. There is now at Post Primary level, under the auspices of the Croke Park

agreement towards 2016 programme a scheme developing which operates on the understanding that the teachers in question would be redeployed when a suitable post becomes available, other than that they stay with their school of origin. Three teachers have currently expressed an interest in the Panel. An early retirement option has been researched and it would appear that there is some interest in this with 8 expressions of interest with a 3-5 year enhancement and 3 with a 1-3 year enhancement. Circa 2 teachers will be eligible to retire within 3 years.

In relation to the SNA's, the model indicates an estimated need for 18 SNA's that will be dependent on the needs of the children at the time and the assessment of the SENO in relation to same. If SNA's who are not associated with a particular student are no longer required, then access to the Department of Education redundancy scheme would be available based on a to be agreed seniority service scheme.

While no discussion with IMPACT on the situation for Administration and other staff has taken place, CIDP has confirmed that while the numbers of Administration and other staff will have to be reduced its intention is to do this via voluntary redundancy, or transfer or retirement if possible. The current redundancy scheme agreed with IMPACT for the staff of the two residences i.e. 4 weeks pay per year of service would be applied. Voluntary redundancy for Administration staff would be on a request and a seniority basis.

For SNA's the scheme on offer is not a voluntary redundancy arrangement but a straight forward redundancy scheme. If redundancy has to be enforced then would be on a last in first out basis. The exception to this is where an SNA has been contracted to support a particular student; he/she would remain with that student until the student leaves once such a clause is stipulated in their contract.

### Secondment

The model as set out above does not include any proposed secondment from the teaching staff to the new Centre for Deaf Education. It is intended that the Centre would operate outreach, intake services and training programmes which members of the current teaching staff being the most appropriate professionals to deliver these services. The initial figures for staffing the Centre for Deaf Education are; Centre Manager (x 1), Outreach teachers (x 4), Information and advice (x 1), Training and support (x 1), Administration (x 1), Educational Audiology (x 1) and Audiology Technician (x 1). It is intended that the outreach teachers and the training and support staff would deliver these services while continuing in a reduced teaching role. The Education Audiologist and the Audiology Technician employed at the Centre will also be available to support the children and the equipment in the school(s). It is intended that at a minimum the 4 outreach staff would be seconded part time from the staff of the new school in a similar manner to the current secondment arrangement on teacher training via the SESS. Currently six members of staff, 4 in St. Mary's and 2 in St. Joseph's are seconded to the SESS to deliver training to teachers in mainstream schools for 6 days each per year. This amounts to a loss to the schools of 36 teaching days although substitute teachers are supplied to the schools in lieu of this cooperation. The new Centre for Deaf Education would see this situation

continue and be expanded thus sharing the expertise of the specialist staff with mainstream schools and teachers at no additional cost to the Department of Education.

Neither does the model as outlined here take into account the possible employment opportunities in the planned Preschool or the possible DeafBlind unit which may be moved from Stillorgan. The Preschool would require funding from the HSE and would employ 3 staff and the DeafBlind unit would employ 3 teaching staff and 3 SNA's given the current operation in Stillorgan.

### Teaching Panel Placement

Of the current teaching staff of 48 (10) are qualified Primary school teachers and (36) are qualified second level teachers plus the two Principal teachers. It is currently envisaged that 45 teaching staff will be required in the amalgamated school. A recent review indicates that 2 teachers will be eligible to retire within 3 years, three teachers have expressed interest in Panel and up to 11 teachers have expressed interest in retirement enhancements. While the modal expressed here recommends a reduction in the teaching staff of 3 teachers, this can happen over a period of time and in negotiation with the Department. The critical aspect for the new school is that it retains teachers who are qualified teachers of the Deaf, who have level three ISL and critically those teachers already employed who are Deaf themselves. Those vulnerable in this situation are the (6) teachers who have temporary contracts Three of these teachers have less than three years experience and three with up to five years experience. Of this group of teachers 3 are Deaf, have their qualifications in Deaf education and are fluent in ISL. It is hoped that the Department of Education would treat the newly amalgamated school as a green field school allowing these teachers be retained and the number of teachers could be reduced via retirements, panel interest and enhanced retirements over a short period of time. It is understood that teachers from other schools who are on the panel would not be placed in specialist schools like St. Mary's and St. Joseph's.

### Post Leaving Certificate

An integral part of the above model at Post Primary level would also be the provision of Post Leaving Certificate / FETAC courses. Such courses require the use of a computer laboratory, art room, catering kitchen, woodwork and metal work facilities. Each course module requires 80 hours of teaching time per year and a full Level 5 certificate will require the completion of 8 modules which can be spread over a number of years. The organisation of a more extensive PLC/ FETAC programme which is envisaged will require a part time coordinator. While the number of additional teachers required to provide this programme can be generated from within the numbers set out earlier in this paper, five additional part time staff would be required in specialist areas if courses in woodwork, metalwork, ICT, business and catering were being offered. There is a need for these courses to be presented in a Deaf friendly manner one that is attractive both to current students of the schools and students from mainstream schools. It is clear that the over 18 rule associated with Primary school pupils will in the case of this specialist school need to be dealt with pragmatically by the Department of Education and Skills, given that many of the students have suffered from a late

diagnosis of their deafness and received less than adequate communication intervention at an early age. These issues have made subsequent literacy development more difficult for some Deaf students, requiring that they remain in the education system for a longer period of time. The schools already offers significant support to these students in terms of additional time and individual attention to enable their literacy skills develop but it means that they are completing their state examinations later than the standard students due to capacity issues which have evolved at an earlier stage in their cognitive development. What is of note is that these students in St. Mary's and St. Joseph's are participating in programmes leading to certification, and they attain very satisfactory (above average) outcomes in achieving their certification with minimal drop out rates. Again so much of this success is due to high standards of teaching and small class sizes.

### Centre for Excellence

Given the specialist approach to the schools and their current staff, it is intended that the amalgamated schools would offer specialist programmes to children from mainstream settings especially in respect of their preparation for the Junior, Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied exams. These programmes would be designed and delivered by the staff either in Cabra or at mainstream locations.

### Posts of Responsibility

In respect of the various posts which will be required in the new school(s), it is envisaged that one Deputy Principal post, 6 Assistant Principal posts will be required as well as 10 special duty teachers. Currently the schools have in place 2 Deputy Principals, 1 Assistant Principals and 12 special duty teachers (plus 2 on leave).

### Ethos

There is a recognition of the importance and equal nature of the ethos as expressed by both schools. Any new school will seek to reflect the traditions of both current schools. What is agreed given the favoured management and structural model set out in this paper is that the school will have a Catholic ethos, which implies that the intention of the school is to create an atmosphere based on a set of ideals for pupils, staff and parents that promote gospel values i.e. a place where peace, respect, justice and love are the values of the school and are supported by various religious and sacramental events. The school is open to pupils, staff and parents of all religions or none, once there is an understanding of the values of the school and that these are respected. Attendance at religious or sacramental events or classes would be a matter of choice. Stemming from this Catholic ethos is an understanding of the need to enable students develop individually and as members of the Deaf, Christian and wider community. This will entail a balance between academic, physical, personal and social development. This implies that the prime business of the school is to cater for each individual students needs but in the context of the needs of others in the school. There is a commitment by the school to work effectively with each student regardless of their ability or

disability to enable their development but always in the context of the common good and ensuring that all staff and students are kept safe and physically and mentally well.

### Staff Development

The CIDP is the trustee of the school(s) and is also committed to enabling the development of the staff who work in the school(s) – this is to ensure that staff reach their potential as individuals and can provide the best possible service to the students. All the evidence from research shows that one of the most significant supports for a child who is deaf is that which comes from a qualified and able teacher of the Deaf. With this in mind CIDP is committed to continuing to offer support to staff who undertake additional and related research and post graduate studies. CIDP will in consultation with the new Board of Management set aside a bursary each year to facilitate this.

### Facilities

Given that this school(s) will be operating to best practice in respect of the education of Deaf and hard of hearing children the facilities available to the students, teachers and SNA's need to be of an appropriate standard. This will require that the ceilings, floors, doors and walls are prepared to the required standard to optimise the quality of sound in each room and that each classroom and staffroom is fitted with loop and infra red sound field systems to ensure that hearing aids and cochlear implants are utilised to their capacity. Each room will be wired to enable staff and students operate ICT equipment and access broadband flexibly and each classroom will be fitted with a white board and a conventional board. CIDP has prepared an ICT strategy for the schools which will detail how ICT itself will be delivered in any new scenario. Current thinking is that each room would have a PC or laptop linked to a central server. Particular subjects will require up to six PC's or laptops in the classroom, the remainder of the classes will be supported via two mobile laptop units one in the second level school and one in the primary school. The intention is that any new amalgamated school(s) will have an agreed number of classrooms assigned per subject together with a library, assembly hall, staffroom and a number of offices for staff. The schools will have specialised equipment to test hearing aids, a sound level meter and cleaning and repair equipment for hearing aids.

One of the critical aspects set out in the ethos of this new school(s) is the physical development of the pupils. Regardless of the location of the school(s) access will be available to a state of the art sports facility with swimming pool, gym, indoor hall, outdoor football pitches etc. CIDP is committed to ensuring that the staff and pupils utilise these facilities on a daily basis if possible but at least bi weekly during, before and or after school. The coordination of this involvement in sports will be the remit of the new PE teaching post and supported by qualified coaches associated with the Deaf community in various sports. Depending on the location of the school(s), space directly outside the schools will also be found for casual outdoor activities. In the event that the location(s) are on sites other than St. Joseph's transport will have to be provided to enable a full usage of the facilities available in the new Village. Student Population

The current student population for both schools comprises a mix of students with abilities and disabilities apart from their deafness. Also the deafness experienced by the students varies from profound deafness to hard of hearing to severe language disorder. Currently at second level there are 4 students preparing for Leaving Certificate, 3 for Applied Leaving Certificate, and 37 for Junior Certificate. On top of these numbers there are other students not following an exam focused course.

## Appendix 1

### Pupils in St. Joseph's with disabilities in addition to deafness

<b>Total Number of Pupils 2011/2012:</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Total number of pupils with other disabilities:</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>% of pupils with other disabilities:</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>% of pupils with &gt;1 other disability:</b>	<b>6%</b>

<b>Category of Special Educational Need</b>	<b>Disability Code (NCSE)</b>	<b>Number of Pupils</b>
Physical Disability	1	0
Hearing Impairment	2	52
Visual Impairment	3	1
Emotional Disturbance	4	1
Severe Emotional Disturbance	5	0
Borderline Mild General Learning Disability	6	2

Mild General Learning Disability	7	3
Moderate General Learning Disability	8	2
Severe/Profound General Learning Disability	9	0
Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders	10	2
Specific Learning Disability	11	2
Assessed Syndrome	12	2
Specific Speech & Language Disorder	13	0
Multiple Disabilities	14	4 (inc. in above)

**Pupils in St. Mary's with disabilities in addition to deafness**

**Total Number of Pupils 2011/2012: 61**

**Total number of pupils with other disabilities: 17**

**% of pupils with other disabilities: 27%**

<b>Category of Special Educational Need</b>	<b>Disability Code (NCSE)</b>	<b>Number of Pupils</b>
Physical Disability	1	4
Hearing Impairment	2	59
Visual Impairment	3	0
Emotional Disturbance	4	0
Severe Emotional Disturbance	5	0
Borderline Mild General Learning Disability	6	3
Mild General Learning Disability	7	1
Moderate General Learning Disability	8	1
Severe/Profound General Learning Disability	9	0
Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders	10	2
Specific Learning Disability	11	0

Assessed syndrome	12	0
Specific speech and language disorder	13	2
Multiple disabilities	14	5
Assessed Syndrome	12	1
Specific Speech & Language Disorder	13	2
Multiple Disabilities	14	7

## **Appendix 2**

During the past number of years the schools have had the following academic outcomes.

### **St. Mary's**

Leaving Certificate 2004-2010 19 students 21 Honours achieved the rest passed

Junior Certificate 2005-2009 46 students 70 Honours achieved the rest passed

Leaving Certificate Applied 2005-2010 21 students 7 Distinctions 13 Merits the rest passed

Post Leaving Certificate 2006-2009 17 students 14 Distinctions 14 Merits and 8 passes

FETAC 2007-2010 8 students 7 completed 1 withdrawn

### **St. Joseph's**

Leaving Certificate 2000 – 2009 43 students 24 Honours achieved the rest passed.

Junior Certificate 2000 – 2009 153 students 84 Honours achieved the rest passed

Leaving Certificate Applied 2000 – 2009 31 students 4 Distinctions 17 Merits and 9 passes

In 2010, St. Mary's had 16 students finishing their 2<sup>nd</sup> level education. 8 completed the Leaving Certificate, 4 the Leaving Certificate Applied and 4 a PLC course. Of these 3 went on to third level university courses and 7 to additional PLC courses. In St. Joseph's 7 students finished their 2<sup>nd</sup> level education, 5 completed the Leaving Certificate, 2 the Leaving Certificate Applied, and 2 left without a state exam qualification. Of these 5 went on the third level university courses, 1 is repeating the Leaving Certificate and 2 are working in family businesses.

### Appendix 3

#### Post Primary staffing

Subjects	Number of assistant teachers
English	4
Maths	4
History	2
Geography	2
Science	3
Art	2 (3 if offered as a PLC course)
Home Economics	2 (3 if offered as a PLC course)
French	1
Woodwork	2 (3 if offered as a PLC course)
Metalwork	1 (2 if offered as a PLC course)
Business Studies / Accounts	2 (3 if offered as part of a PLC course)
Technical Graphics	1
ICT	1 (2 if offered as a PLC course)
Number of subject teachers	26 (27 including the Principal)
Ex quota (shared) PE	1
Home school liaison	1
(shared) Sound perception	1
Language development	1
Career guidance	1
Woodwork	1
ISL	1
Number of pupils	105

Number of classes 22

Religion, SPHE and CSPE will also be taught but accommodated from within the above staff compliment. A summary of the above analysis for both the Primary and Post Primary sections is set out below:

**Primary section**

Assistant teachers including Principal x 9 SNA's x6 Administrator x 1 Cleaning etc x 2  
Maintenance x .5

Ex quota teachers x 2

**Post primary section**

Assistant teachers x including Principal x 27 SNA's x 12 Administrator x 1

Cleaning etc x 2 Maintenance x .5

Ex quota teachers x 7

**Total 45 teachers 18 SNA's 2 administrators 4 cleaning 1 maintenance**

## Appendix 4

### Pupils in both schools from Nationalities other than Ireland

#### Foreign national pupils in St. Mary's

##### St. Mary's School

Poland	3
Bosnia	2
Romania	2
Angola	2
Libya	1
Hungary	1
Pakistan	1
Philippines	1
Nigeria	1
Cameroon	1
Somalia	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>

#### Foreign National Pupils in St. Joseph's

African Countries	7
Hong Kong	1
Philippines	1
Middle East	1
Moldova	4

Lithuania	1
Poland	2
Romania	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>

This equates to 30% of the student population between both schools.

## **Appendix 5**

### National qualification in ISL

Currently there are only two courses on the National Qualification framework in Ireland.

ISL academy FETAC Level

Centre for Deaf Studies Trinity College full time 2 year Diploma Level 7

Centre for Deaf Studies Trinity College full time 4 year Degree Level 8

Cabra schools currently use Signature as the validator of ISL level. Signature is a UK based organisation and its validations are accepted on the UK National Qualification framework from Levels 3 – 5 Irish equivalent.