



NEWS RELEASE

September 29 2009

**Hanafin opens new €8million school in  
Seán McDermott Street**

***New school will be significant addition to the community***

The Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Mary Hanafin T.D., today (29<sup>th</sup> September 2009) officially opened the new Lourdes Parish Schools - Holy Child Primary School and Pre-School - in Seán McDermott Street in Dublin. The school which was established in 1910, was formerly Rutland Street National School.

The new state of the art school building is located over four floors with the school playground located on the rooftop. The Department of Education & Science provided €8 million for the new building and fit out. The school has eight classrooms, while the pre-school facility has five rooms. Between the pre-school and primary school they provide services for over 200 local children. There is also a recreation hall, library, parent's room, and canteen and ancillary offices.

Minister Hanafin addressed pupils, teachers, staff, parents and representatives of the wider community at a special ceremony to mark the historic day in the schools history. Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Diarmuid Martin was also in attendance to bless the new school building.

**"Today is another great day in the proud history of this school, which means so much to generations of men and women who grew up in the area. While we are celebrating the opening of this fine building, the real celebration is for all the good work which goes on in this school each and every day"** said Minister Hanafin

The Minister said inner city schools can face many challenges, **"but Rutland Street has been to the forefront in developing services tailored to meet the needs of the community they serve. That great tradition continues today with Lourdes Parish Schools, in Seán McDermott Street welcoming about one third of its pupils who are newcomers to Ireland.**

**Other challenges faced include social and economic disadvantage which can be heightened by the scourge of drugs and substance misuse. Inter-agency co-operation and Home School Community Liaison has a role to play in helping parents who need support in times of crisis. Here in Lourdes Parish Schools, teachers, children and parents have direct access to a public health nurse and speech and language therapists who provide vital services for the children in the school."**



The primary school, which currently has 106 pupils enrolled, has 13 teachers including four learning support teachers and two language support teachers. The pre-school currently has 96, three to five year olds, has six teachers and five childcare workers employed and offers a programme which last two years.

Minister Hanafin said **“it is a very important feature of a pre-school such as we have here, to encourage parents to become involved as much as possible. By being in the classroom with their child or attending some of the class trips, a much closer bond with your child’s education can be developed and a real appreciation of the value of lifelong learning can be fostered.”**

The school has also been a long time participant in the Department of Social & Family Affairs school meals scheme, providing breakfast for all the primary school pupils and healthy snacks for the operation of after-school and homework clubs. **“This year we are spending €35million to provide school meals to over 220,000 pupils around the country. The benefits of providing quality, nutritious food to children are well documented both here and in and other countries. International research has shown that good nutrition and cognitive ability are linked.”**

The Minister concluded by paying tribute to all involved in bringing the school to this landmark day, including the Chairman of the Board of Management Fr. Michael Casey, the previous Principal Eileen Adams and the current Principal Darina Burke and Deputy Principal Marie Daly, staff and parents. The Minister also paid tribute to the local public representatives, particularly former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern T.D. for his long-standing support for the school. **“I know that this great new facility will be a huge benefit for the wider community and I hope that the positive surroundings will be a focal point for all”** concluded Minister Hanafin.

**PRESS RELEASE ENDS**