

# Irish Examiner



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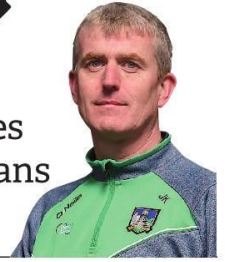
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## Having a cut

Limerick boss takes swipe at abusive fans

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# Time stands still at school built by the British in 1915

## Anne Lucey

Children are being taught in the same classrooms as their great-grandparents in a famed seaside village.

Since the foundation of the State, a new school has never been provided in Waterville, Co Kerry.

“Time may as well have stood still,” said Gearóid Moran, principal of the four-teacher St Finian’s National School. With 3ft-thick walls, the school, currently with 111 pupils, was built by the British.

Mr Moran said the people of the village had “waited long enough” for an Irish government to provide a new school. Locals at a public

meeting demanded action.

Architects have advised against extending the existing building, completed in 1915. But the Department of Education is offering an extension which would deprive the pupils of a playground, and a condition — an increase in numbers to qualify for a fifth teacher.

Mr Moran, meanwhile, said apart from the provision of a partition to allow for a fourth classroom, the thick stone walls and a long dark walk down a corridor to the toilets were all too familiar to people who had returned for a centenary celebration.

“Some were grandparents and great-grandparents of many of the current school-

children and, in March 2015, they remarked how little the school had changed. The same classrooms are in use.”

There are 32 children in one of the classrooms with “wall to wall desks”. The principal said teaching art or allowing children to walk around is very difficult.

“There are obvious health and safety issues. The British government built the school and the only thing the Irish State has done is maintain it,” said Mr Moran who questioned the wisdom of works being undertaken at a cost of over €100,000 in the past eight years. A new building on a greenfield site would have offered better value, he added.