



COMHAIRLE  
NA GAELSCOLAÍOCHTA

# Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta

IME Sector Development Plan

[DRAFT]

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# **IME Sector Development Plan**

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## **Summary of Abbreviations**

<b>AE</b>	Approved Enrolment
<b>BoG</b>	Board of Governors
<b>CCMS</b>	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
<b>CnaG</b>	Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta
<b>COGG</b>	An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta (body in south of Ireland responsible for, amongst other things, the development of teaching resources in Irish)
<b>CPD</b>	Continued Professional Development
<b>DE</b>	Department of Education
<b>EA</b>	Education Authority
<b>EM</b>	English-medium
<b>EOT</b>	Estate Operations Team (with Department of Education)
<b>ESaGS</b>	Every School a Good School (Department of Education policy)
<b>GTCNI</b>	General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland
<b>IE</b>	Integrated Education
<b>IM</b>	Irish-medium
<b>InaG</b>	Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta
<b>LGD</b>	Local Government District
<b>LTE</b>	Long Term Enrolment
<b>NIAO</b>	Northern Ireland Audit Office
<b>NICIE</b>	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
<b>SEN</b>	Special Educational Needs

## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Context of Report**

This report adopts a methodical approach to the strategic development of the Irish-medium Education (IME) sector to help inform the actions of all interested parties within the sector to encourage and facilitate the development of IME throughout the North.

The report adopts a staged approach to setting out the needs of the sector as follows:

- It initially sets out the strategic and policy landscape within which the sector operates.
- It objectively considers the general trends in Irish-medium education
- It considers the implications of wider trends in relation to the current and projected needs of the sector
- It examines trends in IME at a local level within existing or potential catchment areas for post primary provision.
- It seeks to define the current and projected needs of schools within the catchment at local levels.

This report has been prepared to set the framework for proper planning and the strategic development of the Irish-medium sector at all levels over the coming years. Whilst this is not an area-planning document, it will be used to inform the area-planning process. It is not intended as a static document but will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, based on progress against the various targets set out within the document. This will be carried out in tandem with the annual review of the Area-Planning process involving all sectors of education. This document will allow the area-planning process to take full cognisance of the area planning needs of the Irish-medium sector.

### ***Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta***

Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) is the organisation responsible for providing advice pertaining to the development and provision of Irish-medium education (IME) to the Department of Education. The Belfast Agreement, also known as the Good Friday Agreement, placed a statutory duty upon DE “*to encourage and facilitate Irish-medium education*”. Article 89 of the 1998 Education (NI) Order that followed, contained provision to allow DE to pay grants to any “*body appearing to the Department to have as an objective the encouragement or promotion of IME*”. In 2000, DE established Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta to carry out this function.

### ***The functions of Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta***

The functions of Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta, can be summarised as follows:

- To provide advice, assistance and information in relation to IME to voluntary, private sector and public bodies, to groups seeking to establish Irish-medium schools and units and to ensure appropriate and high-quality sites and accommodation for the sector.

- To promote, facilitate and encourage the development of IME and schools in a co-ordinated, planned, educationally efficient and cost-effective manner.
- To effectively represent the interests of the IM sector at all levels of the Area Planning process.
- To advise, either alone or in conjunction with other bodies and institutions, on the development of resources for use in the IM sector.
- To identify the training needs of the sector and, in conjunction with the Education Authority, to contribute to the development of bespoke training for IM teachers, principals and governors.
- To advise the Department of Education on issues relating to the supply of teachers and other staff for the IM sector.
- To identify and access sources of additional funding to support the development of IME.

### ***The Review of Irish-medium Education (2008)***

The *Review of Irish-medium Education* was published by DE in October 2008 and set out to:

*“ensure that Irish-medium Education is fully and appropriately supported as an integral part of the educational system and contributes to the building of a shared future for all our citizens based on equality.”*

The Review made 24 recommendations in total, on a wide range of sectoral issues, including models of delivery in IME; training and capacity issues across the sector; the resource needs of IME, including for SEN; infrastructure, and importantly in the context of this document, and from an Area Planning perspective, the need to forecast growth within the IM sector;

*“In response to forecasted growth in pupil numbers seeking Irish-medium education, Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta has, since 2002, been developing the process of area-based planning for the sector, although its projections do not currently reflect the minimum enrolment recommended by Bain for sustainable schools. Future provision of Irish-medium places must be within the context of the local area-based planning being developed for all schools”. (Page 31 Para 5.10).*

The concept of a bespoke growth model for the Irish-medium sector is discussed at length, later in this document.

### ***Area Planning Context***

Published in April 2017, the EA’s Providing Pathways was the first region-wide strategic area plan for education provision, replacing the regional plans drawn up under the (former) Education and Library Boards. This document was intended to shape proposed changes to educational provision for the period 2017–2020. The need to encourage and facilitate the development of Irish-medium education is identified as a key theme within the document at both primary and post-primary level. The span of the 2017-2020 plan was extended to 2021, when a new plan will be devised to cover the subsequent three-year period.

Within this context, this report has been prepared to set the framework for Area Planning and the strategic development of the Irish-medium sector at all levels over the lifetime of the plan. It is not intended as a static document but will be reviewed on an annual basis, based on progress against the various targets set out within the document. This will be carried out in tandem with the annual review of the Area-Planning process involving all sectors of education.

The Area-Planning process to date has not included planning objectives tailored to the needs of the diverse Irish-medium sector. This document is intended to assist and inform the Area-Planning process to take full cognisance of these specific needs.

## **1.2 The Area-Planning Process and Irish-medium Education (IME)**

The concept of Area Planning, which now forms the basis of all planning for current and future educational provision traces its origins in the Bain Report (2006) and subsequent reports as follows.

### ***Background to Area-based Planning***

#### **1.2.1 The Bain Report 2006**

The primary policy document that set in-train the process of Area Planning was the Bain Report, published in 2006. This document sets the context for the entire Area-Planning process and the importance of planning for IME within this process. In particular, the importance in planning for anticipated rather than demonstrated demand for IME (& integrated education). This review was announced in March 2006 with the following terms of reference:

*“To examine funding of the education system, in particular the strategic planning and organisation of the schools’ estate, taking account of the curriculum changes, including the wider provision for 14-19 year olds, and also demographic trends.”*

‘Bain’ is very useful in setting out the parameters of a high-quality education system and emphasizes the importance of the quality of the “educational experience” in its broadest sense. The Bain report places a particular emphasis on the inter-relationship between the community and the education system in delivering a successful school. Bain proposes minimum long-term enrolment figures for schools at primary level (105 in rural areas and 140 in urban areas) and secondary level (500). The report advises that a sustainability policy should be developed that sets out the parameters for sustainability of schools going forward, with a strong focus on educational experience and sustainability.

At that time, Bain acknowledged that rationalisation of schools was primarily about dealing with a shrinking sector and pointed out a flaw in the calculation of long-term enrolment (LTE) figures within a declining education sector. In contrast, there is a need for a completely different approach within sectors where the school population is growing. Indeed, this is explicitly acknowledged by Bain for the IME and Integrated sectors:

*“Planning should take account of Schools for the Future: Funding, Strategy, Sharing the projected needs of all sectors based on a **consistent approach to estimating long-term***



**enrolments (LTE). This means planning for anticipated rather than demonstrated demand in the Integrated and Irish-medium sectors. Forecasts should consider all the relevant determinants of demand to the greatest practicable extent, including demographics, pupil movements, population shifts, economic development, parental choice and changes in school performance and sustainability.” P 116 para 9.11 (Bold is CnaG emphasis).**

Bain recommended a review of Irish-medium education to clarify and develop a range of issues associated with IME, including the matter of projecting demand into the future to help to plan for the future needs of the sector. Bain clearly recognised the complexities of the IM sector and the need for a significant body of further work to be undertaken in relation to IME in particular, due to its unique needs and aspirations:

*“There appears, however, to be a lack of consensus about aspects of the educational process in IM education and about the most appropriate environment: educationally, linguistically, socially and physically. There is a need for further debate to inform a rationale for an agreed model of immersion education, in keeping with international best practice. In view of the pattern of growth in the sector, the issues that need to be considered, and a radically changing planning context for education, the Review recommends that DE should develop a comprehensive and coherent policy for IM education”.*(Page 157 Para 11.23).

These issues were subsequently considered, consulted on and published in a document entitled *Review of Irish-medium Education*, on 09 October 2008.

### **1.2.2 Review of Irish-medium education, 2009**

The review considered a wide range of development needs for the sector and importantly, from an area-planning perspective, the need to forecast growth within the IM sector:

*“In response to forecasted growth in pupil numbers seeking Irish-medium education, Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta has, since 2002, been developing the process of area-based planning for the sector, although its projections do not currently reflect the minimum enrolment recommended by Bain for sustainable schools. Future provision of Irish-medium places must be within the context of the local area-based planning being developed for all schools”.* (Page 31 Para 5.10).

The report went on to consider a growth model for the sector as set out in the following section.

*“Projected demand for Irish-medium primary provision*

*6.3)*

*Projections are, by their nature, inherently uncertain. This uncertainty can become more marked as we move from projections considering an entire school age population, as in the Bain Report, to any sub-sector of the school age population, such as the Irish-medium school-age population.*

*6.4)*

*Projections are, of course, indicative, and need to be used and interpreted with a degree of caution.*

6.5)

*As set out in Chapter 3, the number of pupils in Irish-medium education has been increasing. Demand for IME primary provision was projected based on this historical growth data, combined with the projections for all primary provision.”*

*The full range of actual year-on-year growth of the Irish-medium sector share of primary provision was used: “Low” is the smallest annual % growth (0.05%); “Ave,” is the average annual % growth (0.12%), and “High” is the largest annual % growth (0.2%). Underpinning this approach is the assumption that growth in supply provides a good measure of growth in demand. The projections are charted in Figure 6.3.*

6.6)

*Despite the falling number of primary pupils, the projected growth in demand for IME means that even the lowest growth projection predicts an increased number of IME primary pupils.*

#### *Projected demand for Irish-medium post-primary provision*

6.7)

*Projecting demand for post-primary provision was more complex than for primary. Firstly, projections were made as for primary, based on actual growth data for post-primary demand, using the smallest annual % growth (“Hist. Low”, which equals 0.005%); the average annual % growth (“Hist. Ave.”, which equals 0.03%), and the largest annual % growth (“Hist. High”, which equals 0.05%).*

*6.8) The assumption that historical growth in supply provides a good measure of growth in demand may be less robust due to the more limited access to post-primary Irish-medium provision. Therefore, additional projections were developed based on the actual transfer rates from primary to post-primary in Belfast (where growth in supply is likely to better reflect growth in demand). Again, a range of actual annual transfer rates was used, based on data going back over 10 years; the lowest (68%); the average (80%) and the highest (95%). These gave average annual % growths in demand for post-primary IME provision of (0.1%); (0.13%) and (0.16%) respectively. These transfer rates were then applied to the entire IME primary population, to gauge possible total demand for post-primary IME provision. This provided 6 different projected post-primary populations by 2016, which are charted in Figure 6.4.*

*6.9) The three lower projections show how the number of pupils in Irish-medium post-primary may change if no new provision is developed. The three higher projections show how the number of pupils in post-primary might change if additional provision was to be developed. An underpinning assumption is that the higher projections would require sufficient numbers of pupils in an area to create demand for viable provision, in a free-standing school, unit or stream.*

*6.10) The number of Irish-medium post-primary schools and units that that would be needed to meet these levels of demand was considered. It was recognised that increasing demand for Irish-medium education could be met in a number of ways, dependant on such variables as geographical spread of demand and the capacity of existing or new provision to meet this demand. In addition, it was recognised that it will be important to ensure that, at a local level, provision is effective and sustainable.*

## **Summary**

6.11) *While projections and assumptions about growth rates can contribute to considerations of the future, the key message from the analysis of demographic trends is clear. The demand for Irish-medium education is growing while in other English-medium sectors this has not been the case. Representatives of the Irish-medium sector highlight their concern that their needs may not get the attention they deserve when set against the often more visible needs of the much larger English-medium sectors. Notwithstanding the growth of Irish-medium education at a regional level, it will remain important at a local level to ensure that there is continuity of IM provision for the future.*

The review clearly sets out a methodology for a “needs model” within the IME sector which has, not, by and large, been applied within the context of overall Area Planning to date, and which this current document seeks to redress. This document bases its approach to Area Planning on the approach proposed by the Review of IME, and considers a range of growth scenarios using historical growth trends to inform future projections at a general level across the north, and within specific geographical clusters.

### **1.2.3 Sustainable Schools Policy - Schools for the Future, 2009:**

This policy sets out the context for the current area-planning process. The document’s purpose is summarised in three points (1.10-1.12):

#### **1.10**

*This document examines the issues relevant to achieving sustainability of schools which should be central to the planning of future school provision. It considers the issue of sustainable schools in the Bain Report context and sets out criteria and indicators for use by the Department; the Education Authority; Boards of Governors and the wider community, to help assess whether a school may be considered fit for purpose, or whether action is required to address emerging problems of viability. The objective is to improve the quality of education offered to pupils of all ages and backgrounds. The criteria should also have a role in helping a school to monitor and self-review its current position and to consider how it might be strengthened and improved.*

#### **1.11**

*Too often, concerns about a school’s viability are addressed only when enrolments have already declined over a period of years to an untenable position and rationalisation is the only option remaining. The criteria set out in this document are much broader than enrolment thresholds and are intended to provide a framework for earlier consideration and action as necessary, so that options can be considered which best meet the educational needs of the local community. The criteria will also ensure transparency, consistency and equity in decision-making on sustainability across schools and sectors.*

#### **1.12**

*In examining these issues, this document also considers the importance of sharing and collaboration and how the education sector can contribute to that by meeting the need for sustainable schools. The policy is relevant to all of our grant-aided schools.*

The policy sets out the indicators of a sustainable school and as such, the framework through which planning for current and future provision should be viewed. The document goes on to mention the Integrated and IME sectors and acknowledges the necessity to respond positively to parental demand for IME and Integrated education, without acknowledging the need to consider a needs model or plan for these growing sectors. The document speaks of dealing with the needs of each case, rather than taking a strategic view on projecting the needs of the sectors. It does not refer to the proposed approach as suggested by Bain and as developed by the Review of Irish-medium Education.

The Sustainable Schools document summarises the basis for the process of Area Planning, which is clear in its suggestion that area-based planning be carried out on a whole system basis, taking into account impacts within and across areas and across sectors.

A vitally-important part of this assessment is the impact of relatively fast-growing IME and Integrated sectors and the need to project for and plan for increases in the numbers of pupils within these sectors. This was not explicitly dealt with in the Sustainable-Schools document, and has to-date not been adequately considered through the subsequent Area-Planning process.

#### 1.2.4 Providing Pathways

Published in April 2017, the EA's Providing Pathways is the first region-wide strategic area plan for education provision, replacing the regional plans drawn up under the (former) Education and Library Boards. It is envisaged that this document will shape proposed changes to educational provision for the period 2017 – 2020. The need to encourage and facilitate the development of Irish-medium education is identified as a key theme within the document at both primary and post-primary level.

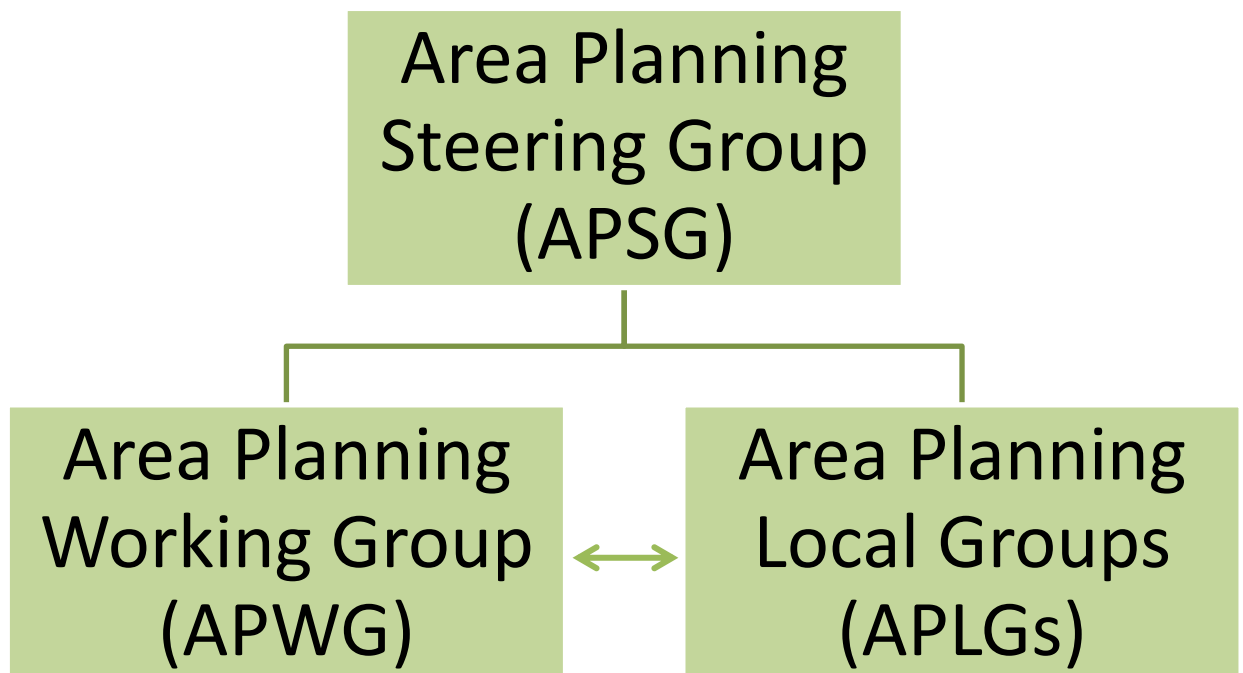
Within the document, the following key areas for action were identified within Primary and Post-Primary Sectors:

Primary Sector	Post-Primary
Reduce the number of available places in schools	Reduce the number of available places in schools
Match provision to population trends	Address school provision which is not sustainable.
Address school provision which is not sustainable	Configure school provision to provide equitable access for students to Entitlement Framework pathways
Further improve the quality of provision	Match provision to population trends
Need to encourage, facilitate and promote 'Shared Education'	Further improve the quality of provision
Duty to encourage and facilitate the development of sustainable provision in the Integrated and Irish-medium Sectors	Need to encourage, facilitate and promote Shared Education
-	Duty to encourage and facilitate the development of sustainable provision in the Integrated and Irish-medium Sectors

### 1.3 Summary of the Area Planning Process

The Area-Planning process has been implemented within the context of the above legislative and policy framework. The process has been implemented and is organised in a three-year cycle. The aim of the cycle is to provide clarity for schools, parents and wider community on the nature, scope and timing of proposals being planned for an area. Along with a three-year Strategic Area Plan, Annual Action Plans are produced to effect the actions contained within the high-level Strategic Area Plan.

With a governance structure composing of three groupings, the following bodies are involved: Education Authority, Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta, CSCC, Governing Bodies Association, NICIE, Catholic Schools' Trustee Service and Dept. of Economy.



#### *Area Planning Steering Group*

The role of the APSG is to support DE in the implementation of policy, Ministerial priorities and in doing so, further embed the process of Area Planning. The APSG has an important role in ensuring a singular and consistent approach to Area Planning and its implementation, scrutinising actions arising from Area Plans, identifying priority areas for action, and to identify policy misalignments or gaps for DE's consideration.

#### *Area Planning Working Group*

The role of the APWG is to bring together the planning authorities and the sectoral bodies who are involved with the operational aspects of Area Planning. The APWG's approach is consistent with the 11 Local Government Districts. Issues and challenges facing each district are discussed and agreed by each of the APLGs.

### *Area Planning Local Groups*

The role of the APLGs is to bring together the local stakeholders and sectoral bodies with the planning authorities along with any other relevant interests (including Further Education). The APLGs discuss issues at a local level and review existing Area Plans, take into account local needs and ensure that plans accurately reflect the current and future needs of pupils within that locality and where necessary, bring relevant issues of wider interest for resolution or referral to APSG.

As indicated above, the EA's Providing Pathways document published in 2017 was the first region-wide strategic area plan for education provision, replacing the regional plans drawn up under the (former) Education and Library Boards. This is the current document that sets out the key areas for action in bringing about changes to educational provision for the period 2017–2020.

#### **1.4 The Department of Education's Statutory Duty regarding Irish-medium Education (*The Statutory Duty*)**

As stated in section 1.1, Article 89 of the 1998 Education (NI) Order placed a statutory duty upon DE "to encourage and facilitate Irish-medium education" (similarly, a statutory duty was also placed on DE with regards to Integrated Education and subsequently a similar duty has been created towards Shared Education). This places additional responsibilities on DE that it must take on board in the delivery of the Area-Planning process.

It is under the above legislation that CnaG was established in order to provide advice pertaining to the development and provision of Irish-medium Education (IME) to the Department of Education. This includes guidance and support in relation to meeting the Department's statutory duty through the Area-Planning Process.

The Department of Education originally considered its duty to encourage and facilitate IM education to be aspirational under article 89 of the Education Order. This position was challenged in relation to the provision of school transport for IME in the Judicial Review case of McKee V Department of Education. In his ruling of 2011, Justice Treacy clarified that this statutory duty is "not merely aspirational" but "has and is intended to have practical consequences and legislative significance". This effectively empowers and obliges the Minister to fulfil the statutory duty and provide additional financial or other support if this is required to encourage and facilitate IME. Justice Treacy also clarified that that this can be done without creating precedents for other sectors.

According to a subsequent judgement by Justice Treacy in 2014 in the case of an application for Judicial Review by Drumragh Integrated College in Omagh, further clarification was given in relation to the definition of the statutory duty (which applied to both the Irish-medium and Integrated sectors). This case is particularly relevant to the current process of Area Planning and the fact the Area-Planning process does not assume growth in the integrated or IM sectors. The Drumragh decision specifically identified the limitations of the needs model in Area Planning when it comes to the statutory duty to encourage and facilitate. Hence in that case the court directed that the DE must be "alive" to its duty to encourage and facilitate "at all levels including the strategic level" (Treacy J).

From the Drumragh decision it is clear that the area-based planning approach is not tailored to facilitate and encourage the development of either the Integrated or the IM sectors. In particular, Justice Treacy ruled that the application of thresholds formulated on the basis of the traditional, established sector represents an obstacle to the development of the integrated sector (and by implication the IM sector).

As evidenced in the court cases mentioned above, it is clear that in implementing the statutory duty towards Irish-medium education, the Department of Education is empowered and indeed obliged to deal with IME in different ways than it would otherwise in order to encourage and facilitate the sector, including at strategic and policy level, and must act to give real effect to the statutory duty.

### **1.5 Educational Linguistic & Societal Challenges in the IME sector**

Arising both from the above research and CnaG's accumulated experience within the sector, there are a wide range of challenges in developing and promoting IME that are over and above the significant and growing educational, budgetary and resource challenges of the English-medium sector. These relate to the particular additional needs of this sector and include the following general challenges:

- **Primarily Monolingual focus within the Education System** - Generally speaking, the Department of Education's policy development and implementation are developed primarily for the English-medium sector and do not necessarily fit the Irish-medium sector. Irish-medium schools, as pioneers of immersion/bi-lingual education, face unique challenges in the delivery of the NI school curriculum relating to pedagogy and practice, curriculum content and resources. Special Educational Needs provision within IM pedagogy is a key issue for the Irish-medium Sector at primary and post-primary level. In addition, there are currently no appropriate tools to accurately assess pupils' progress within the IM sector. There is a need to build the current range of curricular and other pupil support services that are delivered in English to the EM sector through the medium of Irish to the IM sector.
- **Highly negative impact of large class sizes on on linguistic development** – due to budgetary constraints larger class sizes are much more prevalent and whilst large class sizes are far from optimum in the EM sector they have a highly disproportionate impact on IME schools because of the additional linguistic needs of non-native-speaking children in IME. It is becoming increasingly common for classes of up to 30 children being taught in a composite class through a language that is not their mother tongue by a single teacher without the help of a classroom assistant. In Scotland, Bórd na Gaidhlig's Statutory Guidance (Prepared under Section 9 of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005), sets out the maximum composite class sizes at 25 and has strong recommendations for maintaining the effectiveness of the linguistic environment through minimising class sizes and introducing language assistants. . The effective linguistic development of the children is vitally important to their educational attainment and the current situation with growing classes and composite classes is a major threat to the IME sector.
- **Lack of teachers and ancillary staff with high levels of fluency in Irish** - As the fastest-growing sector in education currently, the teacher and ancillary staff supply needs



of IME are acute. A strategy is needed urgently to increase the supply of teachers and classroom assistants to the IM sector, in order to keep up with the growth in demand, particularly in post-primary education, in line with the Department of Education's statutory duties. This issue is discussed in greater detail in section 4.3 below.

- **Resources** – There remains a significant shortfall in tailor-made teaching resources within the IM sector. Recent years have seen an increase in the availability of resources - DE and CCEA have started to address this challenge as has An tÁisaonad in particular. However, there remains a major deficit in resources, especially at post-primary level.
- **Lack of a formal support organisation for parents** – The vast majority of parents of children attending Irish-medium education are not Irish speakers. Most parents rely on an informal support network and their own initiative in relation to securing information and support in relation to their children's education.
- **Lack of a social context for the language** - For the many children who attend Gaelscoileanna and speak Irish, there are limited opportunities to develop their fluency outside school; there is a need for comprehensive youth service provision. For most children, youth activities provide the only socio-linguistic context for the Irish language, and as a result, youth activities have an additional importance for IME pupils above those of children within the various EM sectors.
- **Lack of knowledge and understanding of IME in wider community.** There is a general lack of knowledge about IME and immersion education amongst the general public and a very small uptake in IME from within the traditional Unionist / Protestant communities. There is a need to develop a strategy that will encourage and promote IME to those from the traditionally Unionist / Protestant communities.

Notwithstanding the many challenges facing the sector, considerable progress has been made over the past decade.

## 1.6 Area Planning Challenges & IME

In addition to the above general challenges, there is a range of challenges that are particular to the area-planning process and which need to be considered in more depth as follows:

### 1.6.1 Rapidly-expanding sector

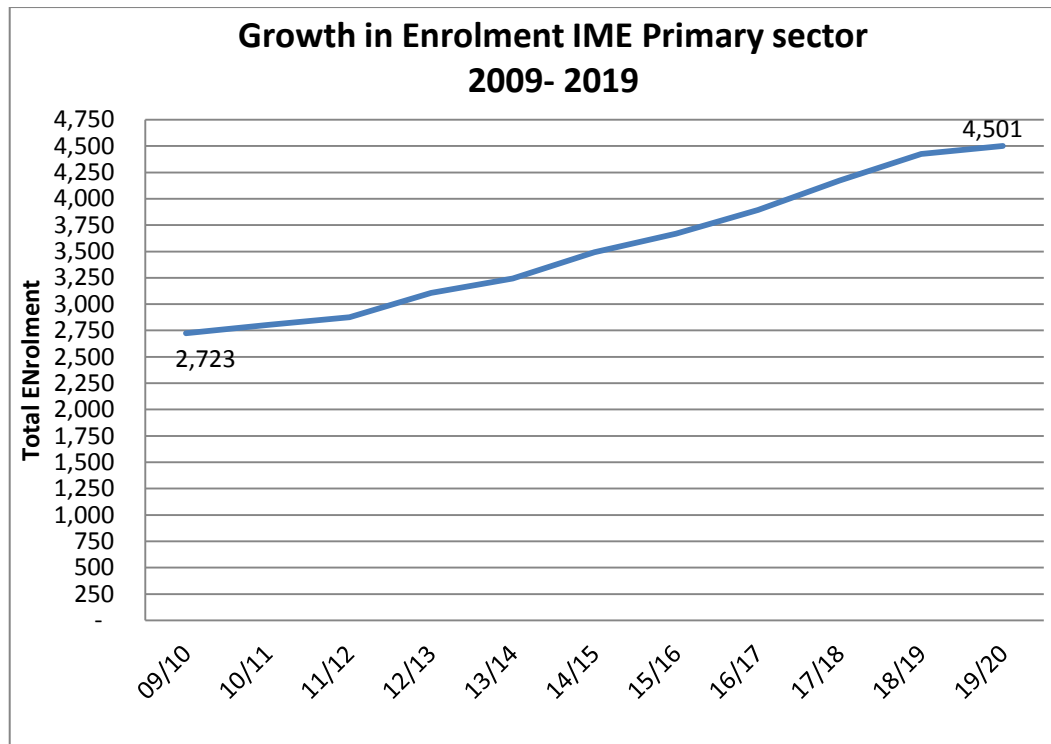
The rapid growth of IME frames most of the significant challenges that the sector faces in relation to Area Planning. To date, this growth has been largely organic and driven by local groups who have decided to set up IME provision within their area. In most areas, enrolments have been rising for the last 20 years, and development and expansion has historically been planned on a year-to-year basis. This has, in many cases, given rise to a reactive approach to planning the strategic development of individual schools and of the sector generally. Many of the schools are very young and most have not yet reached maturity / equilibrium in terms of intakes versus leavers.

The IME sector has grown significantly over the last 20 years. This has seen overall enrolments in the primary sector increase from around 2,700 in 2009 to over 4,500 in September 2019. This



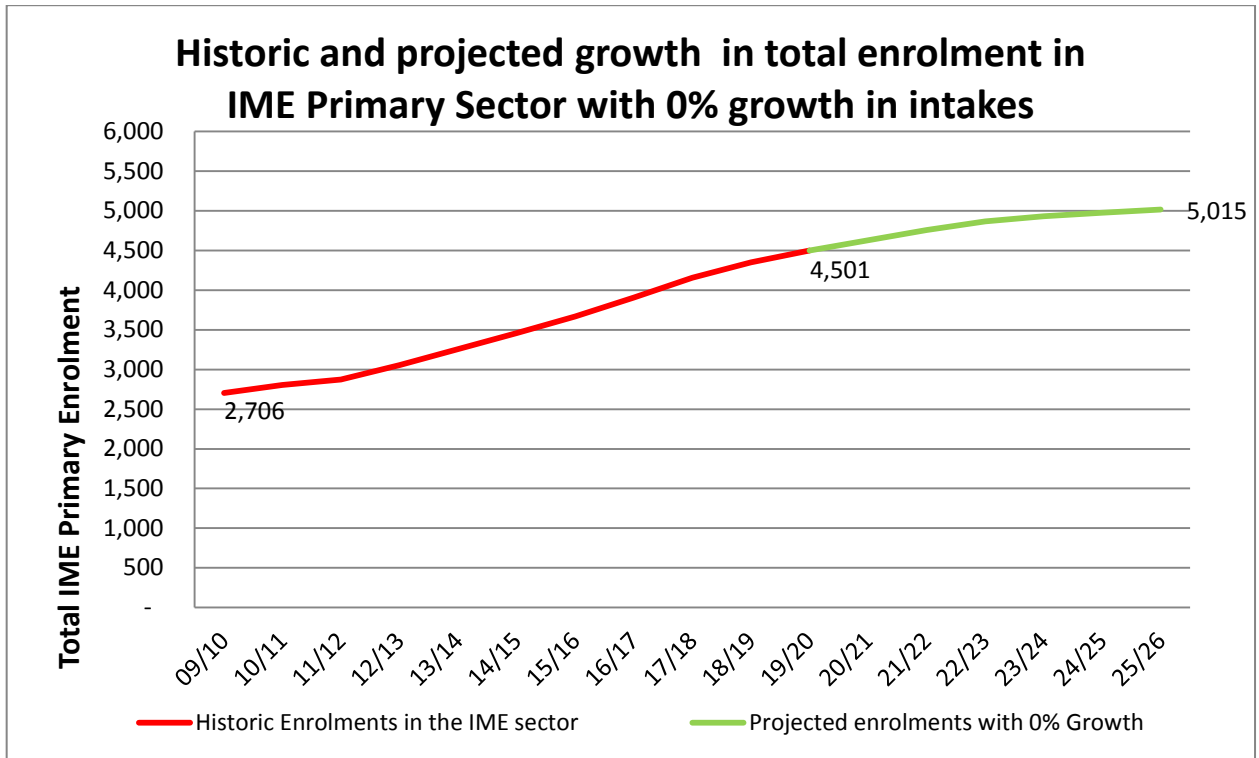
represents a growth of approximately 65% in the sector over ten years, or just over 5% compound per annum. During the same timeframe, the year-on-year growth in intakes has increased by over 85% (6.5% compound per annum) from around 400 pupils in 2009 to 739 in September 2019. In the last five years there has been some slowdown in the growth with average annual increases in admissions of just under 3.5% and increases in the overall enrolment within the sector by around 5.2% per annum. These are compound growth figures and demonstrate consistent and strong growth within the sector.

The growth in overall enrolments has been relatively steady and the following graph demonstrates the growth trend in the IM Primary sector over the last 10 years:



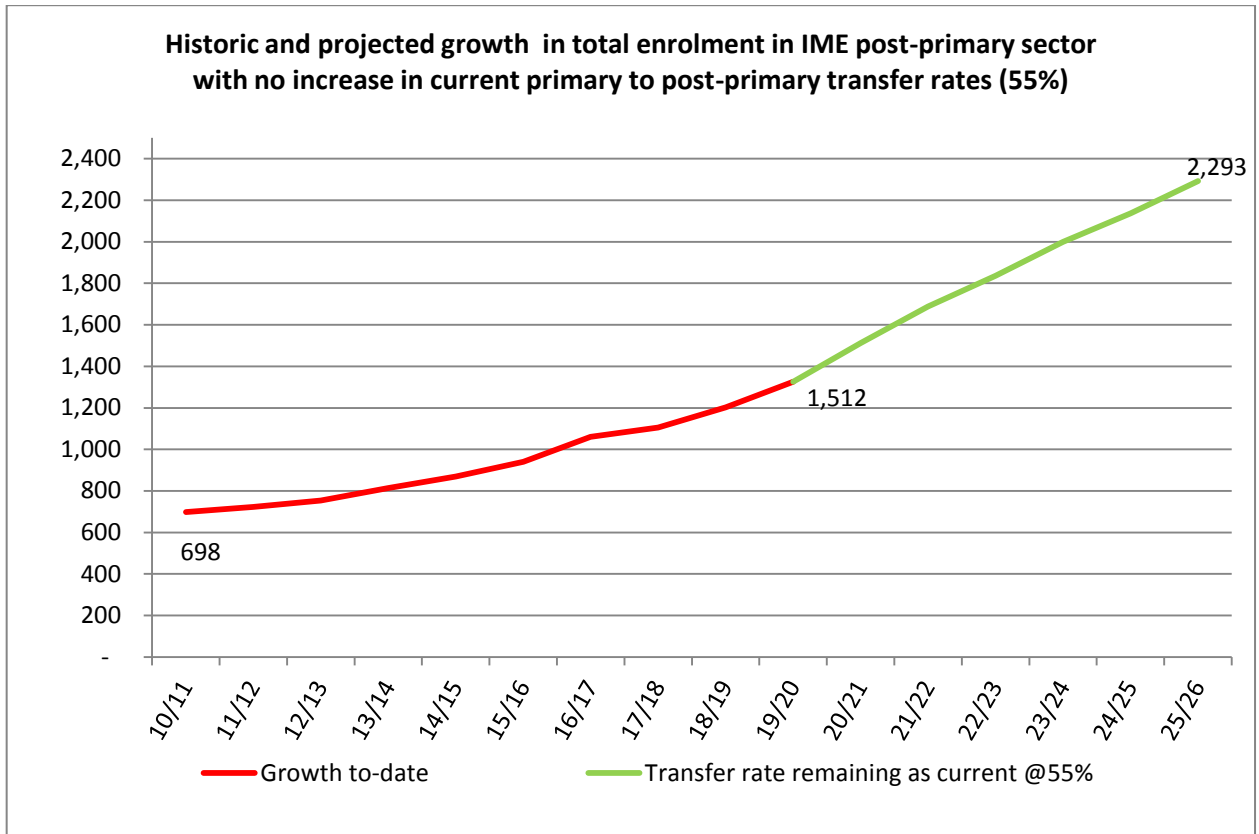
One of the important implications of this rapid growth is that school demography within the IME sector is skewed towards the Key stage 1 years approximately 500 children left R7 in June 2019 and replaced by 735 new entrants into R1.

The implication of this demography is that even if there is 0% growth in the annual intakes to the sector, the total numbers of children within primary IME would increase significantly. The following graph illustrates this effect by combining historic trends with a zero increase in intakes.



The above graph illustrates that with no increase in the current annual admissions to the overall enrolment within the sector would increase from 4,501 to 5,015 by the 2025/26 school year. This would equate to a total increase of over 500 pupils or 11.4% in the overall size of the sector. This demonstrates that significant additional resources will almost certainly be required to meet this latent demand, regardless of any additional increase in annual enrolments to the sector.

If a similar approach is applied to the post-primary sector (i.e., if the September 2019 transfer rate of 55% from IME primary to post-primary) the post-primary sector will see an increase in size by 978 pupils or 74% over the coming 6 years. This represents average annual growth of 9.65%. This remarkable projected growth in post-primary numbers is as a consequence of the growing numbers of children that will be graduating from IME over the coming years.



Catering for this latent demand, together with the expected growth in enrolments within the sector will necessitate additional teachers, additional accommodation and significant additional provision at post-primary level, that of which must be planned and delivered. Considering the poor state of many of the buildings within the sector, this will further increase the pressure on already stretched resources and there is therefore an urgent need to have a school buildings strategy for the sector.

It is now vitally important to strategically plan to support improvement of existing provision and to accommodate future growth. It is absolutely essential to analyse the trends in relation to these growing enrolments across the sector and to produce projections that will help inform the sector and plan for this growth. This will be essential in planning a wide range of areas including the need for additional teachers, teaching resources, new accommodation as well as planning for new school provision.

### 1.6.2 Structural issues in relation to the LMS Common Funding Formula

In common with the approach in Welsh-medium education in Wales, Gaelic-medium education in Scotland and IME in the south of Ireland, the schools funding formula provides additional per-capita funding to Irish-medium schools to reflect the additional curricular subject and the significant additional challenges in delivering minority language immersion education. This additional funding is essential to allow schools to deliver high quality education to their children and the additional outcomes of the system represent very good value for money.

There is a significant corpus of international research which has identified the enhanced educational outcomes of the bilingual education model that is adopted in IM education. This includes “additive bilingualism”, where children acquire a second language to a high level of

fluency, whilst performing at least as well as their monolingual counterparts in their other curricular subjects. There is also a significant body of evidence that suggests improved cognitive thought and problem-solving abilities for children who are early-years bilinguals. Recent research has also identified significant mental-health benefits in early-years bilinguals, including significantly delaying the onset of dementia.

### **LMS**

The Department has commenced a process of reviewing LMS Common Funding Formula. CnaG is actively involved in the Steering Group in developing proposals for the review and has submitted an IME Issues paper for consideration (see Appendix 6). The following is a summary of the main proposals to address what CnaG identifies as structural weaknesses in the Common Funding Formula. CnaG feels that the current formula does not address the full needs of the sector, taking into account the additional curricular requirements, challenges and pressures with which it is faced.

- IME Curriculum & Administrative Factor increase

Following the Salisbury Report in 2013 there was, as recommended, uplift in the IME Curriculum and Administrative factor of the CFS but this was only implemented in the post-primary sector of IME.

In accordance with the issue identified in the Salisbury Report (2013), “Irish-medium schools face additional costs linked to the provision of resources and curricular development in Irish, which must be reflected in funding allocations”. As a minimum it is recommended that the primary IME Curriculum and Administrative Factor be uplifted from its current level to at least that already set for IM post-primary.

- IME Initial Immersion Factor

Similar to the rationale behind the factor for Newcomer children, many IM pupils similarly come from a family background where the language of instruction is not the language of the home and their parents do not speak the Irish language. IM children have the additional disadvantage over and above Newcomer children in that they generally have limited social or contextual exposure to the language of instruction outside of school, in their everyday lives or in public interaction. This places additional burdens upon both the schools and children to develop fluency in the target language, particularly at the foundation stage of school.

CnaG recommends therefore, the introduction of an Initial Immersion Factor for IME children who do not speak Irish at home for the first three years of their attendance at school in order to increase immersion and facilitate fluency progression in these critically important years of school. The additional funding would allow schools to increase their level of immersion and take steps to support the children to build fluency and improve educational outputs for the remainder of the children’s education

### **1.6.3 IME Infrastructure – need to plan to provide the capacity to accommodate growth**

The relative youth of the IM sector, coupled with its rapid growth, has given rise to a sector that is characterised by over-crowding and of the use of temporary accommodation, in comparison to the English-medium sector generally. It is recognised that the availability of the Site Rental Policy has facilitated the establishment and growth of new schools in advance of the acquisition of a permanent site. However, this has also resulted in many school buildings and sites not being suitable for either their current or their longer-term needs.

In June 2019, around 500 children progressed from R7 into secondary level education and 735 entered R1, demonstrating that the sector is still growing. Section 1.6.1 illustrated that even with no increase in annual enrolments the numbers of children in the IM primary and post-primary sectors will grow by 11.4% and 74% respectively. This latent growth potential within the sector which should become a “bottom-line” for the planning of the accommodation needs of the sector.

The traditional position has been that buildings will not be provided in advance of need. However, within the IME sector there is not only this latent potential, but a clearly established growth trend that allows us to plan for the development of the school estate.

There is a need to determine that the capacity for sectoral growth is available and is correctly located and this can be done through the Area-Planning Process. However, special consideration needs to be given to the IME sector within the Area-Planning process on the basis of projected sectoral needs so that the infrastructural needs of the sector can be properly planned.

A baseline assessment is vital to establish the current capacity of the schools and their sites. However, an additional piece of work is also required to assess the capacity of the school against 2 factors:

1. The latent growth potential of the school based on zero increase in annual intakes (pessimistic scenario).
2. An assessment of the suitability of the school buildings and site based on projected increases in intakes (realistic and optimistic scenarios).

There is a clear requirement for a comprehensive IM Building and site capacity & conditions survey to be carried out to provide a baseline for the provision of appropriate school sites and facilities. This survey should consider projected Long –Term Enrolments (LTE) in the context of the amount of space currently available for growth; the Department of Education’s Buildings’ Handbook should be considered as a template for this survey. CnaG advises that a specific fund be created to ensure that the sites and buildings in the sector are capable of dealing with the current and projected enrolment within the sector. The above exercise will be vitally important to plan strategically for the development of individual schools within the sector to ensure that the infrastructural development is based on sound baseline information and sound area-planning principles.

#### **1.6.4 Availability of teaching staff & teaching resources**

As a result of the growth that has taken place within the sector, there has historically been a shortage of qualified and experienced teachers and substitute teachers. There is a very young demography of teaching staff within the sector, and the continued growth in total enrolments will necessitate significant additional teaching staff to be recruited over the coming years. There is also currently a significant shortage of substitute teachers, which has been identified by CnaG (see report Appendix 1).

Within the secondary sector, there is a pressing need for qualified teachers over the coming years, and in particular, specialist teachers in areas where there is currently a significant deficit, such as in Maths and Science. The need for additional teaching staff within the sector is dealt with in greater depth within section 4 of this report.

The provision of teaching and learning resources to the IM sector is less than adequate. An tÁisaonad produces high quality materials and CCEA has also begun to address this challenge, but the sector is still at the beginning of a process that needs to continue to grow and develop teacher education over the coming decade. Again, this issue is dealt with in greater depth within section 4 of this report.

#### **1.6.5 IME delivered through a range of providers.**

Unlike the Catholic-Maintained sector or the Integrated-Education sector, the IME sector has a wide range of governance and delivery models. There are a total of 28 free-standing primary schools and 2 free-standing post-primary schools. Most of these schools are run and managed as “Other-maintained schools”, with 2 free-standing primary schools within the Controlled sector and one within the Catholic Maintained sector. In addition, there are a total of 7 Irish-medium units within the Catholic Maintained primary sector; 2 post-primary streams within the Catholic Maintained sector and one post-primary stream within the Catholic Grammar sector. Within this diverse range of models there arises the potential for often conflicting objectives that complicate the Area Planning exercise.

Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta has a key role to play within the overall Area-Planning process in ensuring that there is clear and regular communication and a shared strategy with both the Catholic Maintained and the Controlled sectors. It is very important that these competing objectives are properly appraised and managed to ensure that the Department’s statutory responsibility to facilitate and encourage IME is met.

#### **1.6.6 Lack of full range of provision in many areas**

Whilst the growth in IME has been significant and the coverage has been extended over the past 10 years, there are areas that effectively do not have a post-primary option for the children who leave IM primary education. Indeed, there are some areas that have effectively, no local IME provision at any level. It is important that these shortfalls in provision are addressed through the development of a strategic approach. It is important that any gaps in provision within the IM primary-school sector are identified and prioritised through a process of feasibility studies that

ensure that any new provision is complementary to the overall strategic development of the sector. Following a feasibility study, a local development strategy will be put in place to help set up pre-school provision with an agreed route-map put in place for this, to be followed by primary sector provision.

The establishment of a widely-available IME post-primary sector is probably the single most significant challenge currently facing the sector. The lack of available, high-quality post-primary provision is currently failing many pupils who, having received their primary education in Irish, have little option but to transfer into the English-medium sector, which is, more often than not, poorly equipped to continue to either build or maintain their fluency in the Irish language. As a result, many of the children who transfer from IM primary education into the English-medium system lose their competence in the language. This can have a very negative impact on many of these pupils' self-confidence and can undermine their sense of the value of bilingualism that they had built up over the course of their primary education.

In September 2019, 55% of children transferred from the IME primary sector into IME post-primary provision and the remainder transferred into the English-medium sector. Whilst the demand for IME post-primary is likely to increase, the sector faces significant challenges in catering for increased transfer-rate over the coming years. The Area-Planning process is a vitally important part of meeting this challenge and developing an IME post-primary option for all children leaving IME primary education. The Statutory Duty empowers the DE and EA to meet these challenges and CnaG will help define these challenges through this plan and set a framework for the statutory duty to be met.

There is a real and pressing need to deliver a child-centric approach which allows IM pupils to feel highly valued and where they can continue to develop their fluency in the Irish language in a system that is focused on delivering excellence in education. It is essential that the sector draws on best practice from other jurisdictions to offer a high-quality, post-primary, Irish-medium education for the growing numbers of pupils who are emerging from the IM primary sector.

The significance of the IM post-primary sector cannot be overstated in terms of its importance in creating a new generation of well-educated, successful, high-achieving and self-confident Irish speakers. This new generation of young, highly motivated Irish speakers will be absolutely essential to the development and support of the growing IME sector; the Irish-speaking communities generally and in the broader reinstatement of the Irish language as a living community language, over the coming decades.

#### **1.6.7 Provision within units and streams in the EM sector.**

A significant proportion of IME provision is within units and streams attached to English-medium schools. Units and streams have made, and continue to make, a very positive contribution to the development of Irish-medium education. However, whilst units and streams have a role to play, international best practice favours the full-immersion model in terms of delivering excellence in bilingual education, where children are fully immersed in the primary language in which they are being educated. This increased immersion assists in building their fluency, their self-confidence and their learning & academic achievement.

There is also a question of parental choice that needs to be considered in relation to the continued development and expansion of these units. The legislative basis for parental choice is provided in Article 44 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, which states that the Department of Education and the Education and Library Boards shall have regard to the general principle that pupils shall be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents. CnaG believes that parental choice should apply to parents of children within IM units in the English-medium sector that have grown past the viability threshold and could become free-standing schools.

Where these units offer an option for viable, high quality, free-standing provision, CnaG believes that there should be a procedure which, subject to parental choice, provides an agreed pathway for these units to be developed into free-standing schools. This in turn will empower these schools to perform an important leadership role within the growing Irish-language communities – a role which is exceptionally difficult, if not impossible for a unit or a stream within an English-medium school.

### **1.6.8 Pre-school provision**

The vast majority of parents, who opt for Irish-medium education for their children, do not speak Irish at home. The Irish-medium pre-school sector introduces both children and their parents to Irish-medium education and incorporates linguistic awareness and competence into the standard pre-school curriculum. For this reason, IME pre-schools (Naíscoileanna) are much more critical to the Irish-medium primary sector than in the English-medium sector. Naíscoileanna also have to address a whole range of additional challenges and training needs, over and above English-medium pre-schools.

Naíscoileanna have to deal with a wide range of parental concerns and often deliver a whole range of parental and family support services, including Irish classes and information events and activities aimed at informing and educating parents about the merits of the Irish-medium approach. There is a lack of availability of fluent Irish-speaking staff who also have the required childcare qualifications, and who have experience in language teaching and acquisition. Consequently, Naíscoileanna have to secure additional formal and informal training to help address this dearth of suitable staff – improving fluency and language teaching skills of staff that have the childcare qualifications, or assisting Irish-speaking staff to secure childcare qualifications.

The Naíscoil sector is particularly critical to the success of the entire IM sector in building language fluency and competency in pupils. Unfortunately, the limited availability of staff, coupled with the significant growth of the sector over the last two decades has meant that there is a significant need for capacity building and training within the sector. There is an urgent and pressing need for the sector to invest in staff development, training and education, to build expertise, skills and competencies to deliver a consistently high standard of Irish-language immersion education at pre-school level across the sector. These needs are over and above the needs of the English-medium sector and need to be properly funded and supported.

There is a pressing need to look at the issue of statutory nursery provision in the Irish-medium sector, and the specific benefits that this type of provision offers. A research report, (*Research on the Educational Outcomes of Pre-School Irish Medium Education*<sup>1</sup>), commissioned and published

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<sup>1</sup> Research on the Educational Outcomes of Pre-School Irish Medium Education is available on the Department of Education's website, [www.education-ni.gov.uk](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk)



by the Department of Education in 2019, examines in detail the added value of statutory provision to a bilingual, immersion model of early years provision. The Report states:

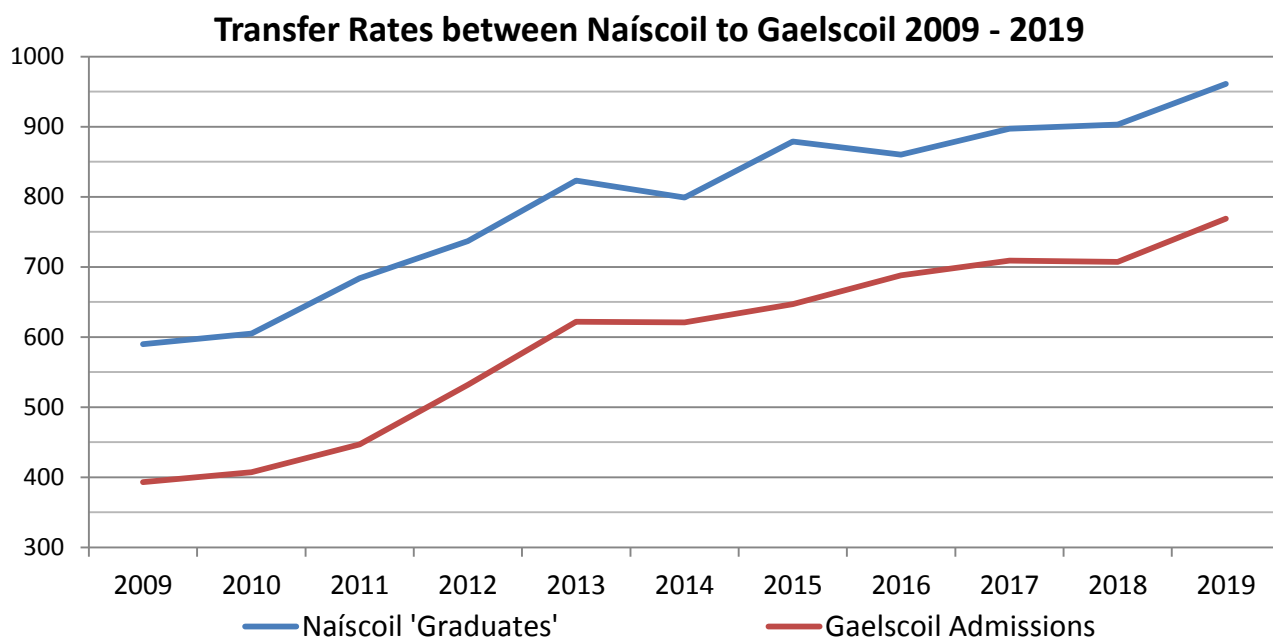
*A strong message emerging from the findings is that differences in provision and associated inconsistencies should be ameliorated in order to ensure equality in provision and the best outcomes possible for young Irish-medium learners. This could be facilitated in a number of ways: by ensuring appropriate continuing professional development and linguistic support for all pre-school settings **and by increasing the number of statutory nursery settings.** (:80)*

It is very important that the IME statutory sector is encouraged and facilitated. As outlined in the DE-commissioned report, there are significant and important benefits in the delivery of Statutory IME provision. However, to date there have a number of notable refusals of Development Proposals for the development of IME Statutory provision.

Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta strongly advises the department that Statutory provision should pro-actively encourage the development of statutory provision in order to deliver the benefits outlined in the above report.

There are also issues in relation to the drop-off of children whose parents opt not to avail of IME after their pre-school education. In the 2019/20 school year, there were a total of 961 funded spaces within the sector, having increased significantly from 605 in 2010/11 (67%). Unfortunately, for a range of reasons, not all children within the pre-school sector progress into IM primary sector. The following table and accompanying graph shows the annual 'graduation' numbers of children from IM pre-school sector into the Gaelscoil sector, and demonstrates recent transfer rates of between 74-80%.

<i>Transfer rates between Naíscoil to Gaelscoil 2008/09 to 2016/16</i>											
	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
Naíscoil 'Graduates'	590	605	684	737	823	799	879	860	897	903	961
Gaelscoil Admissions	393	407	447	532	622	621	647	688	709	717	735
	67%	67%	65%	72%	76%	78%	74%	80%	79%	79%	76%



The above figures and graph demonstrate that there is significant potential to increase the numbers of pupils entering Irish-medium primary education within the existing IM infrastructure, by increasing the transfer rate from Naíscoil to Gaelscoil.

### 1.7 The COVID 19 global pandemic

The Covid-19 crisis has had a catastrophic impact on education across the world. Pupils living in areas of social deprivation and those with Special Educational Needs have been identified as those groups that will be most detrimentally affected by the pandemic. They have also been identified as those who should be targeted most urgently upon return to school to mitigate the negative impact that this crisis has had on their social and emotional wellbeing and their academic development.

A high number of Irish-medium schools are located in areas of social deprivation. In addition, all Irish-medium schools have a range of other needs and challenges that are over and above those faced by the English-medium sector. For example, the vast majority of the children at IME do not speak the language through which they receive their education (i.e., Irish) at home and the schools play a major role in building fluency as well as their vocabulary to enable them to acquire their education. This creates a major challenge to the sector that provides a massive challenge to IME which needs to be properly resourced and addressed.

IM schools have had to contend with greater digital exclusion during the lockdown period and a higher number of pupils disengaged from education. IM pupils presenting with Special Educational Needs already faced the challenges of inadequate assessment tools and inappropriate intervention before Covid-19 and the crisis has exacerbated these challenges further.

IM teachers worked quickly to cater for distance learning but the sector could not fully avail of the advantages of online learning platforms and the wealth of printed resources and the support of media outlets that their EM counterparts did.

The immersion approach relies on sustained, incremental language development, which was halted with the onset of Covid-19. This will impact all IM pupils at all Key Stages but particular cognisance must be given to pupils in the Early Years and Foundation Stage who were only in the initial phase of their linguistic development when the crisis began and to those Post-Primary pupils who face the anxiety of undertaking examinations in the coming school year.

Coupled with the fact that the majority of parents of IM pupils do not speak Irish in the home, the school environment for most pupils is the sole provision for language acquisition and linguistic development. The lack of exposure to the Irish language can be mitigated, however, and recovery can take place with significant investment in mechanisms to promote immersion pedagogy and ensure IM pupils are supported socially, emotionally and academically.

The 2020/21 school year will be especially challenging for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) in the Irish-medium sector. NQTs lost the opportunity to finish their final year of instruction and to complete their teaching practice experiences in IM settings and those completing a one year PGCE qualification will have lost valuable hours in the immersion classroom. There is a need for targeted Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) as it relates to distance/blended learning to enable NQTs in the IM sector to effectively deliver the immersion curriculum in these extraordinary circumstances.

Furthermore, IM schools also have to contend with practical issues with regards to accommodation, teacher supply and travel which will pose additional problems for IM principals. These issues are not limited to the IM sector, but will be felt more greatly within it, since the significant growth within the sector has meant that many schools are housed within inadequate accommodation for their needs. In addition, schools have to contend with a shortage of available IM teaching and ancillary staff.

A summary of the issues and recommendations that CnaG has made to the DE and EA under the COVID Restart programme are contained within Appendix 2

### **1.8 Progress in Addressing Sectoral Challenges and Area-Planning Challenges.**

Over the last number of years CnaG has worked with schools, the Department of Education, the EA and others to seek to address the many sectoral challenges identified above and has also sought to address the challenges of Area Planning. Limited progress has been made in addressing some of the general sectoral challenges identified above including the following:

- The sectoral plan, together with the ongoing communication with the DE and EA and CCMS, have helped build a better understanding of the wider needs of the sector.
- Some progress has been made on progressing CnaG recommendations for IM primary provision in Derry City, but there is extreme disappointment and concern that Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir has not been included on the latest capital funding programme.
- Continued full engagement of CnaG at all level of Area Planning structures.
- Early steps taken in establishment of network of Learning Support Centres for IME through the provision of 2 *Resource Provisions* in Belfast, 1 primary and 1 post-primary.

- Accommodation improvements have taken place in individual schools on foot of Development Proposals for growth and accommodation.

CnaG looks forward to a working with the Department and Education Authority to continue to address the needs of the sector and make further progress over the coming months and years.

### 1.8.1 Progress in Area Planning Delivery

Significant progress has been made in delivering Area-Planning objectives in IME over the last number of years and in particular since the preparation of the last sectoral plan. These have included the following:

#### Reduction in numbers of Unfilled Places

There are still a number of schools which on paper have approved enrolments and 'surplus' places that in no way represent the reality of the capacity of the facilities within the school. For example, Bunscoil Cholmcille officially has 105 'surplus' places based on the number of classrooms the school has. However, most of these classrooms are 30+ year old mobiles and the school has no assembly or sports hall or other important facilities; the entire school is housed in mobile classrooms with children having to go outside in all weathers to use the toilet facilities.

Notwithstanding this, the following table provides a summary of all 'surplus' places in IM schools and units within the primary sector, and shows that 'on paper' in the 2019/20 academic year, there is a total of 520 'surplus' places within the system (105 of which are in the Bunscoil Cholmcille example mentioned above). It is worth noting that the current measure shows a significant reduction from the figure of 941 'surplus' places in 2016 when the last sectoral plan was published.

<b>Table showing current Surplus Places and Projected surplus places / Additional Places within the IME Primary sector required by the 2025/26 academic year with Realistic (3.43 %) growth in annual intakes</b>						
	<b>Approved Enrolment</b>	<b>Enrolment 2019/20</b>	<b>'Surplus' Places</b>	<b>Projected Sept 2025</b>	<b>Surplus' Places</b>	<b>Spaces Needed</b>
<b>West &amp; South Belfast</b>						
Bunscoil an tSléibhe Dhuibh	203	189	14	200	3	
Gaelscoil an Lonnáin	71	56	15	67	4	
Gaelscoil na bhFál	196	186	10	209		13
Gaelscoil na Móna	145	116	29	162		17
Scoil an Droichid	145	152	0	180		35
Bunscoil Phobal Feirste	406	339	67	448		42
Scoil na Fuiseoige	145	148	0	199		54
<b>Area Total</b>	<b>1,311</b>	<b>1186</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>1,465</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>N Belfast &amp; Surroundings</b>						
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin	182	157	25	202		20
Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain	87	105	0	159		72
Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach	105	79	26	81	3	
Gaelscoil Éanna	205	184	21	217		12
<b>Area Total</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>659</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>Newry &amp; South Down</b>						
Bunscoil an Lúir	129	96	33	135		6
Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche	116	100	16	116	0	
Gaelscoil na mBeann	75	76	0	95		20
Scoil Mhuire agus Phádraig	99	99	0	87	3	

<b>Area Total</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Armagh</b>						
Bunscoil na mBráithre Críostaí	185	195	0	222		37
Bunscoil Eoin Baiste	71	75	0	157		86
Gaelscoil Phádraig Naofa	102	168	0	183		81
Bunscoil Naomh Prionsias	146	168	0	235		89
<b>Area Total</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>797</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>293</b>
<b>East Tyrone</b>						
Gaelscoil Uí Néill	185	136	49	149	36	
Gaelscoil Aodha Rua	135	141	0	168		33
Gaelscoil Eoghain	130	104	26	133		3
Gaelscoil na gCrann	160	162	0	196		36
Bunscoil Naomh Colmcille	70	79	0	119		49
Gaelscoil Mhuire		-			0	
<b>Area Total</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>622</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Derry City &amp; Strabane</b>						
Bunscoil Cholmcille, Doire	196	91	105	111	85	
Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir	182	156	26	176		-6
Gaelscoil na Daróige	81	88	0	169		88
Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh	160	140	20	147	13	
<b>Area Total</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Rural Co. Derry</b>						
Gaelscoil Léim an Mhadaidh	100	101	0	167		67
Gaelscoil Neachtain	135	121	14	158		23
Bunscoil Naomh Bríd	154	162	0	206		52
Gaelscoil na Speiríní	58	60	0	49	9	
Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí	120	109	11	140		20
<b>Area Total</b>	<b>567</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>North Antrim</b>						
Bunscoil an Chaistil	116	103	13	110	6	
<b>Area Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>6</b>	
<b>Fermanagh</b>						
Bunscoil an Traonaigh	58	60	0	86		28
<b>Area Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Overall Totals</b>	<b>4,853</b>	<b>4,501</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>5,943</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>977</b>

The above table also demonstrates that, based on the realistic sectoral growth scenario of 3.43% per annum, the overall number of 'surplus' places will have reduced to 162 (with 85 of these being in Bunscoil Cholmcille). More importantly, the above demonstrates that with relatively modest average growth of 3.43 % in the sector that an additional approx. 1,000 places will need to be created by the 2025/26 academic year.

This underlines the urgent need to plan to support this growth in terms of the training of additional teachers for the sector, planning for new and improved accommodation and for curricular support for this growing sector.

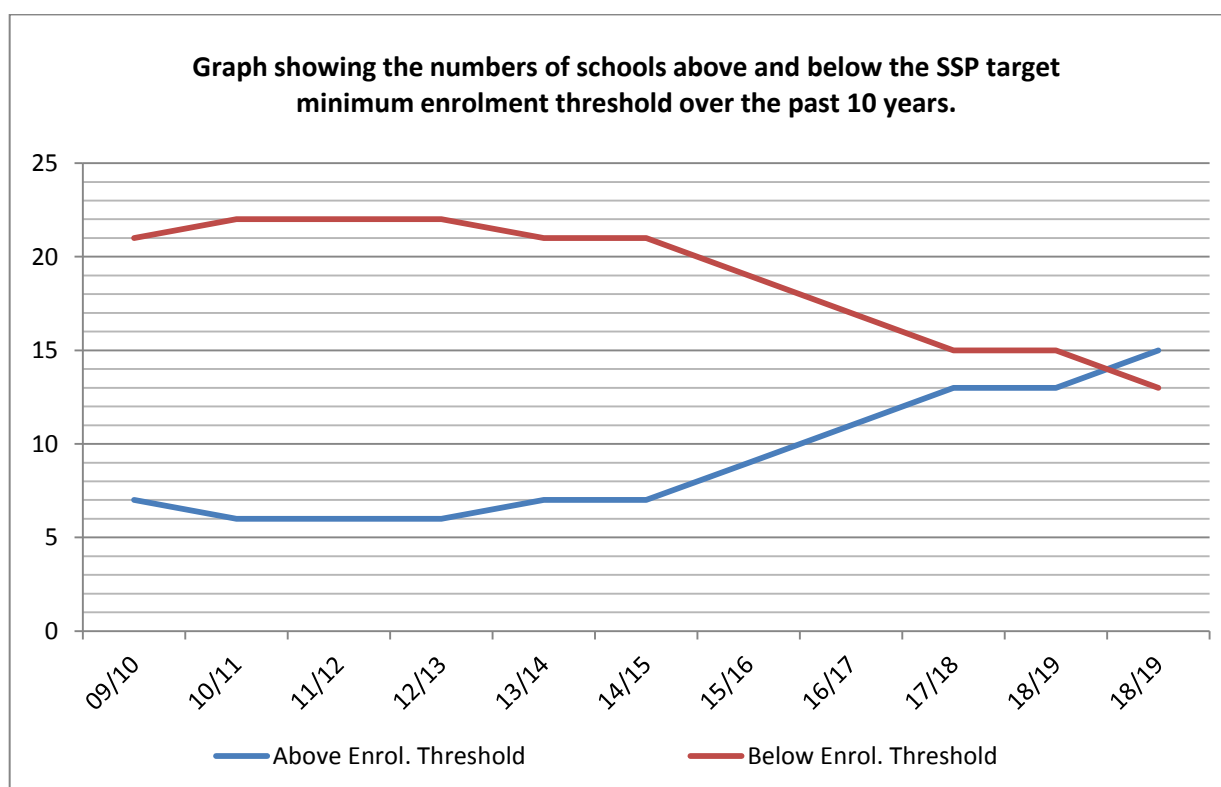
### **Increase of sustainability of IM primary Schools**

CnaG's strategic approach has been to work with and build the capacity of individual primary schools to ensure their long-term success and sustainability. CnaG has been working with schools to build their sustainability as set out by the various qualitative and quantitative SSP criteria). This has paid dividends through improved leadership, community links and in terms of the number of schools with enrolments above the SSP target enrolment thresholds.

The total numbers of schools that are below the prescribed urban and rural thresholds of 140 and 105 respectively has fallen steadily from 21 in 2009 to 13 in the 2019/20 academic year and is set to continue to fall in future years with continued growth in enrolments as shown in the below table.

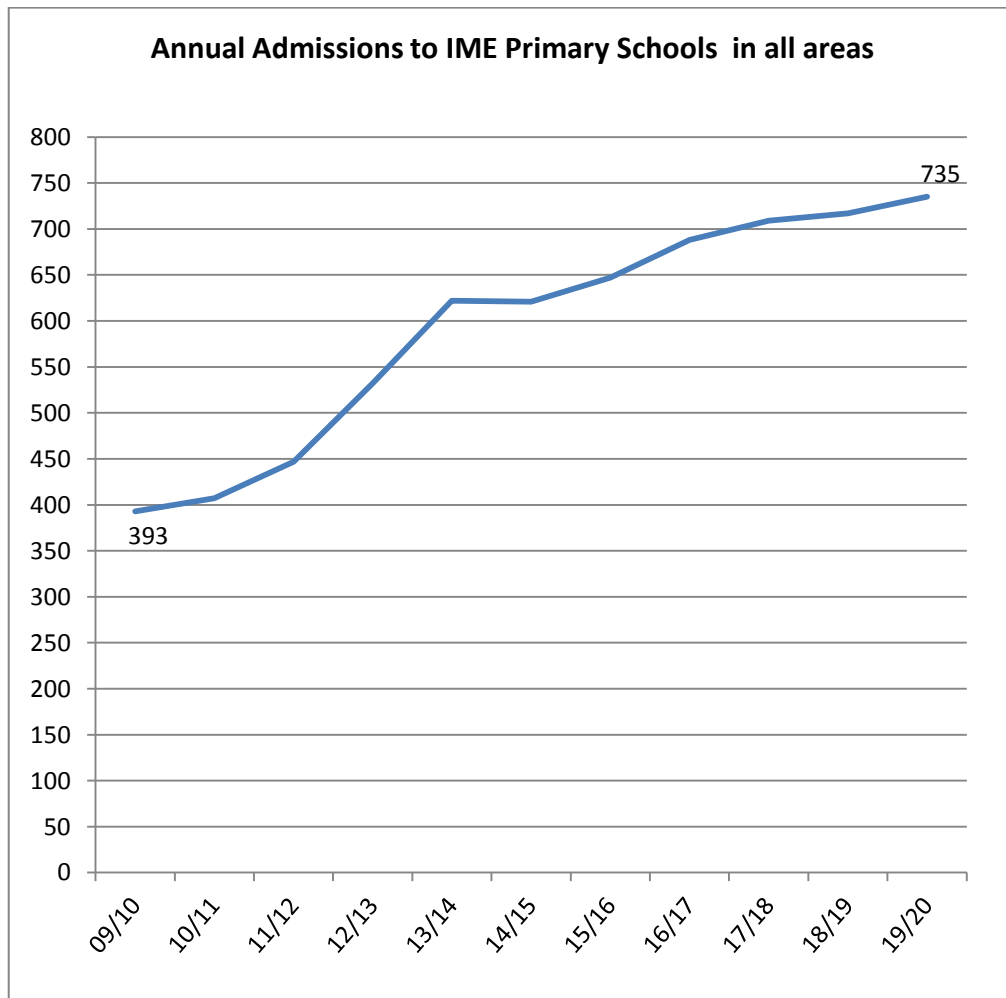
Irish-medium Primary Schools above and below Target enrolment threshold											
	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	18/19
<b>Above Enrol. Threshold</b>	7	6	6	6	7	7	9	11	13	13	15
<b>Below Enrol. Threshold</b>	21	22	22	22	21	21	19	17	15	15	13
<b>Percentage Above</b>	25%	21%	21%	21%	25%	25%	32%	39%	46%	46%	54%
<b>Percentage Below</b>	75%	79%	79%	79%	75%	75%	68%	61%	54%	54%	46%

The following graph illustrates the progress that has been made in building enrolments to above the target enrolment thresholds over the last 10 years.



If current enrolment trends are maintained, without additional growth, the number of schools under the enrolment threshold will fall to 9 schools within 3 years – representing around 30% of the IM primary sector. In all of these schools, future development and growth is restrained by the inadequacy of sites or poor-quality accommodation. It is essential that these constraints are addressed and the schools supported if they are to be expected to grow to have a sustainable enrolment. Exceptionally limited accommodation or poor accommodation are major drag factors to schools being able to attract parents to send their children to the school. Some of these schools are in a “catch22” situation where they cannot grow without improvements to their facilities, whilst the Department will not commit to improving facilities until the numbers have grown. CnaG believes that this is not consistent with the Department’s statutory duty towards IME and that this can be addressed through a strategic investment in the IME estate as outlined later in this report (section 3.2.5). Specific issues will also be explored later, on an area-by-area basis.

CnaG understands that DE currently has a proposal to amend the rural and urban definitions, which will include many local and regional towns outside Belfast and Derry within the urban definition. CnaG has raised objections to this definition since it could act as an obstacle in raising the threshold for the establishment of new IM provision within these towns. CnaG have been assured by the Department through the Area Planning forum that this new definition will not provide an additional impediment to the setting up of new schools within these areas.



**Area Planning outcomes; Development Proposals published & approved.**

During the lifetime of the current Area Plan, 2017-2020, a number of Development Proposals have been brought forward by Irish-medium schools. The majority of these Development Proposals concern an increase in enrolment and admissions numbers while a smaller number sought to establish statutory nursery provision. As per the table below, a total of thirteen proposals were published between 2017 and January 2020 and 4 of these were rejected. All of the 4 rejected concerned establishment of new Irish-medium provision or a change in delivery from English to Irish-medium education. All 6 proposals for increased enrolments were accepted as was the only proposal to decrease enrolments and admissions.

Year	School	Development Proposal	Decision
2020	Scoil an Droichid	Increased enrolment & admissions	Approved
2020	Gaelscoil na mBeann	Establish a Nursery Unit	Not approved
2020	Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí	Increased enrolment & admissions	Approved
2019	Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche	Increased enrolment & admissions	Approved
2018	Gaelscoil Neachtain	Establish a Nursery Unit	Approved
2018	Gaelscoil na bhFál	Decrease enrolment and admissions	Approved
2018	Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche	Establish a Nursery Unit	Approved
2018	Gaelscoil Eadáin Mhóir	Increased enrolment & admissions	Approved
2018	St. Brigid's Primary School, Turkane	Increased enrolment & admissions (Irish-medium Unit)	Approved
2018	Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin	Increased enrolment & admissions	Approved
2017	St. Mac Nissius' PS	Change of delivery to Irish-medium Education	Not approved
2017	New Irish-medium Post Primary School in Derry City	Establish a new Irish Medium Post-Primary School in Derry City	Not approved
2017	St. Colmcille's Primary	Establish a new Irish Medium Nursery Unit with 26 part-time places	Not approved



## **2.0 A Vision for IME**

CnaG is clearly focussed on the further development of the IME sector over the coming years - delivering educational excellence, maximising the achievement of all pupils whilst developing self-confident and fluent bilinguals. CnaG's stated Corporate Vision is as follows:

*A network of vibrant, viable Irish-medium schools, from pre-school to post-primary, providing excellence in education, at the heart of developing Irish Language communities.*

This vision cannot be delivered by CnaG on its own and will require the support of the Department of Education, the Education Authority and collaboration of a wide range of other organisations with an interest in IME. This vision will be delivered through direct support and collaboration to ensure that effective educational and development support is provided for schools, ensuring that high-quality teachers & teaching-support staff are available for this growing sector; that there is a continuous programme of improvement in teaching resources and that high-quality accommodation is available to this growing sector. Whilst CnaG appreciates that there are some schools that currently do not deliver full immersion, CnaG is firmly of the view that the full-immersion model is the optimum solution in terms of delivering an effective educational experience to children, and that the delivery of full-immersion at all levels should be an important development objective for the sector.

CnaG recognises the need to support the development of a strong network of schools to deliver this vision and will be focusing on consolidation and growth within existing provision, together with additional new provision where demand arises, to ensure that every child has access to IME, from pre-school to post primary.

CnaG's vision recognises the commitment and dedication of those who, over 40 years ago, introduced IME in the face of significant official hostility and who funded the development of the sector from voluntary effort and fundraising. Today the sector is unrecognisable, catering for well over 6,000 pupils, with growing recognition and support from the Department of Education and the Education Authority.

Despite the growth in the sector in recent years, the IME sector still only represents less than 3% of the primary sector. Consequently, the IM sector has massive potential for growth by increasing the IM share of the overall school-going population, especially given the proven advantages of bilingualism and second-language education. IME is part of a worldwide system of second-language education that first came to prominence in Canada over 60 years ago. Since then, much research has been carried out which clearly identifies the many educational, cognitive, learning, problem-solving, health & wellbeing, social and other benefits associated with this approach.

Parents are increasingly becoming aware of the benefits of bilingualism and IME and, as a result, CnaG expects that the growth in the sector will continue - provided that the sector is properly equipped and resourced to cater effectively for this growth.

Primary intakes into the sector have grown by more than 80% over the last ten years. Comhairle believes that with an effective strategy that communicates clearly the many benefits of IME and bilingualism, the potential exists to match this performance in the coming 10 years. This level of growth would simply be a continuation of the current growth trend, and indeed the relative size of the IME sector to the overall education sector means that demand could easily exceed these figures. This scale of potential development clearly needs to be supported by a comprehensive

growth strategy which has a clear focus on delivering and maintaining educational excellence and providing the necessary infrastructure, teachers, support staff, teaching resources and school buildings to accommodate this growth.

Communities are also an important part of Comhairle's vision. Growing and vibrant Irish-language communities offer IME the opportunity to deliver a wide range of other community and cultural benefits. George Bain pointed out the importance of the inter-relationship between community and the education system and this is one area where IME is particularly strong.

It is essential that the IME sector is an integral part of a broader vision that places the language within its social context as a community language, supporting the IM education system and vice versa. This includes the vitally important role that IME is playing in reinstating the language as a living, community language.

The vibrancy and sense of common purpose within the Irish-language movement generally provides a range of opportunities for strengthening the links between communities, families and the education system. This can help drive a virtuous circle that can bring about personal development, family and community cohesion and social change. By driving change, the sector can increase levels of educational attainment, increase life chances for pupils and increase prosperity from one generation to the next and can contribute greatly to the many broader Government objectives. This also has very positive implications for the development of sustainable schools as envisioned in the Bain report.

## **3.0 A Future Demand and Needs Model for IME**

### **3.1 Sectoral characteristics**

The structural attributes of the Irish-medium sector make the task of projecting future demand for IME relatively straight forward. The model for projecting the needs and growth of the sector is based on existing post-primary hinterlands or areas that could potentially become a post-primary catchment area. These areas generally consist of a number of feeder IME primary schools and/ or units.

Since an IME post-primary school is, by and large, limited to drawing on the numbers of children who are graduating annually from the catchment IME primary schools, there are effectively seven years of data (i.e. Gaelscoil enrolments) to allow very accurate growth projections for the IM post-primary sector. This provides us with a very sound basis upon which to construct our predictions over the coming years at post-primary level. The main variable within this context is the transfer rate from primary to secondary, which at sectoral level has ranged between 51-55% over the last four years. CnaG predicts that this has the ability to rise as the post-primary sector develops, provided that the sector is supported and facilitated over the coming years.

It is slightly more challenging to secure precise long-term data on which to base predictions within the IM primary sector. However, most children who enter IM primary education have previously attended the IM pre-school sector and the pre-school sector has reasonably well-established patterns of enrolment and growing patterns of intakes, over more than 20 years. This data can be well utilised to provide us with a robust model upon which to construct our projections for the IME primary sector going forward.

As outlined in section 1.7.1 above, as a result of the historic growth pattern, the sector also has a significant latent propensity to expand. This will lead to significant increases in the total number of IME pupils within the sector, even if there is no increase in current annual enrolments or current transfer rates of pupils between IME primary and post primary levels. The analysis outlined in section 1.6.1 demonstrates that this latent demand will result in significant increases in the total enrolment of the IME primary and post primary sectors by 11% and 74% respectively.

The proposed needs model is based on two distinct, but related approaches to assessing and predicting demand as follows:

#### **Sectoral projections**

The first approach is based on a sectoral approach by considering projected growth at a general level across all geographical areas. This provides a range of general predictions that are based on extrapolating historic trends from the data. This sectoral approach will be useful to help the Department of Education and the Education Authority and other interested parties to plan for general resource capacity issues, such as the numbers of teachers required to be trained over the coming years, as well as the numbers of additional classrooms, physical teaching resources, special needs support, youth services etc.

## Geographical projections

CnaG has considered the historic trends within each of the existing or potential post-primary hinterlands. This allows a more detailed picture of the particular needs, targets and priorities to be generated within each of these areas that will need to be delivered to create a vibrant and viable post-primary sector within each of these areas. This will be used to help develop a co-ordinated and agreed strategy that will inform Area-Planning actions, and co-ordinate the efforts of all those with an interest in Irish-medium education – Comhairle, Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta, Altram, The Department of Education, the Education Authority, CCMS and other schools and other support organisations.

It is recognised that, for Area Planning purposes, the eleven Local Government Districts are to be used and that IM development, based on a model leading to a network of sustainable post-primary schools, may not always sit neatly within that framework. CnaG's approach however provides the most logical framework for projecting growth and the needs of the sector and the Area-Planning objectives will then be extracted from this modelled approach.

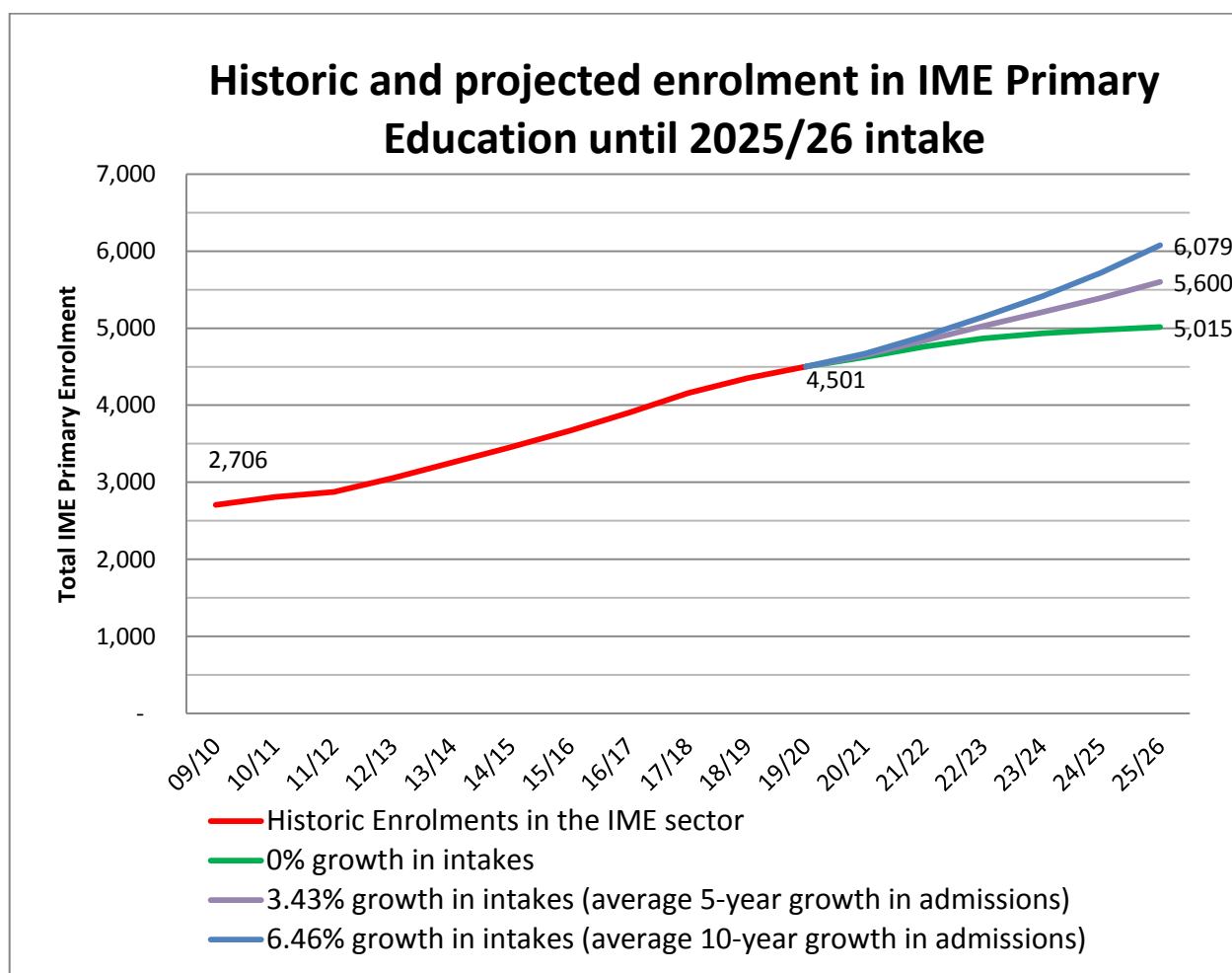
### 3.2 A Needs Model for Sectoral Growth

CnaG has adopted a sectoral needs model based on an extrapolation of the historic trends in enrolments within the sector, based on three scenarios (as suggested in the Review of Irish-medium education 2008), namely pessimistic, realistic and optimistic scenarios. These scenarios have been based on the following assumptions:

Scenario	Assumptions in relation to Intakes to primary sector	Assumptions in relation to transfer rates to IME post-primary sector
<b>1. Pessimistic</b>	0% increase in intakes over the coming 7 years	Transfer rates between IME primary and IME post-primary remain static at 55% in the coming years.
<b>2. Realistic</b>	An approximation related to an assessment of the average growth in the previous 5 years (3.43% p.a.)	An increase in the transfer rates into IME post-primary to 60% by the 2025/26 academic year.
<b>3. Optimistic</b>	Growth of 6.46% representing the 10-year average admissions growth rate.	An increase in the transfer rates into IME post-primary to 65% by the 2025/26 academic year.

### 3.2.1 IME primary projections

Applying the above assumptions to the primary sector produces the following projections:



As outlined above, a 0% increase in annual intakes will still result in the growth of the sector to 5,015 pupils (11.4% increase from 19/20 levels) by the 2025/26 academic year, equating to 514 additional places. This is the baseline that CnaG has used as our pessimistic scenario.

The realistic scenario extrapolates the past trends by using the average growth trend in intakes over the past five years (3.43%). It is entirely realistic to assume that the expansion in enrolments will continue at least to this level, and indeed Comhairle sees this as a minimum target enrolment going forward. This scenario demonstrates a growth of the primary sector to 5,600 pupils (24.4% increase from 19/20 levels) by the 2025/26 academic year, equating to 1,099 additional pupils within the sector. CnaG believes that, given adequate support and resources, this is a likely scenario

For the optimistic scenario a rate of 6.46% has been chosen - which represents the 10-year admissions growth figure. This scenario represents a deliverable target for expansion of the sector over the coming years that could potentially be attained, given favourable circumstances. This scenario demonstrates a growth of the primary sector to 6,079 pupils (over 35% increase in the primary sector from 19/20 levels) by the 25/26 academic year, equating to 1,578 additional pupils.

It is worth noting that intakes into the IME primary sector still only represent less than 3% of the total annual entrants into primary education. Under the right circumstances, and with proper support, this sector has therefore a massive propensity to expand, as more and more parents appreciate the educational and other benefits of Irish-medium education. Indeed, with a planned development strategy for the sector, and given the educational and other benefits of bilingualism and the size of the potential 'market' for IME, the sector has the potential to continue to grow for many years. This would require the proper resourcing of the sector to deliver high-quality educational provision and quality teaching accommodation and ancillary facilities. The propensity of the IM primary sector to deliver will depend on a number of factors and in particular the level of resources committed to the pre-school sector and the quality of provision within the pre-school sector.

CnaG believes that the proper funding of the voluntary pre-school sector is essential in order to deliver required levels of curricular and linguistic support, continued professional development and to improve the remuneration, terms and conditions of those working in the sector. CnaG also believes that the continued expansion of the statutory pre-school sector should be prioritised where the demand exists for this provision. Supporting the needs of both pre-school sectors will be critical to improving the quality of provision in the pre-school sector and supporting the growth model of the sector. A recent Department of Education report identified the importance of improving the quality of provision within the sector and is discussed in section 1.6.8 above.

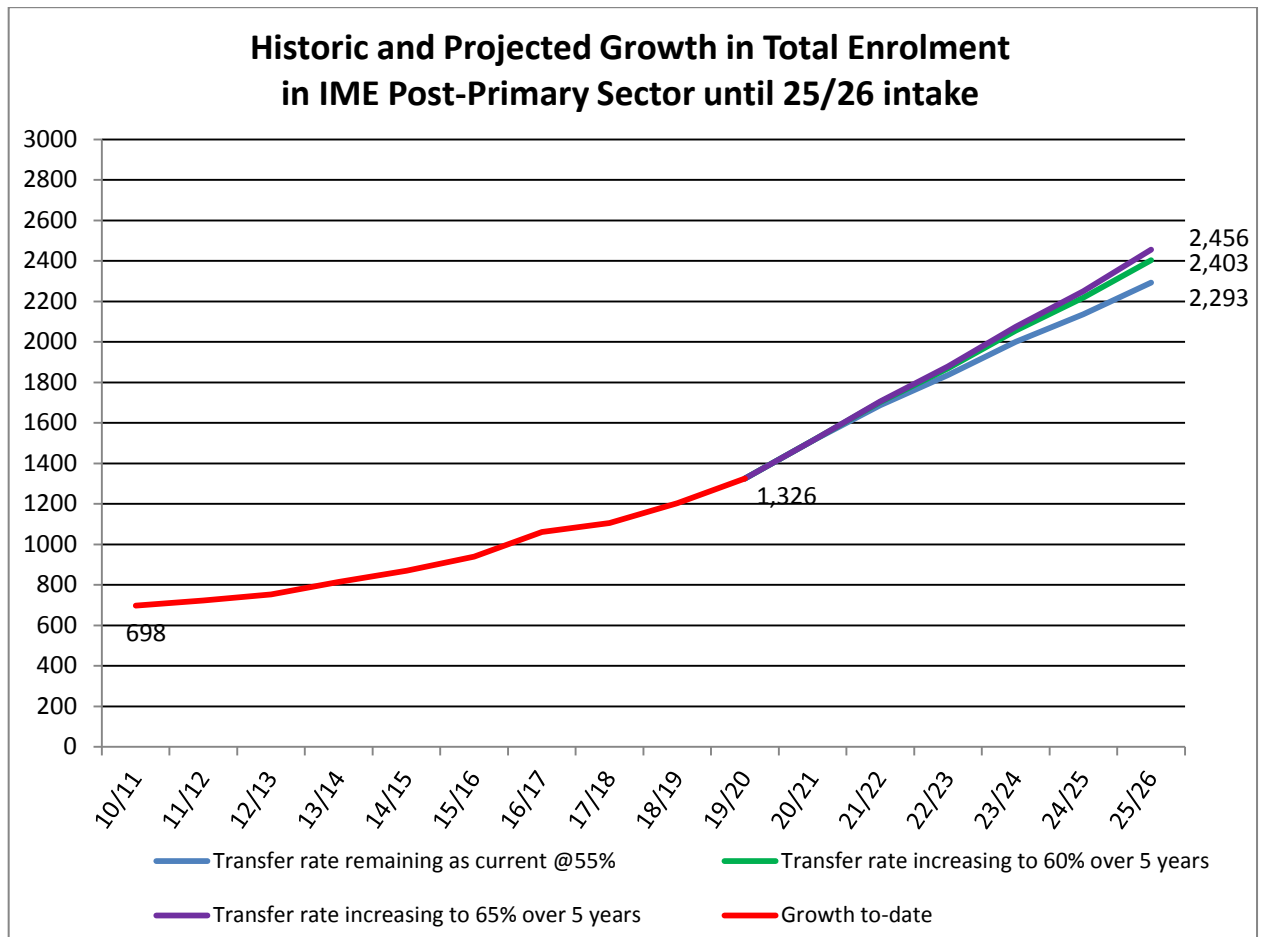
CnaG believes that the various growth scenarios should be reviewed, and where necessary, updated on an annual basis, upon determining the annual intake figures and emerging growth trends.

### **3.2.2 IME post-primary projections**

As indicated at section 3.1 above, it is quite straightforward to quantify the potential enrolment for the IM post-primary sector, since this is by and large, limited to enrolments at IM primary schools within their catchment areas. The numbers of children who will be graduating from IM primary education in the coming seven years are easily defined. The catchment/feeder schools for the various post-primary areas are also quite clearly defined. The main variable therefore in predicting need for IM post-primary sector is the transfer rate from IM primary to IM post-primary. In the 19/20 school year this rate was 55% at a sectoral level and it has ranged between 51-55% over the past four years. For the purpose of its sectoral projections CnaG has assumed an average current transfer rate of 53%.

The increasing numbers of IM children that are graduating from IM primary schools and the expansion in post-primary provision that has taken place over the past few years, will allow the post-primary sector the opportunity to continue to increase its overall enrolment.

The following graph demonstrates the potential growth within the sector, based on the current transfer rate remaining static at 53% and on increasing the transfer rates to 57% and 60% respectively.



The above graph demonstrates that, even with no growth in transfer rates, the sector is likely to increase by 978 pupils from 1,326 in September 2019 to 2,304 by the 2025/26 academic year– a 74% increase that equates to 9.65% compound growth in the sector.

Our realistic scenario transfer rates rising to 57% demonstrates that increasing the transfer rate steadily over a five year period would result in the sector increasing by a total of 1,088 pupils from 1,326 to 2,414, representing an overall growth of 82% or an annual compound growth rate of 10.5% per annum.

Our optimistic scenario of 60% transfer rates from IM primary into IM post-primary would increase the size of the sector to 2,467, an increase of 1,141 pupils or 86% by the 2025/26 academic year, representing an annual compound growth rate of 10.9%.

These transfer rates will be significantly affected by the level of commitment by the Department to the development of IM post-primary provision, and to the level of resources and support that are provided. They will also depend on the willingness of schools with units to allow enrolments to grow or to allow streams to develop into viable free-standing schools that perform an important strategic function in the development of Irish-speaking communities. It will also necessitate a major step-change in the numbers of teachers being trained and in particular teachers with specialist subjects. The current level of teacher training is not capable of supporting any of the above growth scenarios and this is dealt with in the following section of this report.

### **3.3 Implications of the sectoral growth model**

The above analysis demonstrates a general projection for the overall size of the sector based on past trends and a range of potential scenarios. All of these scenarios demonstrate that there is a real need for the Department of Education, the Education Authority and all other interested parties to plan for a significant expansion of the sector – even with a 0% growth in annual intakes to the sector. It will be necessary for provision to be made to accommodate this growth in a range of areas including the training of additional teachers, the provision of additional classrooms, the opening of new schools, the provision of additional teaching resources, the securing of additional educational support services and additional Irish-medium youth services.

### **3.4 Surplus places & increasing demand**

There is clearly a need to undertake a detailed analysis to define precisely the nature and extent of the needs of the sector based on its growth projections, including the numbers of additional teachers, classroom assistants and additional classrooms that are likely to be required under each of the scenarios based on the projected enrolments in future years. In broad terms, based on our realistic growth scenario of growth in the sector of 24.4% in the primary sector and 82% in the post-primary creates an urgent need for significant increases in teaching staff, classroom assistants and in the accommodation provision within the sector. The needs of the pre-school sector create demands over and above these needs.

Section 4 of this report looks in particular at defining the teacher needs within the sector as a first step to further defining the wider resource needs. CnaG will be working with the Department in order to consider and further refine these needs going forward including.

- Ensuring that the accommodation needs for the sector are met including improving the facilities of schools within their existing sites or relocating growing schools to new more suitable sites.
- Providing the required educational, curricular, special needs support services.
- Improving youth services for IME.
- Providing adequate financial support for sectoral support services – via Comhairle, Altram, Iontaobhas, Education Authority.
- Securing adequate levels of IM classroom resources.
- Securing additional pre-school places and in particular providing IM Statutory provision where there is the demand for this from the local area.

There is also a pressing need to undertake a review of the current accommodation provision within the sector and the implications that further growth will have for individual schools across the sector. Serious consideration will have to be given to the suitability of the accommodation and the sites on which schools are located and a strategic approach will need to be adopted in planning for growth across the sector.

### **3.5 Sectoral objectives**

Based on its knowledge of the sector and the above analysis, CnaG has set a range of objectives that will be required to support the overall development of the sector and underpin the Area-Planning process.



### **3.5.1 Establishing of a robust framework for Area Planning**

CnaG sees that the Area-Planning Process as has the potential to provide a very positive contribution to planning for the future of the IME sector, and in helping tie infrastructure development into proper Area Planning principles. Indeed, this process is much more important to the IME sector than most of the EM sectors, in that it is a growing sector in significant need of capital infrastructure development.

CnaG is fully committed to a robust framework for Area Planning that is equitable, and is based on sound statistical information and sound information about the existing infrastructure within the school's estate. The growth projections within this document should form the basis of the area planning for the IM sector.

### **3.5.2 IME sector infrastructure planning**

The extremely variable state of existing buildings within the sector generally and impending accommodation needs as a result of latent demand and growing admissions, mean that it is vitally important to effectively plan for the accommodation needs of the IME sector.

As set out in section 3.2.1 above even a relatively modest expansion rate of 3.43% used in the realistic scenario shows the primary sector expanding by almost 1,100 pupils or 24.4% by 2025/26 academic. This creates serious additional accommodation, needs, over and beyond those that currently exist and which must be planned for.

CnaG, in co-operation with Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta and the Department's Estates Operations Team, would seek to have a comprehensive review of accommodation within the IME sector undertaken, with the following specific objectives:

#### **1. Baseline Accommodation Study**

The fact that most IME schools have experienced significant expansion means that the accommodation needs of the sector are a constantly moving target. A comprehensive baseline review of all IM schools at the start of the next school year would provide an important baseline, upon which the future expansion needs of schools could be planned and monitored going forward. CnaG would like to engage with the DE and EA to arrange for a full baseline study of the current state of accommodation within the IME sector.

#### **2. Needs Assessments/ Feasibility Studies**

CnaG believes that a large number of IME schools are operating well beyond their capacity in terms of their accommodation and many do not have the required ancillary accommodation to deliver a rich educational experience. Many are on cramped sites and have very little potential for expansion to accommodate growth without further compromising the quality of the educational environment within the school. This may necessitate a range of needs assessments/feasibility studies to help schools identify a pathway to provide accommodation to meet their current needs, together with any projected growth. This may be within the school's existing or expanded site or within a relocation to a new site.

### 3. Investment Plan

It is vital that a sufficient investment is set aside within the DE budgets to deal with the accommodation needs of the sector so that the IME sector is not disadvantaged in terms of the quality of the educational environment in comparison to the EM sector. There is a need to identify a rolling medium-term investment plan, based on the needs of the IM sector over the next 5-10 years, taking into account the range of scenarios already identified and in particular, the realistic increase in projected intakes. This plan will be used to help inform the Department of the upcoming sectoral needs of the IME sector so that they can be included in the capital development plans of the Department. This Investment Plan would be informed by the general growth projections but would have to be based on the baseline assessment and the needs assessments/feasibility studies of the individual schools as identified at 1 & 2 above.

### 4. Areas identified for Future Development

The table below gives an outline of the potential areas for future IM provision between the years 2021 – 2026. The dates are in keeping with the next Area Planning Action Plan.

These areas are currently without IM provision or have need for additional provision and communities have expressed interest in securing such provision locally.

Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta will monitor developments and work closely with local communities in their efforts to secure IM provision by initiating feasibility studies as and when appropriate.

Location	LGD	Start Date	Context
*East Belfast	Belfast City Council	2021	Initially a feasibility study was carried out in the local community to establish that there was sufficient demand for IM provision before progressing to the next stage of development; establish management committee, identification of venue/site etc.
West Belfast Central	Belfast City Council	2021	Oversubscription in current provision resulting in increased community demand for IM preschool provision.

Location	LGD	Start Date	Context
Antrim Town, Co. Antrim	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council	2021	Initially a feasibility study will be carried out in the local community to establish that there is sufficient demand for IM provision before progressing to the next stage of development; establish management committee, identification of venue/site etc.
Corinshego, Co. Armagh	Newry, Mourne & Downpatrick	2022	Initially a feasibility study will be carried out in the local community to establish that there is sufficient demand for IM provision before progressing to the next stage of development; establish management committee, identification of venue/site etc.
Hilltown, Co. Down	Newry, Mourne & Downpatrick	2022	Initially a feasibility study will be carried out in the local community to establish that there is sufficient demand for IM provision before progressing to the next stage of development; establish management committee, identification of venue/site etc.
Carryduff, Co. Down	Lisburn & Castlereagh Council	2023	Initially a feasibility study will be carried out in the local community to establish that there is sufficient demand for IM provision before progressing to the next stage of development; establish management committee, identification of venue/site etc.
Armagh City	Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Council	2023	Initially a feasibility study will be carried out in the local community to establish that there is sufficient demand for IM provision before progressing to the next stage of development; establish management committee, identification of venue/site etc.
Ligoniel, North Belfast	Belfast City Council	2024	Initially a feasibility study will be carried out in the local community to establish that there is sufficient demand for IM provision before progressing to the next stage of development; establish management committee, identification of venue/site etc.
Mount Eagles, Outer West Belfast	Belfast City Council	2024	Initially a feasibility study will be carried out in the local community to establish that there is sufficient demand for IM provision before progressing to the next stage of development; establish management committee, identification of venue/site etc.

Location	LGD	Start Date	Context
Creggan, Derry City	Derry & Strabane Council	2025	Initially a feasibility study will be carried out in the local community to establish that there is sufficient demand for IM provision before progressing to the next stage of development; establish management committee, identification of venue/site etc.
Ballygawley, Co. Tyrone	Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council	2025	Initially a feasibility study will be carried out in the local community to establish that there is sufficient demand for IM provision before progressing to the next stage of development; establish management committee, identification of venue/site etc.
Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh	Fermanagh & Omagh District Council	2026	Initially a feasibility study will be carried out in the local community to establish that there is sufficient demand for IM provision before progressing to the next stage of development; establish management committee, identification of venue/site etc.

## **4.0 Educational Support**

As a result of the fragmented nature of the sector, which consists of controlled, Catholic and other-maintained schools, it is important to find robust ways to support the curricular needs of IME and to share good practice, experiences and resources throughout the sector. To date there has been a reliance by DE and EA on collaboration as an approach to develop skills and support within the IME sector.

CnaG is firmly of the view that the EA needs to be central to the development of a strategic support framework that draws on the expertise and knowledge of St Mary's University College, An tÁisaonad, CCEA, Altram, CnaG, ETI, the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) and successful individual IM practitioners.

**CnaG has identified the following areas as the most urgent needs within the IM sector:**

- The adequate and appropriate provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs in the Irish-medium immersion context, including the provision of a regional network of learning support centres;
- A strategic approach to teacher supply issues;
- Adequate resourcing of IM schools with appropriate assessment tools a priority;
- School Governance support;
- The appointment of a coordinator for the Irish-medium Learning Community (IMLC);
- EA IME Specific Support;
- A review of Shared Education opportunities for IM schools;
- The implementation of recommendations regarding best practice in the area of Irish-medium early years;
- The development of cross-border collaboration;
- Youth services and community links in the IM sector.

### **4.1 Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

There remain significant barriers to Special Educational Needs, Irish-medium (SENIM) provision, to ensure that all pupils receive the pedagogic-specific and language-specific support appropriate to an Irish-medium environment. This is further compounded by a lack of understanding and co-ordination among current responsible agencies, to ensure adequate support for SENIM children.

Children in Irish-medium schools are greatly disadvantaged by not being able to access appropriate or timely intervention regarding their special educational needs. This is particularly acute in respect of children presenting with specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia, where

the lack of suitable standardised tests greatly impedes identification and subsequent intervention. Current criteria used by Educational Psychologists, for example, are exclusively in English, meaning that children being educated through the medium of Irish, cannot access them until much later in their school lives.

There is also a growing prevalence of IM pupils presenting with speech and language difficulties; Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) as well Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). There is a lack of additional support materials or their equivalent in Irish for those children with difficulties; Reading Recovery; Lexia; Catch up Maths etc.

There is a lack of awareness within education and health support organisations of the nuances of Irish-medium education, including the educational and cognitive benefits of immersion education, bilingualism and bi-literacy. Often a bi-literal setting can actually be beneficial to a child with special educational needs, especially when the languages have different orthographic depths and offer a new approach. Awareness training and resources need to reflect this rather than external advisers pressuring parents to move children to an English-medium setting.

Since the publication of the DE sponsored Research Report, *Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study for the Development of High-Level Diagnostic Tools in Irish for Children with Special Educational Needs in the Irish-medium Sector* (2012), it is widely believed by SEN practitioners in the IM sector that children presenting with special needs in IM schools are being discriminated against, as no acceptable criteria for their diagnosis and intervention has been agreed by the relevant support agencies. This report concluded that there was no need for high end diagnostic assessments in IM education. This was not and is not accepted by the sector.

**CnaG recommends the following:**

- A tailored SENIM policy is urgently required, along with the creation of a coherent and well-coordinated system of SENIM services, through EA, which will result in all children fulfilling their potential;
- An acceptable and linguistically appropriate means of early identification and intervention regarding SEN in IM schools is developed, to ensure that current inequalities are addressed as a matter of urgency;
- EA and other external agencies should support IM children with a range of additional needs, where possible, through the medium of Irish, so that parents do not have to choose between additional support for their child and Irish-medium education;
- Appropriate tests that measure the extra skills which bilingual children have, should be developed for use in the sector;
- A number of teachers/SENCOs from the IM sector should be seconded from their posts in schools in order to train as Educational Psychologists for the IM sector. In line with a model that was offered to English-medium schools in the past, CnaG propose that teachers continue to be in receipt of their teaching salary during their training; that the replacement teacher salary is also paid; that all qualifying Educational Psychologists will be required to work for the EA for a

period of 3 years post qualification and will work predominantly with the IM sector. CnaG also strongly recommends that the course is amended where necessary to align itself to the nuances of immersion education.

- A skills audit and recruitment drive should be undertaken by EA in order to adequately supply the IM sector with Speech and Language therapists, advisory/support teachers for Numeracy, Literacy, etc.
- EA appoint sectoral support officer(s) within the CYPS directorate, as exist in the Education directorate;
- A specific budget should be ring-fenced to create support resources for IM pupils with specific or additional needs such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Social, Emotional and Behaviour Difficulties and Speech and Language etc.

### **Learning Support Centres**

As of April 2020 there are no Learning Support Centres (LSC's) in the Irish-medium sector; however EA have initiated a process of identifying schools in which temporary learning support-type (resource) provision is made available in the interim, while Development Proposals are progressed, to secure a regional network of permanent IM LSC's in the future.

### **CnaG recommends the following:**

- A regional network of adequately resourced LSC's for the IM sector is established on a proportional basis to the English-medium sector, to adequately deal with the increasing numbers attending IM schools as well as the wide range of issues presenting.

## **4.2 Teacher Supply**

As the fastest-growing sector in education currently, the teacher supply needs of IME are acute. The impact of Covid-19 on the workforce will also be felt more acutely in the IM sector where teacher supply is already limited. A strategy is needed urgently to increase the supply of teachers to the IM sector, in order to keep up with the growth in demand, particularly in post-primary education, in line with the Department of Education's statutory duty. An independent report carried out by language experts from the Council of Europe, and presented on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2020, identified the need for additional teachers to be trained. It stated, "As the number of pupils is growing annually, the need to plan more strategically for the projected demand remains. These concerns, in particular, the training of teachers able to teach subjects in Irish at pre-school and secondary levels, taking into account the particular educational needs in immersion education."

#### 4.2.1 Defining the Need for Teacher Training

There is a well-established need to continue to provide qualified teachers for the growing number of nursery and primary schools in the IM sector, as well as addressing the urgent need for well-educated, newly-qualified teachers for the post-primary sector. CnaG has estimated the teacher training needs based on the pessimistic, realistic and optimistic growth models outlined at section 3.2 and these requirements are set out in the table below:

<b>Total estimated teacher-training requirement per annum between 2019- 2025, assuming three growth scenarios growth.</b>			
	<b>Pre-school/ Primary</b>	<b>Post-Primary</b>	<b>Total estimated teacher requirement per- annum</b>
<b>Pessimistic Growth</b>	21	26	<b>47</b>
<b>Realistic Growth</b>	31	29	<b>60</b>
<b>Optimistic Growth</b>	40	30	<b>70</b>

The table above provided an indication of the impact of projected growth on the needs of teaching staff within the sector. The realistic scenario identifies that between now and 2025 that 60 teachers will need to be trained annually, assuming a modest growth rate of 3.43 % per annum. This year only 40 teachers are being trained for IME – 20 through the 1 year IM Primary PGCE in St. Mary’s, 12 through the 4 year B.Ed programme at St.Mary’s and 8 in the 1 year Post-Primary PGCE in QUB/UU and there is clearly a shortfall even for the pessimistic (zero growth in intakes) scenario.

There are a range of factors which need to be considered and taken into account in order to ensure that the needs of the sector are being met in relation to the delivery of newly qualified teachers. These include the following:

#### **Growth in the Statutory Pre-school Sector**

In the academic year 2019/2020, 51% of the Irish-medium children in their pre-school year attended statutory provision and the balance attended voluntary pre-schools. Under the New Decade New Deal there is a commitment to increase the level of statutory nursery provision and this figure is likely to increase over the coming 5 years which will require an uplift in pre-school teachers.

#### **Specialist Subject Teachers**

There is also a growing need for teachers with the appropriate subjects, high level competence in Irish, specialist insights into immersion pedagogies and also the resources needed to implement these. The fact that it takes several years to educate teachers and that there is already a significant shortage of specialist teachers in areas such as science and maths, means that this needs to be addressed as a matter of extreme urgency.



## Loss of teachers to other sectors/ jurisdictions

The issue of teacher supply is compounded by the fact that many of the teachers that are trained each year find employment in other jurisdictions or find employment teaching Irish or and/ other subjects within the English-medium sector and are not available for employment in the IM sector.

It is extremely worrying that, in the face of this growing need for teachers, the vast majority of newly-qualified Irish-medium teachers, who graduated from St Mary's University College in 2019, were offered teaching posts in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and other locations outside of Ireland. Whilst acknowledging that this is a challenge across the education sector, this trend affects the Irish-medium sector more acutely, where pupil numbers are growing exponentially and the existing pool of qualified teachers and substitute teachers is already depleted.

Growing numbers of teachers are moving to other areas including university lecturing, European parliament, translation services to the civil service and into the wider economy. A number of years ago St Mary's University College carried out research into the employment of teachers who graduated between 2013 and 2015 to determine where and in what sectors they were working and the findings of this are summarised in the following table:

Destination of Trainee IM Teachers Post-Graduation from St. Mary's University College 2013-15						
	B.Ed		PGCE		Total	
	No of Graduates	% of Graduates	No of Graduates	% of Graduates	No of Graduates	% of Graduates
Gaelscoil in North	13	32%	20	40%	33	36%
Gaelscoil in South	3	7%	14	28%	17	19%
EM School	4	10%	10	20%	14	15%
Abroad	17	41%	3	6%	20	22%
Other work	4	10%	3	6%	7	8%
Out of Work	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	41	100%	50	100%	91	100%

It is incredible that 64% of graduates in the study did not end up in the IME sector in the North. Unfortunately this level of loss does not appear to have significantly reduced in recent years and CnaG understands that the loss of teachers abroad and into schools in the south and the English medium sector are in line with the above figures.

The growth in the IME sector would not be deliverable with a continuation of this loss of newly trained teachers to the IME sector. The annual teacher training figures set out at the start of this section for the pessimistic realistic and optimistic scenarios above assume that this 'loss' can be reduced to 40%. However, it is not clear if this can be achieved. If it is assumed that this figure remains at 64% going forward, the annual teacher training requirement would be as shown in the below table:

<b>Total estimated Teacher requirement per annum between 2019- 2025, assuming three growth scenarios growth - and assuming 64% of graduates do not enter IME.</b>			
	<b>Pre-school/ Primary</b>	<b>Post-Primary</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Pessimistic Growth</b>	35	44	<b>79</b>
<b>Realistic Growth</b>	51	48	<b>99</b>
<b>Optimistic Growth</b>	66	50	<b>116</b>

The above table shows the major impact that the loss of newly-qualified teachers to the IME sector on the need to train teachers – i.e., if it is not going to be possible to reduce this loss from current levels (of around 64%) to the targeted 40% a total of 99 teachers would need to be trained per annum under the realistic scenario.

The loss of newly-qualified trained teachers to IME needs to be urgently addressed and CnaG will be engaging with the DE and teacher training institutions in order to develop a strategy to bring more of these teachers into IME.

### **Shortage of Substitute Teachers**

The availability of teachers is already limited and schools are experiencing ongoing difficulties in being able to secure suitable substitute cover when required. There is already a dearth of suitably qualified substitute teachers and almost all schools have experienced significant difficulties in securing substitute cover for teachers who are ill and even for longer-term absences including Maternity cover. This has been evidenced by CnaG within the sector through discussions with school principals; there is strong anecdotal evidence that suggests that it is particularly difficult to source substitute cover in terms 2 & 3 as any teachers available in terms 1 & 2 are reduced by new teachers being offered maternity cover. There is a need to rebuild a pool of substitute teachers for the sector to ensure that it can function effectively.

CnaG welcomes the commissioning of the Engage programme by DE to aid learning recovery after the period of lockdown due to Covid-19, but there is a concern that IM schools will not be able to avail of this initiative in its entirety due to the shortage of substitute teachers. This again will leave IM pupils at a disadvantage to their EM counterparts as a result of these historical shortages and serves as evidence of the direct impact shortages will have on educational standards in IM schools.

### **Retirement/drift out of profession**

Although a relatively young sector, the age profile of IME teachers is increasing year-on-year and an increasing number of teachers will be retiring from the sector over the coming years. There is a natural drift out of the Education sector by teachers generally as a result of retirement, ill health, teachers changing profession or moving into other areas of education outside schools. Even if a very modest 4% drift is assumed (based on actual DE statistics on retirement/ drift out of the profession each year) and we apply this only to the current staffing levels within the IM sector (i.e., ignoring the growth within the sector) this would create a need for approximately an additional 12 FTE teaching posts per year – i.e., 60 FTEs within 5 years.

## **Pupil-teacher Ratio**

In addition to the above, there is an urgent need to invest in reducing class sizes. DE currently fails to recognise the specific requirements of an IM / immersion classroom where maximum exposure to the target language is vital for successful language acquisition and where an extra subject, i.e. English is taught from the end of KS1.

The added challenge of teaching in an immersion classroom is further exacerbated by growing class sizes in the IM sector over the past number of years which have risen by 46% since 2009/2010.

This is particularly important since the vast majority of children attending IME do not speak Irish at home, nor are they exposed to significant levels of spoken Irish, Irish signage or other exposures to the language within their communities

Anecdotal evidence suggests that large class sizes, coupled with the lack of curricular support and materials are having a negative impact in dissuading trained teachers entering the sector. This, coupled with much more attractive terms and conditions in the Republic and overseas, is almost certainly contributing to the loss of newly-qualified teachers to the sector as outlined above.

The above analysis excludes non-teaching staff and again a further plan needs to be put in place to deliver classroom assistants and other ancillary staff as well as qualified pre-school staff with the required level of fluency in Irish.

### **4.2.2 A Delivery Plan for Teachers**

In contrast with the growing need for teachers in the IME sector there appears to be a growing surplus of trained teachers in the EM sector. According to the latest skills barometer for 2019, published by the Department for the Economy, it is estimated that 140 teachers too many will be trained in NI each year for the next 10 years, a statistic that also featured in a BBC news report on Aug 1<sup>st</sup> 2019; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-49177327>.

CnaG advises the Department to consider ways to redirect resources that are destined to be used for training teachers in areas that are not going to have employment opportunities into the Irish-medium sector, which has current demand and is experiencing significant increased levels of demand going forward.

It is vitally important that a structure is put in place to ensure the delivery of the sufficient numbers of teachers with the required subjects to the IM sector. The current approach to supplying teachers is not adequate to meet the increasing needs of the sector.

#### **CnaG recommends the following:**

- The numbers of the places available on the B.Ed. and PGCE Programme for IME Student Teachers in St. Mary's University College Belfast should be increased from 12 places to 18 places in the B.Ed. Programme and from 20 to 25 places in the PGCE Programme per annum to sufficiently cater for the demand for teachers in a fast growing sector and to allow for the flexibility required in a changing employment landscape;

- Whilst the current IM Post-primary Enhancement Course offered by St Mary's University College in conjunction with QUB and UU, goes some way to improving, post-primary teacher supply, this course is no longer sufficient to meet the growing needs of the sector and should be replaced with a fully mainstreamed course, allowing more autonomy for the Irish-medium team in St Mary's to recruit students. CnaG proposes a pilot scheme which would see at least 10 such university places per annum being redirected to prospective post-primary Irish-medium teachers either in the form of additional B.E.d. or PGCE places. These additional places could allow the introduction of a specialised B.E.d post-primary course which would provide the IM sector, and Initial Teacher Education institutions who are experienced in training practitioners for the sector, the ability to not only select prospective candidates but also to have autonomy on the content of the courses. This would undoubtedly reflect and endeavour to meet the urgent need for well-educated, newly-qualified teachers for the post-primary sector;
- The creation of a pathway for English-medium subject specialists with spoken Irish to make the transition to Irish-medium schools. Subject specialists who have a conversational level of fluency in Irish could be funded to work in schools while at the same time supported to improve their Irish fluency as well as funding sabbaticals for teachers to learn Irish and return to schools to continue teaching in their subject areas;
- The creation of a pathway for experienced Irish Language speakers to re-train as subject specialists in target areas. IM post-primary schools, at their own expense, have facilitated such teachers to retrain and become subject specialist teachers in different areas successfully, by supporting members of staff to undertake further study and by providing in-school or external peer support. DE should provide a programme by which teachers who are fluent Irish Speakers can retrain as subject specialists in much needed areas;
- There is a need to build an awareness of employment opportunities in the Irish-medium sector. As part of the 14-19 strand of the DE/EA Transformation Programme, DE should fund a bespoke IM careers guidance scheme including the appointment of an information officer. This scheme should be delivered in conjunction with a partnership of Irish language organisations including Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta, Conradh na Gaeilge and Gael Linn, to create suitable materials and to offer guidance to careers teachers and students on the significant opportunities for Irish speakers in a wide range of areas including education.
- Universities and Colleges of Further Education have been slow to respond to the growing demand for courses that include an element of Irish Language proficiency. For example, it is not possible to study Irish and Maths at QUB or Ulster University. CnaG proposes that, with the help of DE and DoF, links between faculties at third level institutions should be strengthened to facilitate the growing number of students from both English-Medium and Irish-Medium schools

who would like to continue their studies in a particular area while developing their competence in Irish. This would also benefit the IME sector.

- DE should fund and replicate a Teacher Professional Learning scheme such as the Welsh Sabbatical Scheme (See appendices), a language course for teachers and classroom assistants who wish to improve their Welsh and gain more confidence in using the language. The aim of the course is to improve the language of education practitioners to make them feel confident to teach through the medium of Welsh. This would enable teachers/classroom assistants who wish to teach through the medium of Irish to build the language competency to do so.

### **4.3 IM Resources**

There is a prevailing attitude that resources can be simply translated for use in Irish-medium classrooms and this is not the case. Direct technical translations often raise the level of language far beyond the level of the pupil and are therefore unfit for their desired purpose. This is true for both teaching materials and public examinations and can place pupils at a disadvantage.

Development is needed in the production of independent, curricular and non-curricular reading texts and support materials for pupils at all levels of attainment in IME. Teacher training in the development and use of these materials is also required. An early-reading programme is being developed by An tÁisaonad, which in its infancy received limited support from the Department of Education. Insufficient funding is now causing an unacceptable delay in the production and creation of said programme. A further programme is now needed to promote reading development throughout the school, incorporating reading strategies and other resources to encourage children to be independent readers in Irish from as early an age as possible. Research is being carried out in this area by An tÁisaonad and work is ongoing at an extremely slow pace due to immense budget restrictions.

The onset of Covid-19 served to highlight the dearth of resources available to IM pupils, particularly online resources appropriate for distance learning or a blended learning approach. Again, IM pupils were left at a significant disadvantage as they could not enjoy the wide range of online resources in Irish that their EM counterparts could in English. As we move forward into a new school year with the threat of Covid-19 still apparent, it is imperative that the movement towards parity in resources is expedited.

#### **CnaG recommends the following:**

- All resources produced by Government-funded agencies and all curricular resources and examinations should be translated to a standard that is appropriate for the language skills of the pupils and made available for use in IM schools – this should include a panel of individuals who have experience in language development in IME.
- All education policies, curriculum initiatives and associated training in resources need to be IME-proofed so that they fit the specific needs of the IM sector;

- An overarching strategy for the production of IM resources is designed and implemented over the next 3-5 years. This will enable both an tÁisaonad and CCEA to plan strategically, informed by the wider IM sector; to create a comprehensive and high-quality bank of resources and to serve all key stages in IME;
- IM funding for both CCEA and An tÁisaonad should be ring-fenced, permanent and subject to ongoing review, in line with enrolment trends and emerging needs within the sector and should involve cross-border collaboration, with COGG where appropriate;
- Funding is required for resources, including a varied range of reading materials, both curricular and non-curricular which need to be created and adapted. This work should be undertaken by those who understand immersion pedagogy and can do so sensitively, taking into consideration the varying levels of language ability and backgrounds of children entering IME;
- A bank of online Maths games for pupils across the Maths' curriculum should be developed and made available to the IM sector without delay;
- Funding is made available to release IM subject specialists at post primary level to work with An tÁisaonad to create and quality assure bespoke subject materials in accordance with current specifications;
- A specific budget should be ring-fenced to create support resources for IM pupils with specific or additional needs such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Social, Emotional and Behaviour Difficulties and Speech and Language etc.
- Assurances must be made and funding allocated to allow core texts and resource materials, e.g. An Clár Luathléitheoireachta (*The Early Reading Scheme*, published by An tÁisaonad and currently only available for pupils until Primary 4), to be made available on a sustainable basis.
- The above recommendations be progressed as a matter of urgency in light of the Covid-19 crisis and immediate funding for resourcing appropriate for blended/distance learning.

### **CCEA/IM Specific Assessment Tools**

One of the two recommendations in the *IMSLWG* report that was not accepted related to the need for assessment tools suitable for use in the Irish-medium sector. The Minister at the time stated that the responsibility for assessment lay with CCEA and therefore he could not accept that particular recommendation.

The newly-formed IM Learning Community and CnaG subsequently held talks with CCEA on the question of assessment in IME and in 2017, a researcher was appointed on a six

month term by CCEA to scope out the issue. The findings of this report have not been progressed or even considered.

DE relies heavily on end of Key Stage (1&2) results in primary and GCSE in post primary for assessment purposes. At primary level, English-medium schools are at an advantage, in that tasks that exemplify the Levels of Attainment are readily available. In Irish-medium schools some tasks have been translated by CCEA, however, most remain in English only, resulting in a further inequality.

Schools have cited an Irish Language Framework as a priority for the sector. The current curriculum for IM schools is a translation of that for English-medium schools with some additions but it is not fit for purpose. A Language Framework would be a huge step in rectifying this issue. Additionally, IM education is young in development; immersion education is comparatively new and such guidelines are essential for good practice. A Language Framework would also be a precursor to curriculum support and assessment as well as production of relevant resources. It would provide guidance for all schools and support bodies and would save time and money in resource provision.

At post primary in the IM sector, the exam papers of children doing GCSE examinations are in some instances translated and marked by English-speaking examiners. This practice is not acceptable in that it cannot provide an entirely accurate version of the original text and should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

In discussions between CnaG and CCEA, a three-year plan was presented to coordinate the work of officers ensuring the seamless continuation of the work of the IME unit. A Project Board has been established with stakeholders from across the IM sector sitting on the board to oversee the implementation of this three-year plan. However, CnaG remains concerned that the level of resources allocated by CCEA to meet the needs of the sector is not sufficient.

#### **CnaG recommends the following:**

- The urgent need for bespoke assessment tools and standardised tests for the IM sector from pre-school to post-primary level is addressed as a matter of priority;
- The creation of updated, bespoke cognitive assessment tools and the development of online, rather than paper-based assessments for the sector;
- A Language Framework for IME should be progressed urgently;
- CCEA revises its current policy which necessitates the translation of IM scripts into English before assessment, to ensure a more equitable assessment process for IM pupils;
- That CCEA addresses the issue of tailoring the language used in examinations and other materials to the level of the pupils in IME for whom it is intended, bearing in mind that for most IME pupils Irish is their second language;

- All support materials should include specimen assessment materials, past papers etc, which must be made available in Irish at the same time as in English.

### **C2K Provision in IME schools**

The current C2K contract did not include any provision for Irish-medium education, though significant work has been done retrospectively on an Irish version of C2K's *NewsDesk*, *Seomra Nuachta* by An tÁisaonad. *Seomra Nuachta* has been cited as a key resource utilised during the lockdown period of the Covid-19 crisis due to its efficacy in providing pupils with an immersive online environment that could be accessed from home. This resource should therefore be expanded and developed to ensure it continues to provide access to the language to pupils at all key stages.

The current C2K contract was extended until March 2021 which means that Irish-medium will not be adequately provided for in this respect for at least another year. CnaG and the Irish-medium Steering Group for Online Learning (IMSGOL), was actively involved in the discussions around the content of the new C2K LOT 8 contract. CnaG is represented on the Strategic and Technical Advisory Group (STAG) which oversees the content and roll-out of the next contract.

### **CnaG recommends the following:**

- ETS (Education Technology Services) ensures the implementation of all recommendations made by the IM sector when negotiating and awarding the next contract in line with the Statutory Duty towards IME.
- In order for EA to provide equity for all pupils through the new contract, a plan needs to be urgently developed and implemented wherein Irish-medium ICT provision is properly provided for. This will ensure the timely provision of age and context specific translations of resources which are fit for purpose for IM pupils across all Key Stages, as is currently available for English-medium pupils.
- Immediate additional funding from DE/EA to enhance the scope and capacity of *Seomra Nuachta*. An increase in capacity would enhance the resources already available to Primary pupils and allow for Post-primary to avail of the same and provide the same daily content that the English-medium sector enjoys.

### **4.4 Governor Support & Development Programme**

Most Irish-medium schools are classed as *other-maintained* and not part of an administrative authority. As a result, the competence of the Board of Governors is vitally important to the successful strategic development, governance and management of the school. There is a real need to build the competencies of governors to strengthen the development of the sector.

In broader terms, it is of the utmost importance that IM governors avail of EA training for Governors, particularly those mandatory elements of training regarding Child Protection etc.



Historically there has been a poor uptake in Governor training from the IM sector which CnaG, EA and DE need to address as a matter of urgency.

**CnaG recommends the following:**

- A programme of capacity building for IM governors, to include elements of mandatory child-protection training; training on recruitment, selection, financial issues and issues specific to IME is developed by EA, in consultation with CnaG.

#### **4.5 Irish-medium Learning Community**

Emanating from a DE-commissioned report on '*Collaborative Practice to Drive School Improvement*' (Appendix 3), the Irish-medium School Leaders Working Group (IMSLWG) proposed in 2016 that an Irish-medium Learning Community be established to develop practical and deliverable solutions to help drive school improvement in the Irish-medium sector, through collaborative practice. CnaG, EA and members of IMSLWG worked to form four regional clusters of IM principals and leaders of IM units in English-medium schools, from which a Leaders' Group was nominated to oversee the strategic direction of the Learning Community.

This cluster approach has proven to be highly effective in a number of areas, notably the West Belfast Principals' Cluster who avail of a fully funded, full-time coordinator. Learning communities were hailed as successful mechanisms during the lockdown period to facilitate sharing of effective practice, collegiality and support amongst principals and middle leaders. Although CnaG currently carries out the administrative work of the IMLC, through good will, the efficacy of the group is compromised due to a lack of cohesive coordination which would be provided by a coordinator.

In the original IMSLWG report, an IMPACT Project was proposed, where established and effective IM practitioners could be released to disseminate and develop good practice in the areas of Literacy, Numeracy, ICT and SEN. Working with middle leaders and clusters on priorities identified by the Leaders Group within the IM Learning Community, the nominated practitioners would work in individual schools & clusters of schools and organise seminars for the dissemination of good practice. To date this has not taken place as no resources are available for its facilitation.

**CnaG recommends the following:**

- EA needs to provide support and direction to the IMLC as they work to implement their initial 3 Year Strategic Plan;
- Funding is necessary to employ (at least) a part-time coordinator to oversee the administration and running of the four regional groups and the Leaders Group;
- The IMLC needs to be fully resourced so that it can implement all proposals mentioned in the original IMSLWG report (see appendix 3), particularly the IMPACT project.

#### **4.6 IME-EA Specific Support**

CnaG is of the view that whilst collaboration is an important element of building capacity and supporting the IME network, it is vitally important that EA directly addresses the particular

challenges and needs of the IME sector. In order to deliver quality and consistency in the support services offered to the IME sector, CnaG believes that DE and EA need to place an increasing emphasis on developing the EA's in-house expertise, skills and knowledge to enable them to directly support schools, rather than the current emphasis, which appears to be based largely on collaborative, peer to peer practice.

Although a collaborative approach is useful in respect of supporting staff in IM schools, the Irish-medium sector is comparatively young and does not have the wealth of experience that the English-medium sector enjoys. Previously the IM CASS team consisted of 1 full-time coordinator and 2 seconded teachers for Literacy and Numeracy. Currently there are no dedicated Irish-medium seconded teachers available exclusively to the IM sector. One employee of the EA School Development Service (SDS), who has a background in Irish-medium education, is available to support IM schools. However they are not exclusively dedicated to IME and no other EA officer has an equivalent understanding of immersion methodology and pedagogy. The loss of the previous CASS team is a retrograde step for the sector as their significant expertise was lost to the sector when their posts were terminated.

There is currently no provision of tailored support, in the form of bespoke TPL provision, from the EA to the IM sector. Previously, extra training days were provided by the EA CASS team, particularly to Newly Qualified Teachers, but also to IM practitioners in general. This support is essential to cater for the needs of an expanding sector.

These challenges are currently felt acutely within Children and Young People's Services, especially with regards to IM SEN, and Operations and Estates.

#### **CnaG recommends the following;**

- Two full-time School Improvement Professionals are recruited by the EA at an early date to work exclusively with the IM sector;
- TPL provision should be reintroduced as a matter of urgency;
- EA establish a cross directorate group at AD level to liaise with CnaG on a termly basis in order to create a mechanism to monitor, evaluate and prioritise IME support;
- The adequate funding of The IM Bursary Scheme, as part of the Learning Leaders strategy to allow practitioners to avail of TPL opportunities.

#### **4.7 Shared Education**

Despite high levels of interest and a strong willingness to engage with other sectors, the Irish-medium sector remains the least represented sector in the two current Shared Education projects, according to recent figures from the EA. The IM sector is at a massive disadvantage as a result of this lack of engagement, not only in terms of pupil involvement but also in terms of staff training and professional development in the form of TPL opportunities for staff. CnaG is keen to explore the many reasons behind this lack of engagement.

## CnaG recommends the following:

- A series of round-table discussions at DE/EA level is convened to make plans to overcome current barriers, in terms of IM involvement, prior to a new tranche of funding becoming available;
- A Shared Education Forum should be established with representation from all sectors which may require an IM specific Action Plan or approach. This approach may consist of the following three steps to promote and encourage IM involvement and a willingness to share with the IM sector among other sectors;
- Sharing and development of sound working relationships between BOGs and Principals;
- Teacher sharing and exploration sessions in order to establish common ground and to debunk myths relating to the Irish language and Irish-medium education;
- Pupil sharing events to discover aspects of a shared cultural and linguistic heritage to include place names, surnames, myths and legends and basic Irish language lessons in order to eventually facilitate bilingual Shared Education sessions.

## 4.8 IM Early Years

### 4.8.1 Research on the Educational Outcomes of Pre-School Irish Medium Education

RSM McClure Watters (Consulting) Ltd was appointed by the Department of Education in 2015, to undertake Research on the Education Outcomes of Pre-School Irish Medium Education. RSM McClure Watters (Consulting) Ltd subcontracted aspects of the research to Dr. Eibhlín Mhic Aoidh (St Mary's University College, Belfast) as Project Manager and to Dr. Laoise Ní Thuairisg (National University of Ireland, Galway) and Aileen Nic Íomhair (St John the Baptist Primary School, Portadown) as research associates.

Although not published until January 2019, the report makes several significant recommendations regarding best practice in the area of Irish-medium early years:

**Recommendation 1:** The perceived variation between statutory and voluntary IM pre-school settings noted by participants should be addressed in order to ensure consistency of experience for all pupils. One way of addressing these differences is to provide the required levels of curriculum and linguistic support and continuing professional development for all settings, both voluntary and statutory. Another way is to consider extending the number of statutory nursery settings.

**Recommendation 2:** The identification and sharing of good practice across sectors should be promoted within bespoke programmes of CPD available to all IM Preschool settings. This should also inform a quality assurance framework for CPD provision.

**Recommendation 3:** A language competence framework and continuing professional development programme for staff working in Irish-medium pre-school settings should be developed in order to enhance provision and secure the best language-related learning outcomes.

**Recommendation 4:** An agreed fit-for-purpose transition report form which reflects the IM learning experiences and linguistic development of children at the end of their pre-school year should be devised.

**Recommendation 5:** Given the importance of the key relationship between parents and the pre-school education provision for their children, linguistic resources should be developed to support IM parental partnerships.

**Recommendation 6:** An exploratory framework of desirable descriptors/indicators of typical IM language development for children in pre-school settings should be developed and piloted. These descriptors/indicators should take cognisance of three key sources: bilingual frameworks in international research; the experience of IM preschool teachers; and empirical evidence of the typical levels of immersion language observed in settings.

**Recommendation 7:** Bespoke pre-school curricular guidance which takes cognisance of the IM immersion context should be developed by a collaborative group of stakeholders including practitioners.

**Recommendation 8:** Quality indicators in IM pre-school settings should be developed to underpin the Together Towards Improvement self-evaluation process.

**Recommendation 9:** An understanding of the principles and practices of pre-school IM education as well as a reasonable proficiency in the Irish language should be a requirement of all those who evaluate the quality of provision and learning in IM pre-school settings.

#### **CnaG recommends the following:**

- DE and EA should initiate discussions without further delay with CnaG and Altram to ensure implementation of all recommendations contained in this report. The question around provision of statutory pre-school education for IME is discussed in greater detail in section 1.6.9 above

#### **4.8.2 Altram and Report on State of the Sector (2017)**

In 2017 Altram, commissioned a report on the Irish-medium early years sector, with the aims of:

- Reviewing the impact of the sector;
- Identifying the pressures and challenges facing the sector;
- Assessing the sustainability of the sector; and
- Identifying the support needs within the sector.

The key findings of the report include:

- A costed and time-bound Workforce Development and Training Plan, with clearly defined targets, should be developed by Altram and agreed with partners,

fundings and regulatory authorities. This will enable a more strategic approach by all to the provision of a skilled, qualified and developing workforce across all areas of Early Years Care & Education, Irish Language and Immersion education methodology.

- Altram should develop a Workforce Strategy for the sector addressing future workforce requirements, recruitment of staff, terms of employment and other issues raised through the engagement process as a way of making the sector an “employer of choice.”
- Altram, with its strategic partners, should develop a Sustainability Framework, seeking to attract parents and children to the sector.
- The sector should develop a Communications strategy.
- Altram should consider the need for objective research into factors that contribute to positive outcomes for children in Irish-medium Early Years settings, with particular emphasis on language acquisition, including the comparison between statutory and voluntary/community settings.
- Altram and Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta should seek to identify, clarify and reach agreement on their respective roles and responsibilities with the development of a pathway to effective partnership.
- There should be a review of the arrangements for supporting parents with their children’s language development including access to language classes and resources.
- Altram should develop Guidance on the Roles and Responsibilities of Management Committees and develop a training strategy to ensure appropriate governance arrangements.
- Altram, with its strategic partners, should undertake an audit of the accommodation in which Irish-medium services are provided

Altram is currently funded for three year periods via a Service Level Agreement with CnaG, with monies provided by the Department of Education. The temporary nature of these funding arrangements is unsatisfactory and leads to anxiety and uncertainty in staff and a possible break of service between contracts.

**CnaG recommends the following:**

- DE to work closely with CnaG and Altram at a strategic and operational level, to ensure that all recommendations in the report are achieved.
- The Department of Education should seek to ensure a more permanent arrangement for the future support and funding of the IM Early Years sector.

**4.9 Parental support infrastructure.**

The vast majority of parents who send their children to Irish-medium Education do not speak Irish and are unfamiliar with Irish-medium education. Understandably new parents in particular have concerns about Irish-medium Education and often rely on an informal support network of other local parents who have children in Irish-medium Education. Concerns range from how to support their children in doing their homework to understanding how their children are progressing in their education and linguistic development.

Gaelic-medium education in Scotland has addressed this problem by the establishment of a parental support group “Comann nam Pàrant” that has been operating for over 25 years and which provides advice and support on Gaelic medium education to parents through a national organisation and a network of around 30 locally-constituted groups.

This group represents the interests of parents whose children are educated through the medium of Gaelic at the various levels, from pre-school to secondary level. The organisation has been very successful in engaging and supporting parents in Gaelic Medium Education across Scotland and especially at a local level.

CnaG has identified the need to meet the needs of parents in IME and this could potentially be based on a similar model as Comann nam Pàrant, which has worked so well in Scotland.

**CnaG recommends the following**

- The undertaking a feasibility study and consultation to establish the need for and strategy for supporting parents of children in IME in the North.
- To investigate the range of possible solutions to meet this need including the setting up of a similar organisation to Cumann nam Pàrant and to consult on these with the sector.
- To engage with local communities to identify areas that would like to participate in an initial pilot project to deliver the preferred solution.
- To seek funding from DE to facilitate the delivery of a parent support initiative/ network initially focused on a number of pilot projects.

**4.10 Cross-border Collaboration**

There are a wide range of areas where it would be very beneficial to build cross-border collaboration between organisations throughout Ireland. CnaG has identified a number of initial areas for collaboration, on a range of areas as follows:

Area of Collaboration	Details of potential collaboration	Action
Teacher Education and Continuing Professional Development	While there is some collaboration between St Mary’s University College and the National University of Ireland Galway, (NUIG) in the area of second-level teacher education (TICO and MGO), there is significant scope for increasing this collaboration, along with collaboration with other HEIs, and cooperation to meet the strategic needs of the sector in both jurisdictions.	There is a need to define the teaching needs of the sector and take appropriate steps to ensure that courses are appropriate to the needs of the sector across Ireland, and that high-quality teaching graduates with the appropriate skills, subjects and high levels of fluency are available for the growth and development of the sector. The question of all-Ireland compatibility of teaching qualifications should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Access to IME secondary provision for pupils where this is convenient	There are areas in which IM post-primary provision could operate on a cross border basis, with pupils from both jurisdictions travelling across the border. This already happens in some areas where people from Derry and Strabane travel to Letterkenny and Buncrana, and in South Armagh where children travel to Dundalk.	Propose to investigate the practicalities and challenges of facilitating this cross-border approach with DE, the EA, Gaeloideachas Teo and the education authorities in the south.
Teaching resources Development	There is already significant co-operation between an tÁisaonad in St Mary's University College, and COGG in the development of resources for primary schools, along with CCEA.	This co-operation could be developed so as to collaborate in the development of resources for 2nd level schools.

It is CnaG's intention to seek to have the Coiste Seasta Thuaidh Theas / North-South Standing Committee on Irish-medium education re-established in conjunction with Foras na Gaeilge, to progress the above areas of collaboration.

#### 4.11 Youth services & community links

Both Bain and *The Sustainable Schools Policy* identify the added benefit to the sustainability of a school that is provided by extending the range of services that the school helps deliver. Paragraph 2.13 of *The Sustainable Schools Policy* summarises this.

Extended services can make a significant contribution to reducing differentials and improving the quality of life for children and young people, particularly from disadvantaged areas. Positive engagement with families, sharing facilities with local community groups, and establishing close links with statutory and voluntary agencies working in the area helps reinforce the position of the school and highlights its pivotal role in terms of its contribution to personal, health and community development.

These benefits can be delivered in a range of ways, either through formal extended schools programmes, collaboration in the setting up of a registered youth club, collaboration with existing youth organisations and networks and collaboration with other Irish-language community organisations.

This approach is particularly beneficial to Irish-medium education, in providing pupils with a range of opportunities to use their language within a social context, and to provide opportunities for Irish-speaking youth to secure training and experience in youth work and build the wider community involvement in the language revival. It can also be very important in providing a support network for parents of children who are in IME, or who may be contemplating IME for their children.

There are a number of areas where there is very strong collaboration and links between IME provision and the community, and these present models of good practice which can be used to help other areas.

**CnaG recommends the following:**

- DE supports CnaG in the establishment of a framework for collaboration with a range of Irish-language bodies (including Foras na Gaeilge, Ciste Infheistíochta Gaeilge, Fóram na nÓg, Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta, Conradh na Gaeilge, Glór na nGael and Altram);
- A youth and community strategy/policy is created to establish and promote a joined up approach between school and community in the IM sector so as to better support IM pupils, in line with ESaGS.



## **5.0 Sub-regional / Geographical Needs Model**

In order to underpin the validity and deliverability of the top-down Sectoral Needs Model outlined in Section 3, CnaG has also adopted a bottom-up approach to the analysis which looks at potential and likely growth within defined geographical areas.

### **5.1 Bottom-up approach**

This more detailed, bottom-up approach is vital to predict, monitor and review the needs of individual schools and clusters of schools, and to set specific area-planning objectives that will inform the overall Area-Planning Process.

In order to deliver this, CnaG has analysed the particular needs of 9 sub-regions to produce projections, based on the particular circumstances and attributes of each of these areas.

These 9 geographical sub-regional areas either currently have Irish-medium Post-primary provision or have the potential to have such provision. CnaG accepts that there may be some overlap between the catchment areas of the various IME-post-primary schools, however it is felt that this will be quite limited, and this can be taken into account at each sub-region. CnaG appreciate that these areas do not necessarily match the Department of Education's Area Planning localities. However, it is essential that IME is planned, based on its own strategic development framework which will then inform the Department of Education's Area Planning process.

### **5.2 Rationale for defining sub-regions**

One of the strategic objectives of CnaG within each of these sub-regions, is to facilitate growth of the sector, to ensure that there are sufficient pupils to deliver the long-term viability of a post-primary school within each of these areas. CnaG agrees with the current admission and enrolment levels proposed within the Sustainable Schools Policy, in relation to a long-term enrolment (LTE) of 50+ children per annum for a viable post-primary school. CnaG believes that any area that currently does not have provision, and which is considering implementing a post-primary Development Proposal, should have a clearly-established pattern of growth that will, based on a long-term target of 67% transfer rate, generate 50+ pupils per annum.

If an area is not likely to be able to sustain an annual LTE of 50+ pupils, consideration should be given to the provision of an interim solution, until such times as the LTEs can justify free-standing provision. CnaG advocates a staged development approach for any interim solutions (including existing units) that would bring about their development into free standing schools, once they have shown that they have the potential to reach the viability threshold.

CnaG's strategic objective in relation to growing IME primary enrolments within these areas, will be based largely on strengthening and growing existing provision and, where necessary, setting up new provision. Where IM units within English-medium schools have reached a viability threshold to become sustainable free-standing schools, CnaG, subject to a formal consultation and Development-Proposal process, advocates the transformation of these Units into free standing provision.

### 5.3 Definition of sub-regions

These sub-regional areas are shown on the map in figure 1 and are summarised as follows and linked to Local Government Districts (LGD) and Area Planning (AP) localities:

Area	Corresponding LGD and (AP Localities)	General Description (2019/20)
South & West Belfast	Belfast (Locality 3)	This area is served by Coláiste Feirste, which has a current total enrolment of 720 and has a total of 7 Gaelscoileanna within the west and south-Belfast catchment area. A total of 136 children graduated from these seven feeder schools in 2019, rising to 175 in 2025 and this provides a strong foundation for what is an existing and viable post-primary school. A further IM primary school is currently being planned for in the wider Carryduff area (Lisburn & Castlereagh LGD).
North Belfast & Surrounding Areas	Antrim and Newtownabbey (Locality 2); Belfast (Locality 3)	This area is currently served by Coláiste Feirste and does not currently have its own post-primary school. A total of 69 children graduated from four feeder schools in 2019, forecast to rise to 71 in 2025. This demonstrates a long-term enrolment that could provide a viable post-primary intake of 50+ per annum. Coláiste Feirste and CnaG are actively exploring sites for a second provision linked to the Coláiste in this sub-region.
Newry & South Down	Newry, Mourne and Down (Locality 3)	This area is served by an IM stream in St Malachy's High School in Castlewellan, which currently has an enrolment of 105 pupils. A total of 46 children graduated from three schools and a feeder IM primary Unit in 2019, forecast to rise to 58 in 2025. The area is not yet at a level to have a long-term enrolment that would justify free-standing IM post-primary provision. Enrolments within this area will be monitored as they continue to grow towards viability levels for free-standing provision.
Armagh	Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon (Locality 1); Newry, Mourne and Down (Locality 3)	This area is served by an IM stream in St Catherine's, Armagh city, which currently has an enrolment of 142 pupils. A total of 61 pupils graduated from four IM primary units in 2019, forecast to rise to 88 in 2025. A further feeder school is anticipated in Armagh City in the future. The area should be considered now by Area Planning as an area that could sustain a viable free-standing Post-Primary school, with an intake of 50+ pupils per annum.
East / Mid Tyrone	Fermanagh and Omagh (Locality 1); Mid Ulster (Locality 1)	This area is served by an IM stream in St Joesph's Grammar school in Donaghmore, which has a current enrolment of 156 pupils. A total of 70 children graduated from four IME Primary schools and one IME primary Unit in 2019 rising to 117 in 2025. The area currently has long-term enrolments that could justify a viable post-primary intake well in excess of 50+ per annum. If the development of free-standing provision within this locality is not going to be brought forward, CnaG would support a more locally based Post-Primary solution in the Omagh area, which could also draw pupils from Fermanagh and Strabane.
Derry &	Derry City and	

Strabane	Strabane (Locality 2)	This area currently does not have IM post-primary provision and a growing number of pupils within this catchment area progress to Gaelcholáiste Dhoire and some to Coláiste Ailigh in Letterkenny. A total of 45 children graduated from the four schools within the catchment area in 2019, forecast to rise to 82 in 2025. The area currently does not have enrolments that could justify a viable post-primary provision. Enrolments within this area will be monitored as they continue to grow towards viability levels for free-standing provision. Pending this Gaelcholáiste Dhoire will continue to provide an option for pupils who wish to travel to avail of IME post-primary
Rural Co. Derry	Causeway, Coast and Glens (Locality 2); Mid Ulster (Locality 1)	This area is currently served by Gaelcholáiste Dhoire which opened in September 2015. The school has total enrolment of 121. A total of 63 children graduated from the five schools in 2019 within the catchment area, forecast to rise to 86 in 2025. The school has already reached sustainable-level admissions and enrolment trends. The school should now be recognised as a viable Post-Primary provider, and its future accommodation and other requirements should be planned for on that basis.
North Antrim.	Causeway, Coast and Glens (Locality 2)	This area currently has no IM post-primary provision. The area consists of a single IM primary school with 11 children graduating to secondary in 2019, forecast to rise to 15 in 2025. There is currently little prospect of any viable post-primary IM provision, either free-standing or a stream until additional IM primary provision is established within the general North-Antrim / North-East County Derry area.
Fermanagh	Fermanagh and Omagh (Locality 1)	Co. Fermanagh currently has no IM post-primary provision available. The Fermanagh area consists of a single school with a total of 8 children graduating from R7 in 2019, forecast to rise to 15 in 2025. There is currently little prospect of the area justifying either a post-primary free-standing school, or a stream. However, Coláiste Oiriall in Monaghan is relatively close and could offer an option for those wishing to transfer to IME post-primary. However, Coláiste Oiriall in Monaghan is relatively close and could offer an option for those wishing to transfer to IME post-primary.

# Key

- Area with Existing Post-Primary Provision in north
- Area with current potential for post-primary provision
- Area not yet in a position to deliver viable post-primary provision
- Area with Existing Post-Primary Provision in south

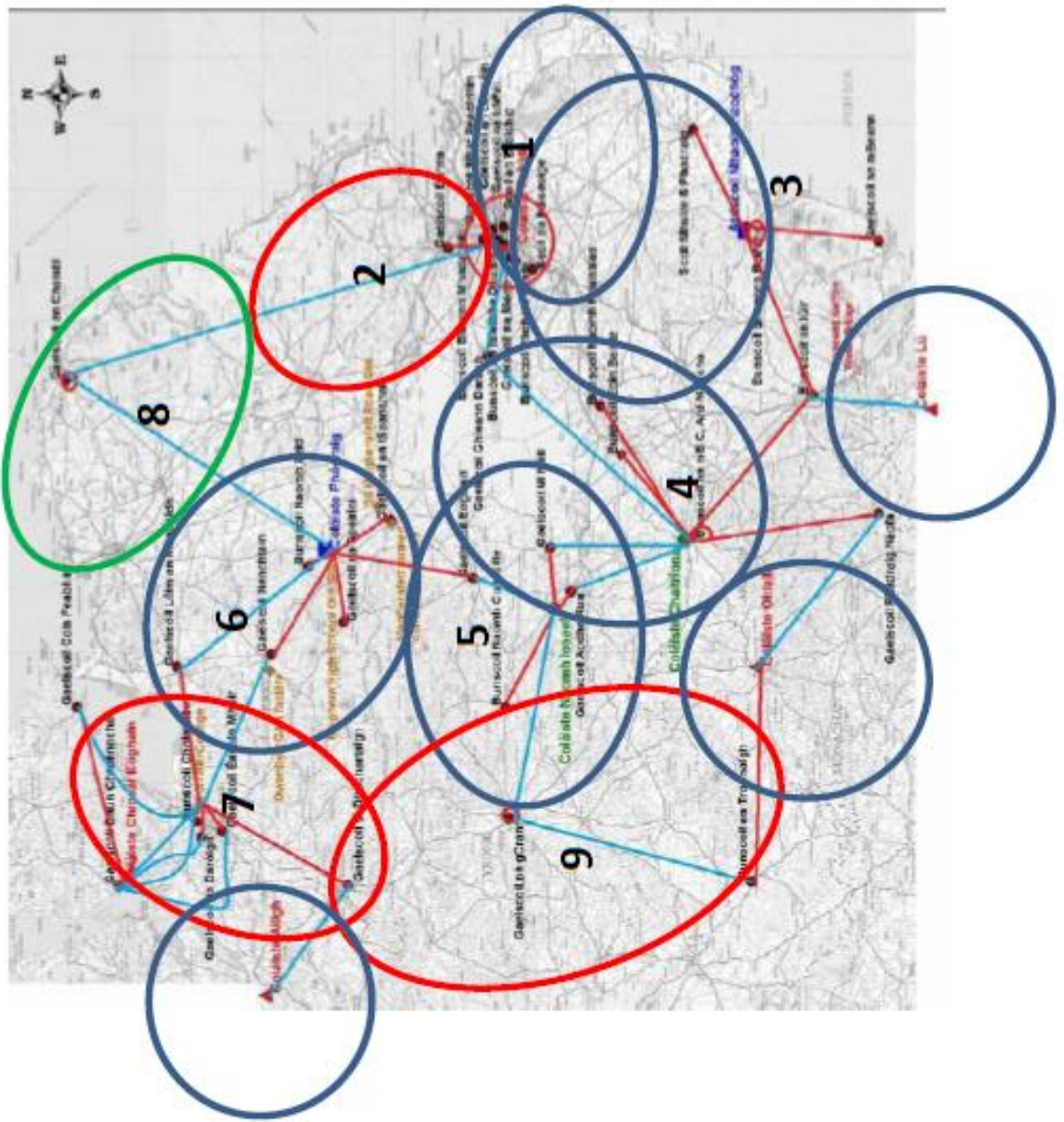


Figure 1. Map of sub-regions

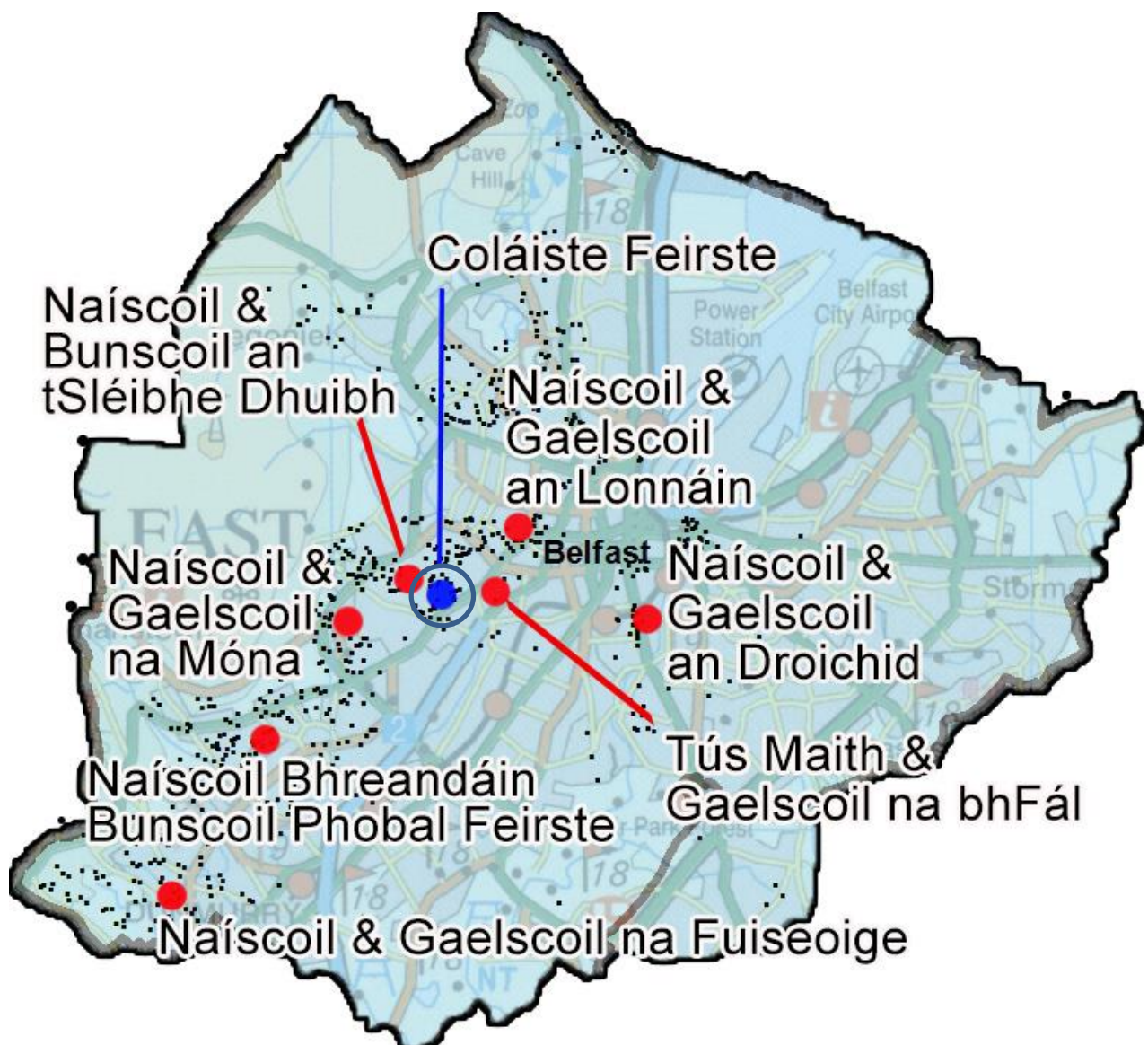


## 6.0 Sub-regional analysis and priorities

### 6.1 South & West Belfast

#### 6.1.1 Summary of current provision

At post-primary level this area is served by Coláiste Feirste, the largest IM-secondary school in Ireland and one of the top performing, non-selective schools in Belfast. Coláiste Feirste opened in 1991 with a total of 9 pupils and now has in excess of 700 pupils. The following map shows the location of the various IME pre-school, primary and post-primary schools within the area.



All of the IM providers within this area are in Belfast LGD.

## Gaelscoileanna (Irish-medium Primary Schools)

Currently, Coláiste Feirste caters for a wide catchment area with children attending the school from Gaelscoileanna right across Belfast and other areas including Downpatrick and Crumlin. However, for the purpose of this Area-Planning exercise, it is assumed that a second post-primary facility will be established within the Belfast area and cater for the schools within the North of the city and Crumlin (albeit some pupils from Crumlin may still opt for the existing provision). It is therefore assumed that there are effectively 7 feeder schools within the primary catchment area of Coláiste Feirste as shown on the following tables.

The following table provides an overview of the schools within the catchment area.

School Name	Location	Management Type	Current Provision	Approved Enrolment	Intake Sept '18	Intake Sept '19
Bunscoil an tSléibhe Dhuibh	Whiterock Rd	Other Maintained	189	203	30	26
Gaelscoil an Lonnáin	Lower Falls	Other Maintained	56	71	6	12
Gaelscoil na bhFál	Falls	Other Maintained	186	196	26	26
Gaelscoil na Móna	Turf Lodge	Other Maintained	116	145	22	23
Scoil an Droichid	Ormeau Road	Other Maintained	152	145	25	25
Bunscoil Phobal Feirste	Shaws Road	Other Maintained	339	406	49	59
Scoil na Fuiseoige	Dunmurry	Other Maintained	148	145	17	26
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>1186</b>	<b>1311</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>197</b>

The number of 'unfilled' places dropped significantly from 410 in September 2016 to 148 in September 2018 – a reduction of 64%. This has been achieved through increasing enrolments at every school and coupled with this, the rightsizing of Gaelscoil na bhFál's Approved Enrolment (reduced from 290 to 196).

Whilst most of the schools are close to or above an enrolment of 140 pupils, one school (Gaelscoil an Lonnáin) remains well below this level. Despite having grown by 11 pupils (18%) its current accommodation presents a major challenge on the ability of the school to deliver an enriching educational experience and to grow.

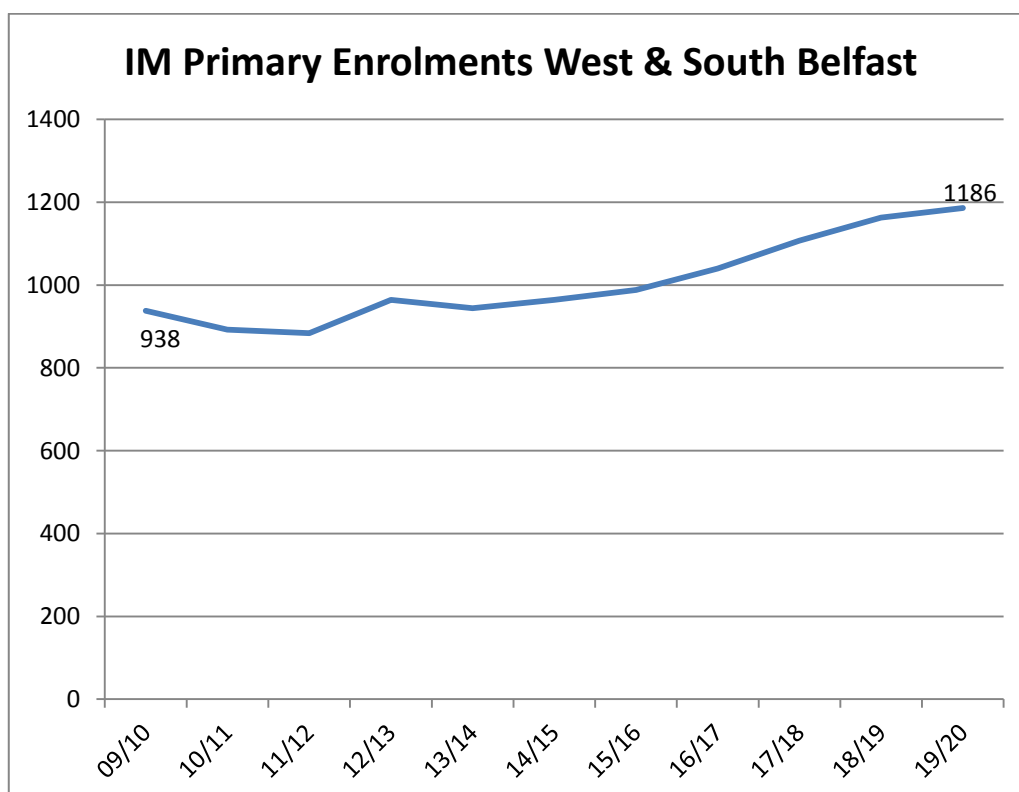
## Naíscoileanna (Irish-medium Pre-Schools)

There are seven Naíscoileanna within the catchment area and the 2019 figures are shown in the below table.

Name	Location	Description	2019/20 Enrolment	1 <sup>st</sup> Preferences Sept. 2019
Naíscoil an Lonnáin	Belfast	Voluntary	12	8
Naíscoil an tSléibhe Dhuibh	Belfast	Statutory Unit	27	25
Naíscoil Bhreandáin	Belfast	Statutory Unit	61	60
Naí-Ionad na bhFál	Belfast	Statutory Unit	28	28
Naíscoil na Móna	Belfast	Statutory Unit	24	23
Naíscoil an Droichid	Belfast	Statutory Unit	27	31
Naíscoil na Fuisseoige	Belfast	Voluntary	24	26
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>203</b>	<b>201</b>

### 6.1.2 Enrolment Trends

The following graph show sustained growth in overall enrolments within the sector over the past ten years. However, the underlying annual R1 admissions shows steady growth over this period and this has significant implications regarding the future growth of the sector in the area. This is dealt with later in this section of the report. The following updated graph demonstrates that the enrolment trend has continued in an upward trajectory.



The demographics of the sector are such that the average year group sizes in Key-stage 1 have been higher than in KS2 and as a result the overall number of pupils in the sector has grown as the smaller KS 2 classes leave to be replaced by larger intakes year-on-year.

The following tables detail the underlying enrolment trends in the Náiscoileanna and Gaelscoileanna within the area.

Numbers of Children Graduating from Náiscoileanna								
Náiscoil / Pre-School	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Náiscoil an Lonnáin	15	15	17	13	8	8	9	12
Náiscoil an tSléibhe Dhuibh	26	26	26	29	29	28	25	27
Náiscoil Bhreandáin	52	52	51	51	52	52	60	61
Naí-Ionad na bhFál	29	26	26	26	27	24	28	28
Náiscoil na Móna	28	19	19	23	24	26	23	24
Náiscoil an Droichid	26	26	26	29	28	30	31	27
Náiscoil na Fuiseoige	26	20	26	26	24	24	24	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>203</b>

Breakdown of Primary Admissions								
Year	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Bunscoil an tSléibhe Dhuibh	22	29	28	22	29	28	30	26
Gaelscoil an Lonnáin	9	14	9	11	11	9	6	12
Gaelscoil na bhFál	23	25	26	24	29	26	26	26
Gaelscoil na Móna	13	19	16	18	15	16	22	23
Scoil an Droichid	17	22	22	22	23	28	25	25
Bunscoil Phobal Feirste	36	44	43	45	57	51	49	59
Scoil na Fuiseoige	21	22	16	22	27	21	17	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>197</b>
<b>Growth in Last 5 years - annual equivalent and gross</b>							<b>4.25%</b>	<b>23%</b>

Total Enrolments at Gaelscoileanna								
Year	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Bunscoil an tSléibhe Dhuibh	146	153	157	159	162	174	189	189
Gaelscoil an Lonnáin	44	49	51	54	60	63	65	56
Gaelscoil na bhFál	162	159	158	161	161	172	176	186
Gaelscoil na Móna	92	94	93	102	101	108	117	116
Scoil an Droichid	120	131	125	128	137	147	158	152
Bunscoil Phobal Feirste	287	243	255	263	287	302	314	339
Scoil na Fuiseoige	113	115	125	121	132	141	144	148
<b>Total</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>944</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>988</b>	<b>1040</b>	<b>1107</b>	<b>1163</b>	<b>1186</b>
<b>Growth in Last 5 years - annual equivalent and gross</b>							<b>4.23%</b>	<b>23%</b>



The above tables demonstrate relatively stable admissions and growing enrolments with some fluctuation. The very low first choice applications for Naíscoil an Lonnáin is concerning and results from the continued location of the school in inadequate and substandard accommodation.

Generally the statistics demonstrate strong growth in both admissions and enrolments in the area over the past five years – with R1 admissions growing 30% over this period (average 5.37% per annum) and overall enrolments growing 23% (average 4.25% per annum).

### 6.1.3 Transfer Rates

#### Naíscoileanna – Gaelscoileanna

The Following table demonstrates the transfer rates between the Naíscoileanna and the Gaelscoileanna within the area in the last eight years.

IM Preschool to Primary Transfer Rate								
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Graduating from Naíscoileanna	177	202	184	191	197	192	192	200
No. Progressing to IM Primary	141	175	160	164	191	179	175	198
Transfer Rate	80%	87%	87%	86%	97%	93%	91%	99%

The above demonstrates a strengthening sector with both an increase in overall enrolment and an increase in transfer rates over the past five years in particular. The levelling out of enrolments in the Naíscoileanna over recent years indicates that any long-term growth in the Gaelscoil sector will require additional provision within the Naíscoil sector through either the introduction of additional pre-school sessions or through new provision in areas with potential demand.

#### Gaelscoileanna – Iarbhunscoil (IM Post-Primary Level)

The following table illustrates the transfer from all of the Gaelscoileanna within the Belfast Catchment area (including Crumlin) into Coláiste Feirste.

Projected Transfer from IM Primary to Post-Primary					
Year of Transfer	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
<b>Coláiste Feirste</b>					
Total Numbers Graduating from R7 in catchment schools	186	164	160	175	213
Transfer Rate	55%	76%	64%	56%	73%
<b>Admissions Year 8 Coláiste Feirste</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>155</b>

The above figures include all schools in Belfast. Last year, 73% of the R7 leavers in the catchment opted for Coláiste Feirste. This is an average based on all the schools within the catchment area, but the statistics show that there is a significantly higher percentage of children in West and South Belfast (78%) who transferred than those in North Belfast and Crumlin (60%).

#### 6.1.4 Accommodation

Earlier in this report, a need was identified to commission a detailed baseline assessment of the accommodation constraints of the IME sector and it is recommended that this be carried out as soon as possible. Pending this, the following table provides a summary of the state of the accommodation within the area and the constraints that are associated with the accommodation.

<b>Bunscoil an tSléibhe Dhuibh</b>	
Current Status	Capital Viability Status
Description of Buildings	The school building is modern and is located on a site that is suitable for the current needs of the school.
Current Constraints	Accommodation within the school falls short of the DE handbook and has particular accommodation requirements regarding lunchtime provision, ICT & SEN provision, lack of space for counselling/outside agencies. The requirements are outlined in the DE Handbook, however, the school pre-dates the handbook. The school is approaching full occupancy with no room for future expansion.
<b>Bunscoil Phobal Feirste</b>	
Current Status	Capital Viability Status
Description of Buildings	The school building is modern and is located on a site that is suitable for the current needs of the school. However, this situation will continue to be monitored.
Current Constraints	The School now has no surplus classroom capacity (2 classes per year group and all classrooms in usage). It urgently requires additional storage capacity, additional rooms/offices for parent meetings or external support services, SEN / Health Visitors etc, staff-room and additional toilets for pupils and staff, in accordance with Department of Education's Building Handbook. As the school enrolments increase towards approved enrolment level, accommodation within the school falls short of DE Handbook and has particular accommodation requirements regarding SEN provision, ICT provision, office space, space for counselling/outside agencies, canteen provision, including restrooms. Further teaching classrooms are urgently required.
<b>Gaelscoil an Lonnáin</b>	
Current Status	No Capital Viability status.
Description of Buildings	The current school building is not fit for purpose. School urgently needs to relocate to an appropriate site and accommodation as it is currently located within a 100 year old building which has inadequate space and is unfit for use as a modern school building.
Current Constraints	The school falls far short of the DE handbook standards. The school has no internal or external sports facilities, no hall or dining area, no grassed area within its grounds, no parking provision, shortage of rooms / offices for visitors, a lack of adequate toilet facilities, lack of storage and no playing pitch. The growth of the school has been severely hampered by the unfit for purpose premises.
<b>Gaelscoil na bhFál</b>	
Current Status	Capital Viability status.

Description of Buildings	The school buildings are modern and the site is suitable for the current needs of the school.
Current Constraints	There is a need for more appropriate outdoor play provision. The school has no green areas.
<b>Gaelscoil na Móna</b>	
Current Status	Capital Viability status.
Description of Buildings	The school is located on a site that is suitable only for the current basic needs of the school. The current proven growth in the school means that new accommodation will be imminently required. A new site and additional accommodation will be required in the near future.
Current Constraints	The school falls far short of the DE handbook standards and has no internal or external sports facilities, no assembly hall and a limited dining facility, very limited grassed area within its grounds, limited parking provision, no rooms for parent meetings or external support services, SEN / Health Visitors and limited external play area and no playing pitch.
<b>Scoil an Droichid</b>	
Current Status	Capital Viability status.
Description of Buildings	The school is located on an inadequate site* and housed in mobile and modular accommodation.
Current Constraints	The school is in a very cramped site with poor accommodation. It has limited external sports facilities, no assembly hall and limited grassed area within its grounds; limited parking provision, no rooms for parent meetings or external support services, SEN / Health Visitors etc and no playing pitch and urgently needs to move to a new site. Annual increase in intake has meant that play area has decreased. *It should be noted that the development of a new school and site is now underway with an anticipated completion date in late 2020.
<b>Scoil na Fuisseige</b>	
Current Status	Capital Viability status.
Description of Buildings	The school building is a modern building located on a site that is suitable for the current needs of the school.
Current Constraints	Accommodation within the school is currently sufficient. The school has recently received additional accommodation and Resourced SEN Provision.
<b>Coláiste Feirste</b>	
Current Status	Capital Viability status.
Description of Buildings	The school buildings are largely modern and significant development works were completed on the site in 2017/18. However, the school population continues to grow rapidly. Upon the completion of the capital project, DE supplied 4 x modular classrooms to accommodate the increased school numbers. This extra accommodation is still insufficient however to meet the needs of the school. A Development Proposal has been submitted to DE to increase the approved enrolment and admissions numbers and to provide further accommodation as a temporary solution to increasing demand.
Current Constraints	Refurbishment Work has been completed in the school for a pupil population of 600, and an additional 4 x modular classrooms have been provided to accommodate increased pupils numbers. The school currently exceeds its approved 600 pupils. Total enrolment in 2019/20 stands at 721 pupils and is set to rise by 40 to 50 pupils per year to over 900 pupils by 2023/24. Therefore, the current accommodation which is already stretched beyond the DE accepted temporary tolerance. The current site will be unable to cater for the increasing school numbers and second-site provision will be required in North Belfast.

There is a great deal of physical accommodation improvement needed in Gaelscoileanna in this catchment area with Gaelscoil an Lonnáin urgently requiring relocation. The current accommodation and facilities of Gaelscoil an Lonnáin are wholly inadequate and are undoubtedly having a constraining effect upon the growth of the school. Gaelscoil na Móna, Bunscoil Phobal Feirste and Bunscoil an tSléibhe Dhuibh all require additional facilities and as schools with increasing enrolments, their needs will increase.

Coláiste Feirste has already outgrown the 600 pupil number for which the current building was designed. The school's population has grown to over 700 pupils (2019/20) and as such, planning to increase accommodation is essential.

Generally, there is an issue regarding provision of facilities across the catchment area, with a specific lack of facilities to cater for outside visitors, ICT, SEN and health visitors etc. With particular reference to Learning Support Centres, the current temporary (Resource) provision and accommodation needs to be developed into a permanent solution and expanded to form part of a regional network of LSCs for the IM sector.

Rooms for ancillary services are often utilised as classrooms as a direct result of insufficient classroom accommodation. This has a direct impact upon the learning environment in which many children are taught. Consequently, schools are deprived of these facilities and purpose for which they were originally designed.

### **6.1.5 Potential for Growth in IME**

South and West Belfast represent the longest established area providing IME in the North of Ireland, and is a relatively mature in terms of its enrolments.

Overall enrolment within this area has risen significantly in the last 10 years from 119 in September 2009, to 197 in September 2019, equating to a 79% increase overall or 6% compound per annum growth. The demographic profile of the school population continues to be skewed towards KS1 and consequently, the area has significant latent potential for growth over the coming years.

In terms of building the enrolment figures, whilst some of the Naíscóileanna and Gaelscoileanna have surplus spaces, most Naíscóileanna have larger, stable enrolments. CnaG believes that the strengthening and expansion of the IM pre-school sector is vitally important to supporting the further growth and development of the wider IM sector in the area

In this respect it is important to look strategically at all provision within the greater Belfast area (including North Belfast and surrounding catchment areas) and develop a growth strategy which creates additional IME enrolments but which considers the viability of existing provision within the area. CnaG believes that potential exists to increase IME provision in a number of ways including:

- Maximising enrolments in Naíscoileanna/ Gaelscoileanna which have existing surplus places.
- Extending provision within existing statutory and voluntary Naíscoileanna and Gaelscoileanna - extending approved enrolments to accommodate proven demand.
- By new Naíscoil provision in areas with limited or no provision or areas where the local provision is over-subscribed. Supporting additional Statutory Naíscoil Provision where the demand exists.

CnaG will continue to consult with the Naíscoileanna and Gaelscoileanna within the area to consider how best to meet the increasing demand for IME, working with all relevant partners in a way which underpins and supports the viability of the existing provision within the area.

### **6.1.6 Projections – Primary**

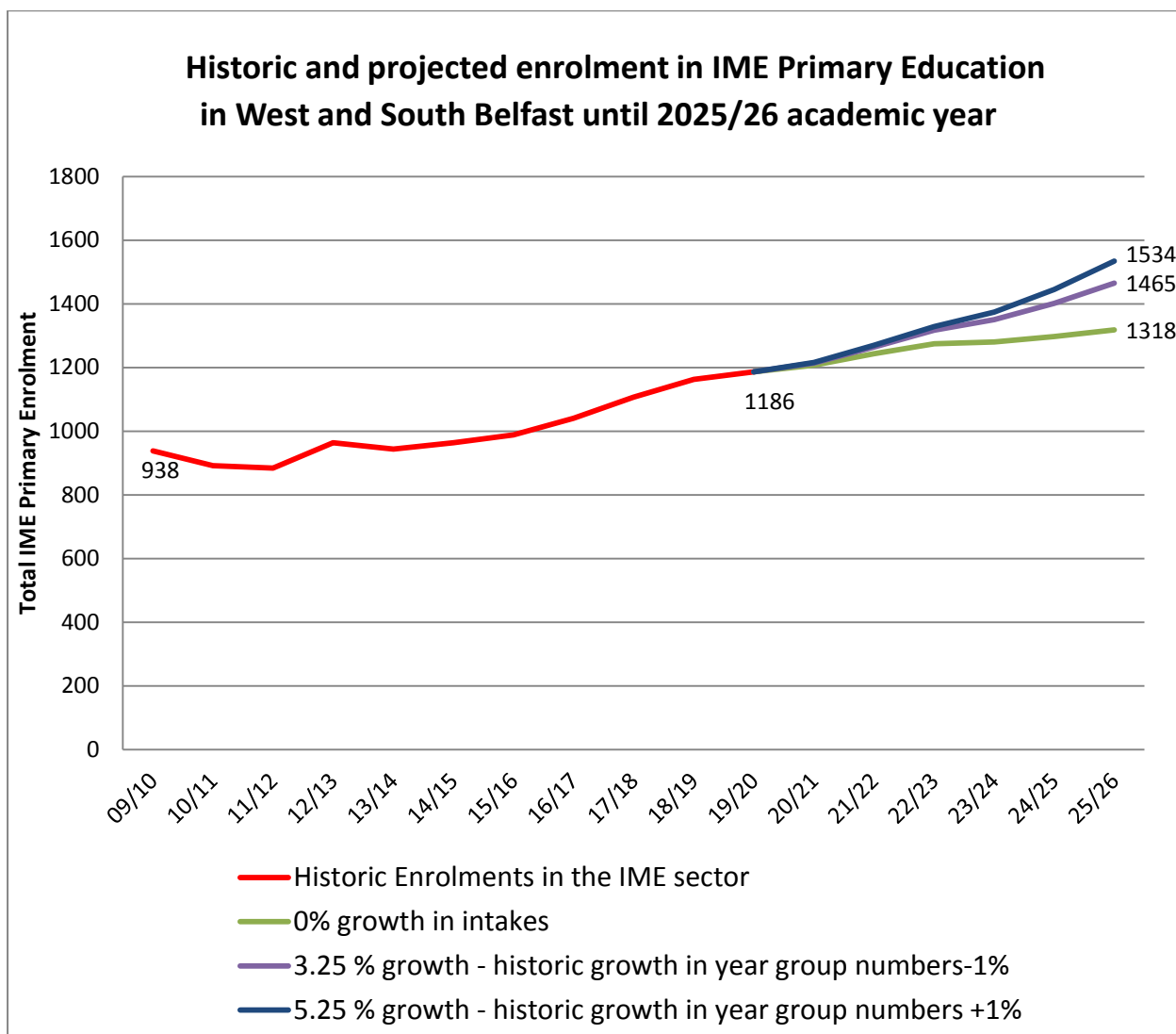
There has been a strong growth trend in admissions to IME primary schools within the area of 23% over the last five years (average 4.25% per annum) and projected growth in the sector until 2025 is expected to continue. The projected growth has been based on three scenarios as follows:

Pessimistic Scenario - 0% growth in enrolments

Realistic Scenario – 3.25% growth. This is based on an extrapolation of the historic 5-year growth rate of the schools in the catchment area minus 1%. CnaG is of the view that this reduced growth rate can be sustained over the coming years, given the required support and resources from CnaG, DE & EA.

Optimistic – 5.25% growth. This is based on an additional 1% on the historic growth rate. CnaG believes that this is potentially achievable, again given adequate support and resources from CnaG, DE & EA.

The following graph shows the effects of the above projections on the total enrolments in the sector until the 2025/26 academic year.



As illustrated above there has been significant growth in admissions to the sector since 2009. The graph demonstrates that even with 0% growth in admissions the sector will see growth of enrolment by 132 pupils or 11% by the 2025/26 academic year.

The realistic growth scenario of 3.25% per annum would increase the overall enrolment within the sector by 279 pupils or 23.5% whilst the optimistic scenario would increase the sectoral enrolment by 348 pupils or 29.3% by September 2025. The above scenarios will have significant personnel and other resource implications for the sector in the city and this will be monitored annually to help identify these requirements in advance and plan accordingly. The above projections also place an increased importance on the consultation outlined at section 6.1.6 above.

#### 6.1.7 Projections – Post-Primary

The potential pupil numbers for the secondary sector are based on the enrolments of the various primary schools within the catchment area. This provides 7 years of reliable data for projecting the Long-Term Enrolment (LTE) in Coláiste Feirste. Currently Coláiste Feirste also caters for the children from North Belfast and Crumlin, which for the purpose of this report north Belfast has

been separated into a distinct catchment area, since it clearly has the potential to develop new provision within the north of the city.

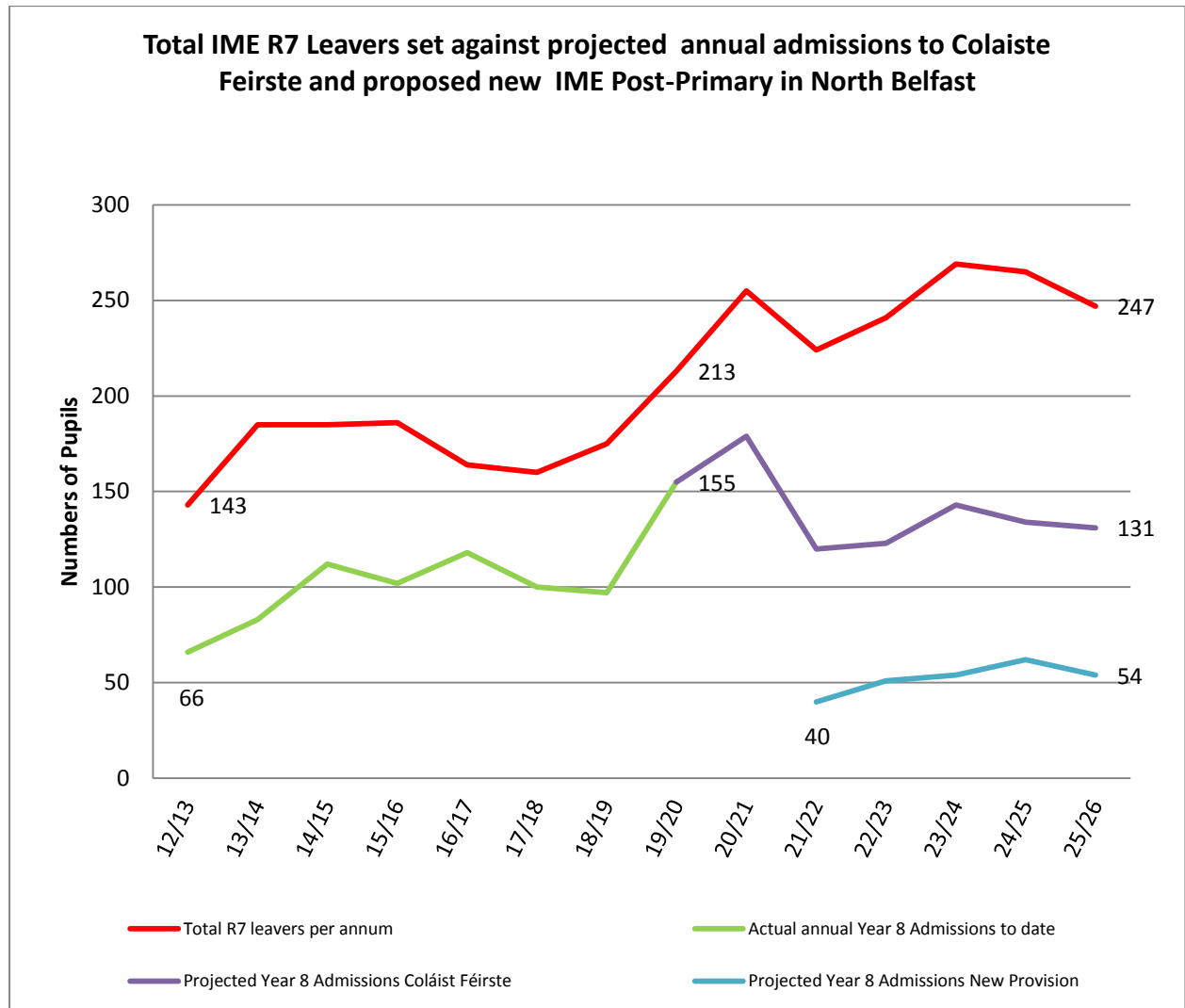
In 2019, there was a transfer of 202 children from the primary sector to post-primary and there were 288 admissions to R1 in the same year. In terms of the long-term enrolments, there are clearly sufficient pupil numbers within the primary sector to justify two free-standing post-primary schools within the Belfast area. The Year 8 admissions to Coláiste Feirste were 155 pupils representing a transfer rate from Primary to Post-Primary within this combined area of 72% - with around 78%, of the children from South and West Belfast transferring and only 60% of children from the North of the city and Crumlin transferring. With additional provision in the North of the city, it is a reasonable assumption that the transfer rates of children from IM primary schools in the North of the city and Crumlin could be increased.

CnaG is currently working with Coláiste Feirste and representatives of the North Belfast IM schools to develop a further local provision, in the North of the city.

The following table and graphs demonstrate the projected enrolment in both Coláiste Feirste and a newly established provision until the 2025/26 academic year. It is based on the assumption that transfer rates in South and West Belfast remain steady at 75% and that in the North Belfast and Crumlin start off at 60% rising to 75% by September 2025. The figures also assume that two thirds of the pupils transfer from GCSE into 6<sup>th</sup> form.

<b>Projected Transfer from IM Primary to Post-Primary</b>						
<b>Year of Transfer</b>	<b>20/21</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>25/26</b>
<b>South &amp; West Belfast</b>						
Total Numbers Graduating from R7	166	154	152	176	175	164
<b>Transfer Rate</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b><i>Estimated Numbers Transferring to IME Post Primary</i></b>	<b>125</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>North Belfast &amp; Surrounding areas</b>						
Numbers Graduating from R7	67	70	73	76	79	72
<b>Transfer Rate</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b><i>Estimated Numbers Transferring to IME Post Primary</i></b>	<b>40</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Combined numbers graduating from R7</b>						
	<b>233</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>236</b>
<b>Combined numbers entering IME Year 8</b>						
	<b>165</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>Admissions Year 8 Coláiste Feirste</b>						
	<b>165</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>Admissions Year 8 New Provision</b>						
	<b>0</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Projected Enrolment Coláiste Feirste</b>						
	<b>797</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>846</b>	<b>849</b>
<b>Projected Enrolment New Provision</b>						
	<b>0</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>255</b>

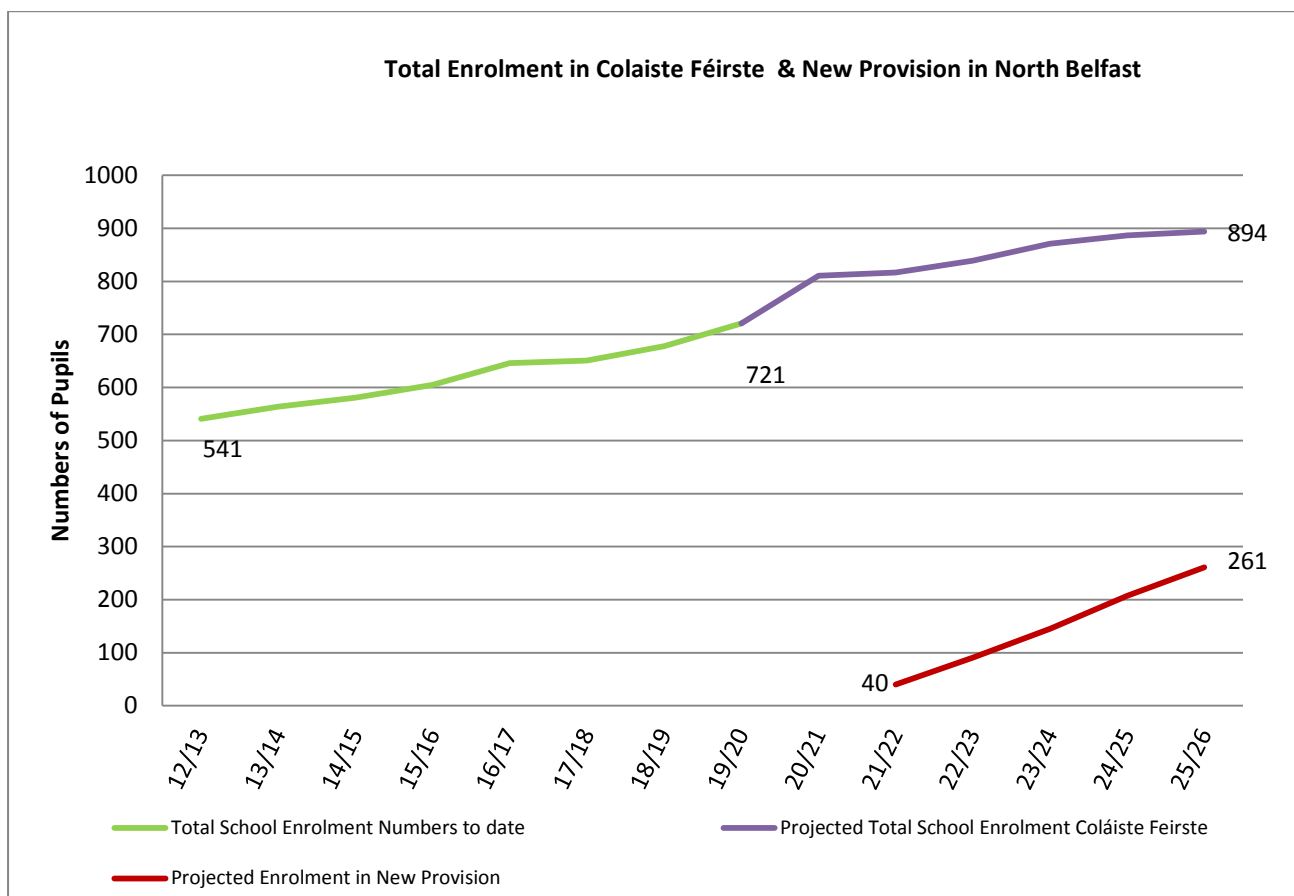
The projected intakes are sufficient to allow a second IME post-primary facility to be opened in Belfast to cater for the children within the North of the city and surrounding areas. This additional facility will increase the accessibility of IME post-primary and with it the overall percentage of children transferring from IME primary to IME post primary will increase. The following graph illustrates the trend in increasing R7 leavers set against the projected enrolment of Coláiste Feirste and the proposed new IME post-primary provision.



The following graph shows the actual growth trend in total enrolments in Coláiste Feirste and the proposed new IME provision in North Belfast from 2012 until 2025. The graph demonstrates that there is clear potential for the required level of annual intakes for new IM post-primary provision in North Belfast without impacting on the core viability of Coláiste Feirste’s intake.

The following graph illustrates the growth in the total projected enrolment of Coláiste Feirste and the new North-Belfast Provision.





The above demonstrates that Coláiste Feirste is likely to continue to grow in overall enrolment terms to over 850 by 2025, whilst allowing the growth of a second post-primary facility within the city. It is estimated that this provision would start out with an initial annual intake of 44 in September 2021 and rise to an overall enrolment of 255 by September 2025.

### 6.1.8 Area Planning / Development Objectives

Based on the above analysis and projections, a range of development and area planning objectives have been identified.

The following objectives within the area are based on an assessment of the needs of the various IME schools and assume the realistic growth scenario for growth in IME primary enrolments.

There are a number of urgent Development Priorities within this area as follows:

#### 1. Gaelscoil an Lonnáin relocation.

The current accommodation is major constraint upon the future growth and development of this school. It is not possible for the school to become sustainable within the constraints of its current accommodation. The accommodation is out-dated and the proposed relocation is required urgently to ensure the future success of the school and the all-round educational experience to which each child is entitled. Coupled with the relocation of Gaelscoil an Lonnáin, concentrated work is required in building up the enrolments of both Naíscóil and Gaelscoil an Lonnáin in order for the Gaelscoil to reach the Urban Enrolment Threshold of 20 pupils per annum.

**Action:** CnaG to continue to liaise with DE, EA and the school to relocate to a suitable site for GS an Lonnáin within the current catchment area, as soon as possible.

## **2. Scoil an Droichid relocation.**

Scoil an Droichid is in urgent need of relocation due to the cramped site. The current and ongoing work on the new site and building should be progressed as swiftly as possible.

**Action:** CnaG continue to monitor progress through involvement on the new-build Project Board.

## **3. Gaelscoil na Móna, urgent accommodation needs.**

Gaelscoil na Móna is lacking in non-classroom ancillary spaces. This has been a negative factor in the ability of the school to build its enrolment. Planning for a new school site should begin immediately. The school has been nominated by CnaG for the Capital Build call issued in Oct 2019.

**Action:** CnaG to work with school, DE and EA to identify and secure a suitable site for relocation and development of a new school building capable of meeting growing demand for IME in the area.

## **4. Bunscoil an tSléibhe Dhuibh, accommodation needs.**

Bunscoil an tSléibhe Dhuibh is currently lacking in SEN facilities, lunchtime facilities, ICT facilities and space for counselling/outside agencies.

**Action:** CnaG to work with school, DE and EA to address lack of essential facilities as highlighted above.

## **5. Bunscoil Phobal Feirste, accommodation needs.**

Whilst 'on paper', Bunscoil Phobal Feirste has surplus spaces, it is lacking in facilities, such as meeting rooms for SEN and health visits and sufficient storage space. Also, the official Approved Enrolment figure is not reflective of the physical capacity of the school.

**Action:** CnaG to work with school, DE and EA to address lack of essential facilities as highlighted above.

## **6. Coláiste Feirste & Post-Primary IME in Belfast**

With the continuing growth in IM post-primary demand, which has now outgrown available accommodation at Coláiste Feirste, Ard na bhFeá site, there is a need to support the development of a second site, in the North of the city.

**Action:** CnaG to work with Coláiste Feirste, representatives of the North Belfast IM schools, DE and EA, to develop a further local provision in the North of the city.

## **7. Establishment of Permanent Learning Support Centres**

The current temporary (Resource) provision established at Coláiste Feirste and Scoil na Fuiseoige to be developed into permanent LSCs, as well as planned LSC provision as part of the new build for Scoil an Droichid. Further provision in the area should also be planned for.

**Action:** DE, EA, CnaG to assist and progress appropriate Development Proposals with schools in the area as part of the development of a regional network of LSCs.

## **8. Establishment of New IM Pre-school Provision**

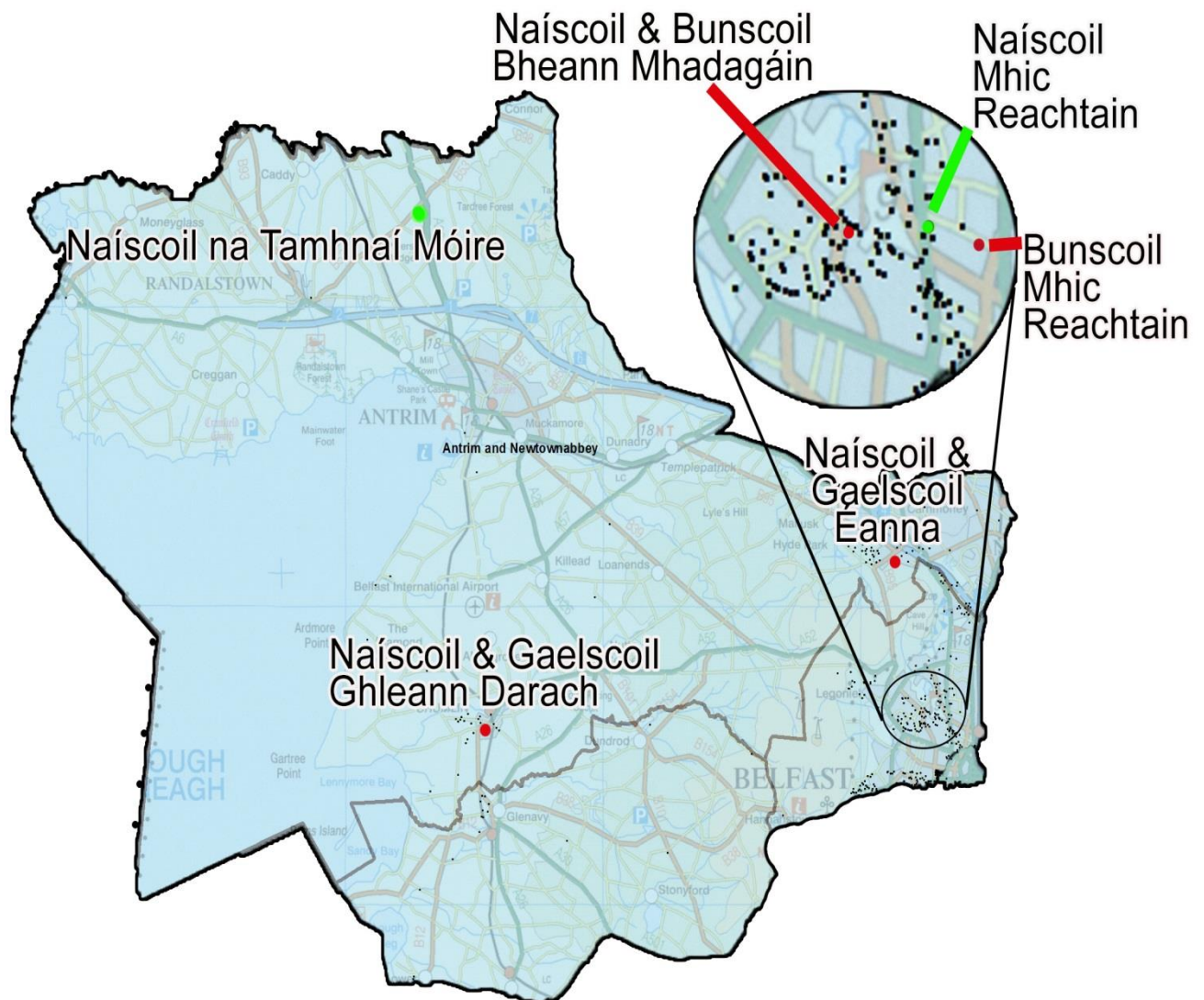
As identified in the analysis, current transfer rate from IM Pre-School to Primary is 99%. In order to facilitate further growth, further pre-school places need to be made available either through increasing spaces within existing facilities or through new provision.

**Action:** CnaG and InaG to work in collaboration with the above and neighbouring IM schools to identify potential new provision.

## 6.2 North Belfast & surrounding areas

### 6.2.1 Summary of Current Provision

This area consists of north Belfast and surrounding areas. At post-primary level, the area is currently served by Coláiste Feirste, however, as indicated at section 5.1 above CnaG recognises that, based on existing enrolments within the primary sector, there is a substantial demand that justifies new post-primary Irish-medium provision. The following map shows the locations of the various IME pre-school and primary schools within the catchment area.



The IM providers within this area cover the following LGDs:

**Antrim and Newtownabbey:** Naíscoil Ghleann Darach, Naíscoil na Tamhnaí Móire, Gaelscoil Éanna, Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach

**Belfast:** Naíscoil Mhic Reachtain, Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain, Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin

## Gaelscoileanna (IM Primary Schools)

Currently, Coláiste Feirste caters for a wide catchment area with children attending the school from Gaelscoileanna right across Belfast and other areas including Downpatrick and Crumlin. However, for the purpose of this Area-Planning exercise, it is assumed that a second post-primary facility will be established within the Belfast area and cater for the schools within the North of the city and Crumlin (albeit some pupils from Crumlin may still opt for the existing provision). For the purpose of this section of the report 4 feeder schools have been included within the catchment area as shown on the following tables.

School Name	Location	Management Type	Current Provision	Approved Enrolment	Intake Sept '18	Intake Sept '19
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin	Cliftonville	Other Maintained	157	182	22	27
Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain	York Street	Controlled	105	87	10	20
Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach	Crumlin	Other Maintained	79	105	19	13
Gaelscoil Éanna	Glengormley	Other Maintained	184	205	21	28
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>502</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>82</b>

The number of 'unfilled' places dropped from 97 in September 2015 to 54 in September 2019 – a reduction of 56%. It is important to note that this significant reduction has occurred during a period in which a further 37 places were created at Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin.

Whilst two of the schools are comfortably above their requisite enrolment thresholds, issues remain at the other two. Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain continues to grow in spite of an inadequate and highly-restrictive site and lack of full facilities. This growth has necessitated preparation of a Development Proposal to increase the approved enrolment of the school to better reflect the current and historic pupil numbers.

Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach has also demonstrated the ability to grow and this is reflected in the pattern of increasing enrolment evident in the lower classes of the school.

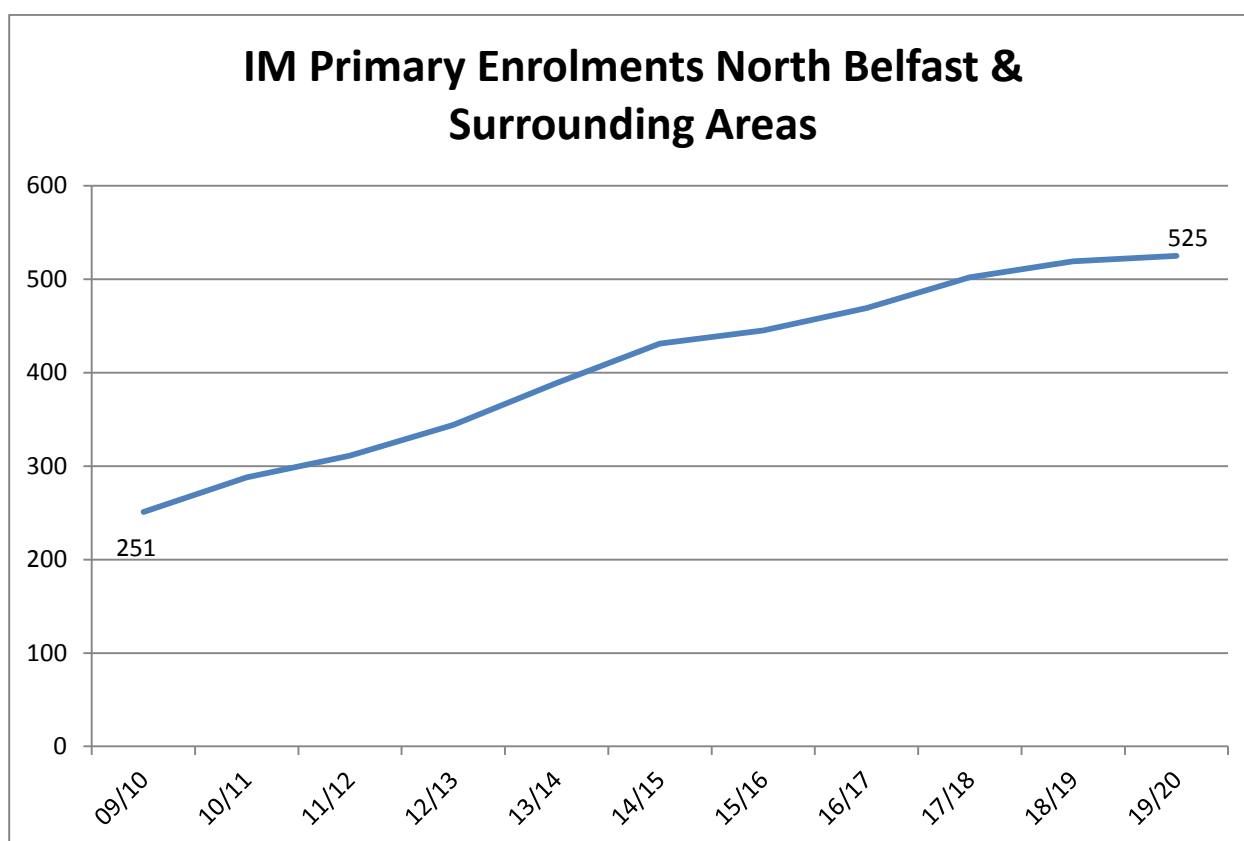
## Naíscoileanna (IM Pre-schools)

There are six Naíscoileanna within the area as follows:

Name	Location	Description	2019/20 Enrolment	1 <sup>st</sup> Pref Sept. 2019
Naíscoil Mhic Reachtain	Belfast	Voluntary	13	11
Naíscoil Bheann Mhadagáin	Belfast	Statutory	26	26
Naíscoil Ghleann Darach	Crumlin	Voluntary	17	17
Naíscoil Éanna	Glengormley	Statutory Unit	26	26
Naíonra Éanna	Glengormley	Voluntary	16	16
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>98</b>	<b>96</b>

### 6.2.2 Enrolment Trends

Over the last 5 years the total annual combined R1 intake in the area has increased by 22%, which represents an annual compound growth rate of 4.02%. The following graph shows the continued steady growth profile associated with the sector locally over the last 10 years – over 80% growth in the last decade.



The above graph reflects the strength of the sector within this area and a very strong foundation that will help bring about a viable and thriving post-primary sector. The demographics of the sector are such that the average year group sizes in Key-stage 1 have been higher than in KS2. This is reflected in the 88 pupils admitted to local IM Primary 1 compared to 67 pupils in the P7 classes in the area.

The following tables detail the underlying enrolment trends in the Naíscoileanna and Gaelscoileanna within the area.

Numbers of Children Graduating from Naíscoileanna								
Naíscoil / Pre-School	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Naíscoil Mhic Reachtain	18	17	16	17	16	14	18	13
Naíscoil Bheann Mhadagáin	26	26	26	30	29	25	30	26
Naíscoil Ghleann Darach	14	10	16	9	19	18	21	17
Naíscoil Éanna	33	25	26	26	26	26	26	26
Naíonra Éanna	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>98</b>

Breakdown of Primary Admissions								
Year	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin	12	19	18	24	28	27	22	<b>27</b>
Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain	13	10	17	15	18	17	10	<b>20</b>
Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach	13	13	9	13	7	15	19	13
Gaelscoil Éanna	34	38	20	25	25	27	21	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Growth in Last 5 years - annual equivalent and gross</b>							<b>6.58%</b>	<b>38%</b>

Total Enrolments at Gaelscoileanna								
Year	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin	104	108	118	126	129	139	145	157
Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain	61	61	82	84	92	100	100	105
Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach	75	84	79	77	74	78	87	79
Gaelscoil Éanna	104	136	152	158	174	185	187	184
<b>Total</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>525</b>
<b>Growth in Last 5 years - annual equivalent and gross</b>							<b>4.02%</b>	<b>22%</b>

The above figures demonstrate strong enrolment patterns in Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin and Gaelscoil Éanna and with rising enrolments at Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain. The fluctuating admissions number at Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach is showing signs of improvement with an average 3-year intake above the operational viability threshold of 15 pupils. The first admissions for Naíscoil Ghleann Darach for September 2019 (shown at section 5.2.1) are a positive sign that can hopefully be maintained in future years. CnaG will allocate resources to the Gaelscoileanna that have not yet reached a steady pattern of enrolment that is above the operational viability thresholds.

Generally the statistics demonstrate strong growth in both admissions and enrolments in the area over the past five years – with R1 admissions growing 38% over this period (average 6.6% per annum) and overall enrolments growing 22% (average 4% per annum).

### 6.2.3 Transfer Rates

#### Naíscoil – Gaelscoil

The following table demonstrates the transfer rates between the Naíscoileanna and the Gaelscoileanna within the area in the last few years.

IM Pre-school to Primary Transfer Rate								
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Graduating from Naíscoileanna	77	91	78	84	99	102	91	107
No. Progressing to IM Primary	72	80	64	77	78	86	72	88
Transfer Rate	94%	88%	82%	92%	79%	84%	79%	82%

#### Gaelscoileanna – Iarbhunscoil (IM Post-Primary Level)

The following table illustrates the transfer from all of the Gaelscoileanna within the Belfast Catchment area (including Crumlin) into Coláiste Feirste.

IM Primary to IM Post-Primary Transfer Rate								
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Graduating from Rang 7	142	162	180	179	164	160	175	259
No. Progressing to Coláiste Feirste	75	94	111	103	124	102	98	155
Transfer Rate	53%	58%	62%	58%	76%	64%	56%	60%

The above figures include all schools in Belfast's transfer rate and average at around 60%. This includes all the schools within the catchment area with significantly higher percentages of children in West and South Belfast transferring than those in North Belfast and Crumlin. Enrolments in North Belfast and Crumlin are now at a level that justifies additional provision to be located in the North of the city. This is dealt with in Section 5.2 of this report.



## 6.2.4 Accommodation

The need to commission a detailed baseline assessment of the accommodation constraints of the IME sector was identified earlier in this report. However, pending the undertaking of this, the following table provides a summary of the state of the accommodation within the area and the constraints that are associated with the accommodation.

<b>Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin</b>	
Current Status	Capital Viability Status
Description of Buildings	The school building is modern and is located on a site that is suitable for the current needs of the school.
Current Constraints	Despite the completion of the recent new-building, the school already has classroom accommodation requirements due to approval of DP for Increase in Admissions.  Work is currently being progressed to supply the school with two additional classrooms.
<b>Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain</b>	
Current Status	This is an IME controlled school. The school has realised capital viability status.
Description of Buildings	The school is housed in a former BELB building and is inadequate for the requirements of the school.
Current Constraints	The ancillary facilities, site and accommodation of this school are inadequate and fall far short of the DE accommodation handbook standards. The current school building is unfit for purpose and new premises are required.  There is a particular problem with outdoor play provision and as it is located in a built-up area there is no room for expansion and this has been identified as a barrier to sustainability.
<b>Gaelscoil Éanna</b>	
Current Status	Capital Viability status.
Description of Buildings	The school is located on an inadequate site and housed in mobile and modular accommodation.
Current Constraints	The school was awarded capital investment funding in March 2016 but still currently awaiting delivery of school build.
<b>Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach</b>	
Current Status	Capital Viability status.
Description of Buildings	The school buildings are modern and the site is suitable for the current needs of the school.
Current Constraints	It is important to note that whilst the school has relatively new classroom accommodation it still lacks much of the ancillary accommodation in accordance with the DE Handbook.

There are several issues requiring immediate action within this catchment area. Gaelscoil Éanna is an expanding school and currently suffers from inadequate accommodation. Also, it should be noted that the school community have recently recently established a second feeder IM preschool. If this second preschool continues to grow, these additional numbers would need to be taken into consideration in any future planning.

Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin is another school with increasing enrolment and despite receiving a new 5-classroom build recently, additional accommodation is essential in order to cater for the seven separate classes. Currently, as one of the schools with the highest demand in the wider area, it is

essential that these physical restraints are not allowed to impact upon the growth of IME in the North of the city.

Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain is also suffering from the physical constraints of its current accommodation and this has prevented the school from growing since it has had to limit demand in order to prevent over-crowding. The continued location of Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain in a physically-restricted site will prevent the school from reaching the urban enrolment threshold. It should be noted that the school (in conjunction with EA and CnaG) are currently progressing a development proposal to more accurately reflect their current enrolment and identify accommodation requirements. Additionally, work is ongoing to identify a suitable alternative site to secure the long-term future of IME in the area.

In each of these three schools, it is clear that the physical constraints of the buildings are a negative factor in encouraging and facilitating IME in North Belfast and need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

### **6.2.5 Potential for Growth in IME**

It is important to strategically consider the growth and development of IME within the greater Belfast area by adopting a strategic approach to growth which creates additional IME enrolments but which also considers the viability of existing provision within the area.

CnaG believes that potential exists to increase IME provision in a number of ways including:

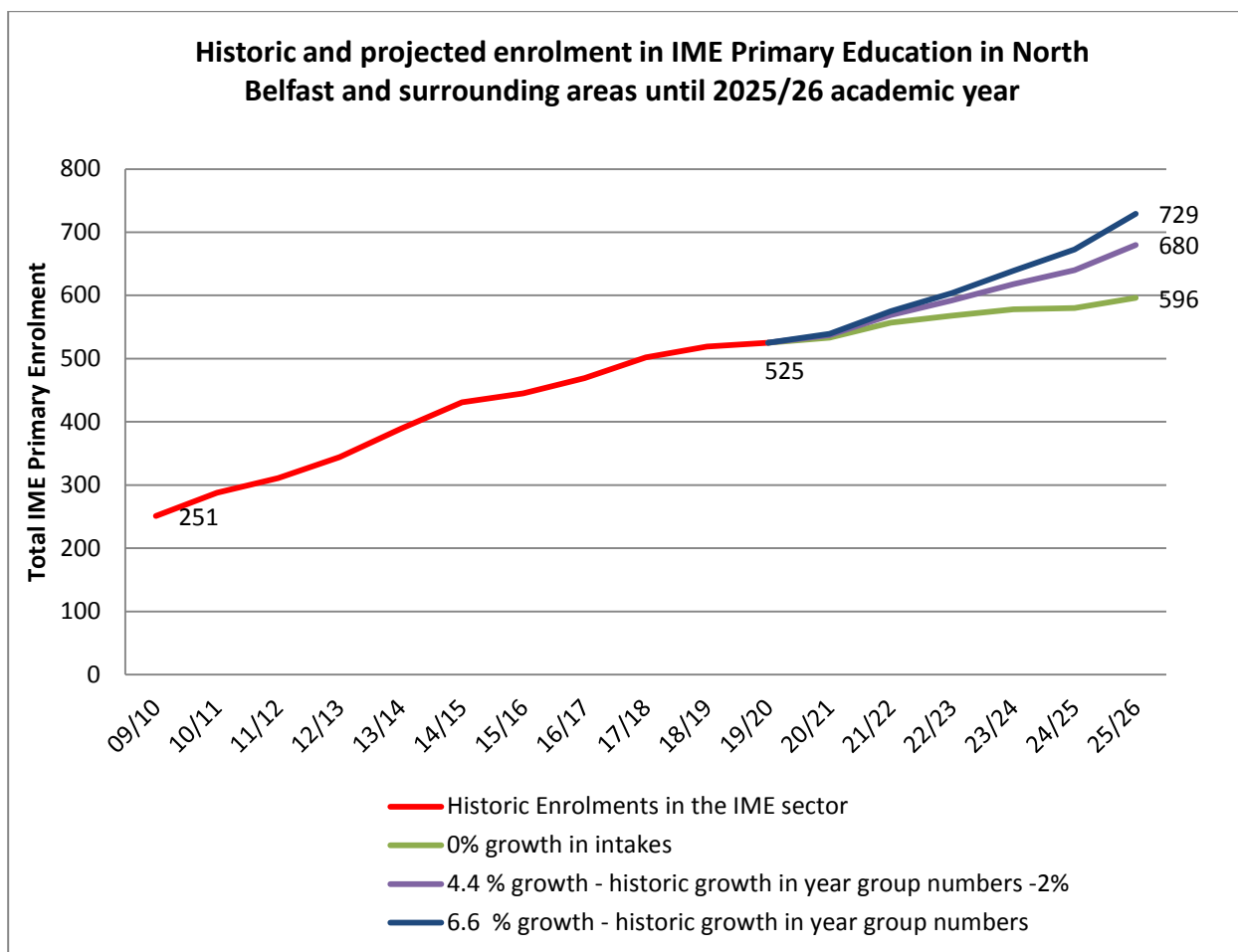
- Maximising enrolments in Naíscoileanna / Gaelscoileanna which have existing surplus places.
- Extending provision within existing Naíscoileanna and Gaelscoileanna - extending approved enrolments to accommodate proven demand.
- By new provision in areas with limited or no provision or areas where the local provision is over-subscribed.

CnaG will continue to consult with the Naíscoileanna and Gaelscoileanna within the area to consider how best to meet the increasing demand for IME in a way which underpins and supports the viability of the existing provision within the area.

The potential development of Irish-medium education at Tannaghmore provides an important opportunity for IME in the area that would be capable of attracting pupils from Randalstown, Antrim and Ballymena.

### **6.2.6 Projections – Primary**

The R1 admissions over the last five years have increased by a total of 38% which equates to an average of 6.6% compound growth per annum. It is felt that while growth is expected to continue within the area that this growth rate is unlikely to be sustainable in the longer term. As such a realistic growth rate of 4.6% has been used and we have used the historic growth figure of 6.6% as the optimistic scenario. Zero growth has again been taken as the pessimistic scenario.



Even with no additional growth in annual admissions to the sector the numbers of children in IME in the area is expected to grow by 71 pupils or 13.5% over the coming 5 years.

The realistic growth scenario demonstrates significant growth of 155 pupils or 29.5% in the coming five years.

The optimistic scenario demonstrates a growth in overall enrolments by 204 pupils or a 48.9% increase in total enrolments in the area.

The above scenarios will have significant staffing and other resource implications for the sector in the area and this will be monitored annually to help identify these requirements in advance and plan accordingly.

### 6.2.8 Projections – Post-Primary

The potential pupil numbers for the secondary sector are based on the enrolments of the various primary schools within the catchment area. This provides 7 years of reliable data for projecting the Long-Term Enrolment (LTE) in Coláiste Feirste. Currently Coláiste Feirste also caters for the children from North Belfast and Crumlin, and for the purpose of this report this area has been separated into a distinct catchment area, since there is clear potential for this to develop new post-primary provision within the north of the city.

In 2019, there was a transfer of 202 children from the primary sector to post-primary and there were 288 admissions to R1 in the same year. In terms of the long-term enrolments, there are clearly sufficient pupil numbers within the primary sector to justify two free-standing post-primary schools within the Belfast area. The Year 8 admissions to Coláiste Feirste were 155 pupils representing a transfer rate from Primary to Post-Primary within this combined area of 72% - with around 78%, of the children from South and West Belfast transferring and only 60% of children from the North of the city and Crumlin transferring. With additional provision in the North of the city, it is a reasonable assumption that the transfer rates of children from IM primary schools in the North of the city and Crumlin could be increased.

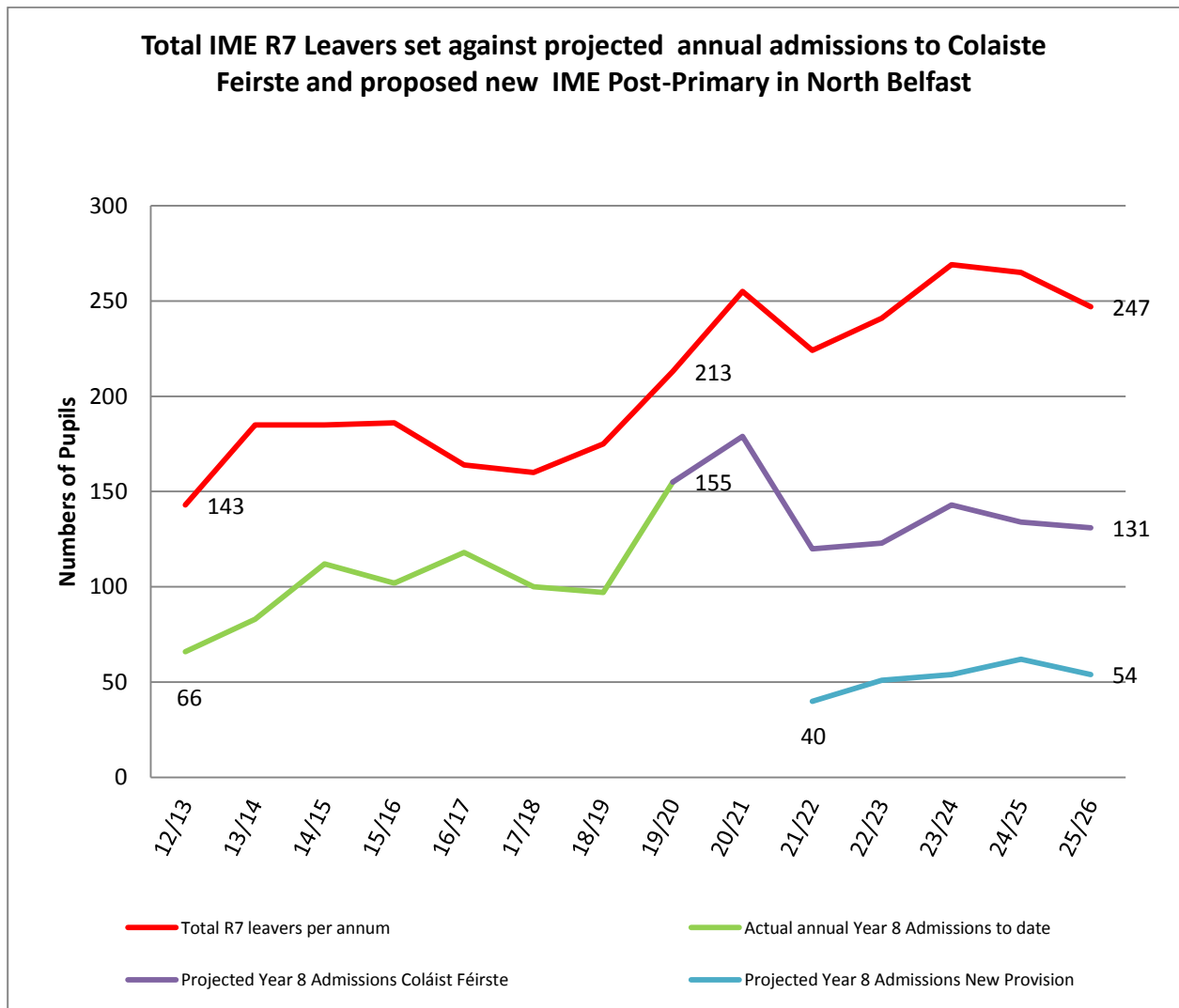
CnaG is currently working with Coláiste Feirste and representatives of the North Belfast IM schools to develop a further local provision, in the North of the city.

The following table and graphs demonstrate the projected enrolment in both Coláiste Feirste and a newly established provision until the 2025/26 academic year. It is based on the assumption that transfer rates in South and West Belfast remain steady at 75% and that in the North Belfast and Crumlin start off at 60% rising to 75% by September 2025. The figures also assume that two thirds of the pupils transfer from GCSE into 6<sup>th</sup> form.

<b>Projected Transfer from IM Primary to Post-Primary</b>						
<b>Year of Transfer</b>	<b>20/21</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>25/26</b>
<b>South &amp; West Belfast</b>						
Total Numbers Graduating from R7	166	154	152	176	175	164
<b>Transfer Rate</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b><i>Estimated Numbers Transferring to IME Post Primary</i></b>	<b>125</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>North Belfast &amp; Surrounding areas</b>						
Numbers Graduating from R7	67	70	73	76	79	72
<b>Transfer Rate</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b><i>Estimated Numbers Transferring to IME Post Primary</i></b>	<b>40</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Combined numbers graduating from R7</b>						
	<b>233</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>236</b>
<b>Combined numbers entering IME Year 8</b>						
	<b>165</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>Admissions Year 8 Coláiste Feirste</b>						
	<b>165</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>Admissions Year 8 New Provision</b>						
	<b>0</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Projected Enrolment Coláiste Feirste</b>						
	<b>797</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>846</b>	<b>849</b>
<b>Projected Enrolment New Provision</b>						
	<b>0</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>255</b>

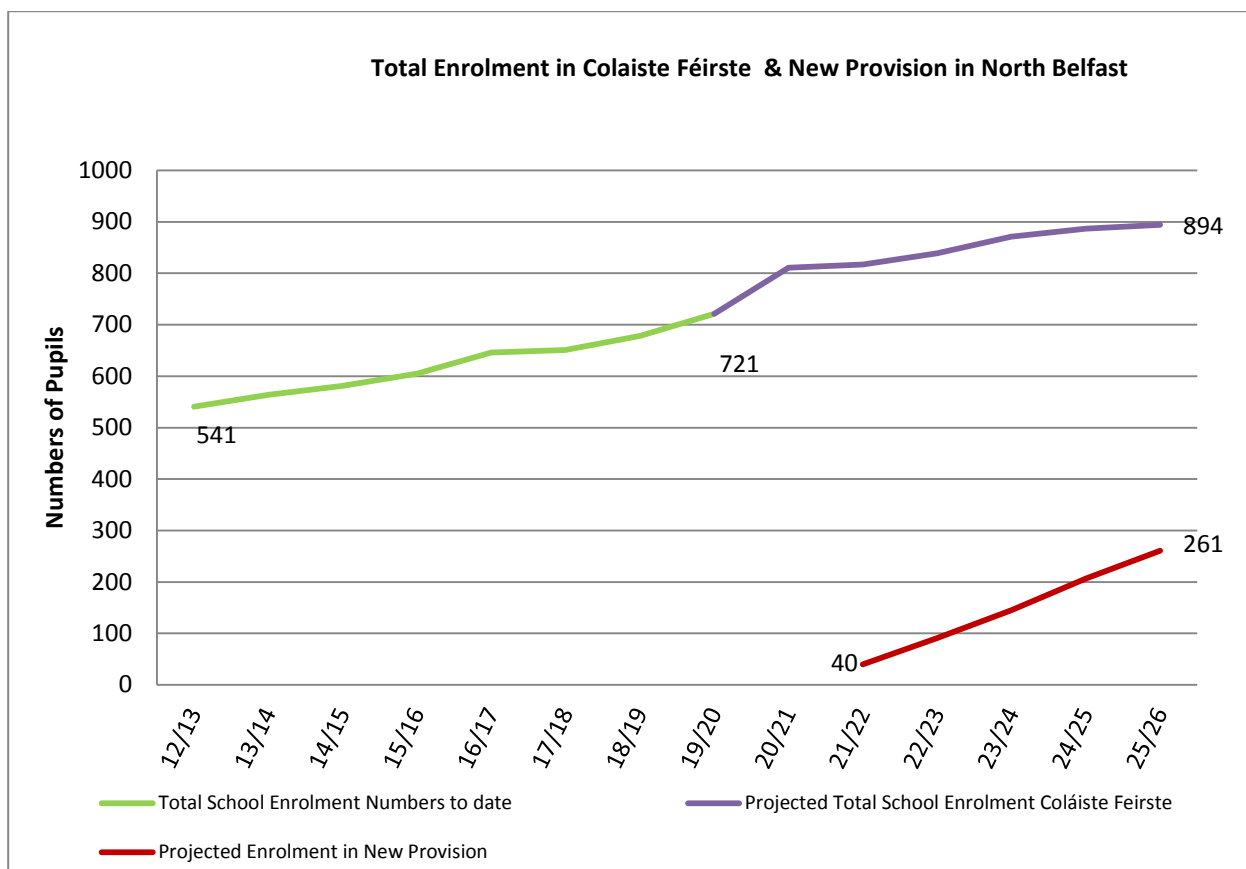
The projected intakes are sufficient to allow a second IME post-primary facility to be opened in Belfast to cater for the children within the North of the city and surrounding areas. This additional facility will increase the accessibility of IME post-primary and with it the overall percentage of

children transferring from IME primary to IME post primary will increase. The following graph illustrates the trend in increasing R7 leavers set against the projected enrolment of Coláiste Feirste and the proposed new IME post-primary provision.



The following graph shows the actual growth trend in total enrolments in Coláiste Feirste and the proposed new IME provision in North Belfast from 2012 until 2025. The graph demonstrates that there is clear potential for the required level of annual intakes for new IM post-primary provision in North Belfast without impacting on the viability of Coláiste Feirste’s intake.

The following graph illustrates the growth in the total projected enrolment of Coláiste Feirste and the new North-Belfast Provision.



The above graph demonstrates that Coláiste Feirste is likely to continue to grow in overall enrolment terms to over 850 by 2025, whilst allowing the growth of a second post-primary facility within the city. It is estimated that this provision would start out with an initial annual intake of 44 in September 2021 and rise to an overall enrolment of 255 by September 2025.

### 6.2.9 Area Planning / Development Objectives

Based on the above analysis and projections a range of development and area planning objectives have been identified.

The following objectives within the area are based on an assessment of the needs of the various IME schools/ units and assume the realistic growth scenario for growth in IME primary enrolments.

There are a number of urgent Development Priorities within this area as follows:

#### 1. Gaelscoil Éanna – new accommodation

Gaelscoil Eanna received approval for a new building in March 2016. There is an urgent requirement to facilitate and expedite the new school building as swiftly as possible.

**Action:** CnaG to continue to (work with InaG), to liaise with school and DE Infrastructure Directorate to progress the new school building.

## **2. Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain- Relocation needs.**

The accommodation and the site of the school are totally unsuitable for the needs of the school and are constraining its development and its ability to meet the enrolment threshold to become a sustainable school. Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain has been operating in excess of the school's Approved Enrolment for several years, with further growth anticipated. The EA and CnaG, in conjunction with the school, are currently progressing a Development Proposal to more accurately reflect the current enrolment at the school. A relocation of the school to a suitable site is a necessity.

**Action:** EA and school to bring forward DP/ CfC to increase enrolment and address resultant accommodation needs.

## **3. Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin - Additional accommodation needs.**

Despite the recent opening of its new building and as a result of the high number of applications being received for both the Naíscóil and Bunscoil, two extra classrooms are required to cater for each of the seven year groups. This work is already being progressed and it is essential that it is completed in a timely fashion for the beginning of the 2020 academic year.

**Action:** CnaG to continue to liaise with school and DE Infrastructure Directorate to progress the additional accommodation.

## **4. Bunscoil na Tamhnaí Móire / Tannaghmore PS**

There is a current IM preschool provision in the grounds of Tannaghmore PS providing children with the opportunity to attain IME in an unrecognised stream within the school with at present 23 pupils. There is a need to explore the potential for mainstreamed IM provision within the area.

**Action:** CnaG, CCMS and school to continue to explore options for permanent provision for the wider area which could include Ballymena, Randalstown, and Antrim.

## **5. Development of Post-Primary IME options in North Belfast & surrounding areas**

With the continuing growth in IM post-primary demand, which has now outgrown available accommodation at Coláiste Feirste, Ard na bhFeá site. North Belfast has been identified as a key growth area for Coláiste Feirste. There is a need to support the development of a second site, in the North of the city.

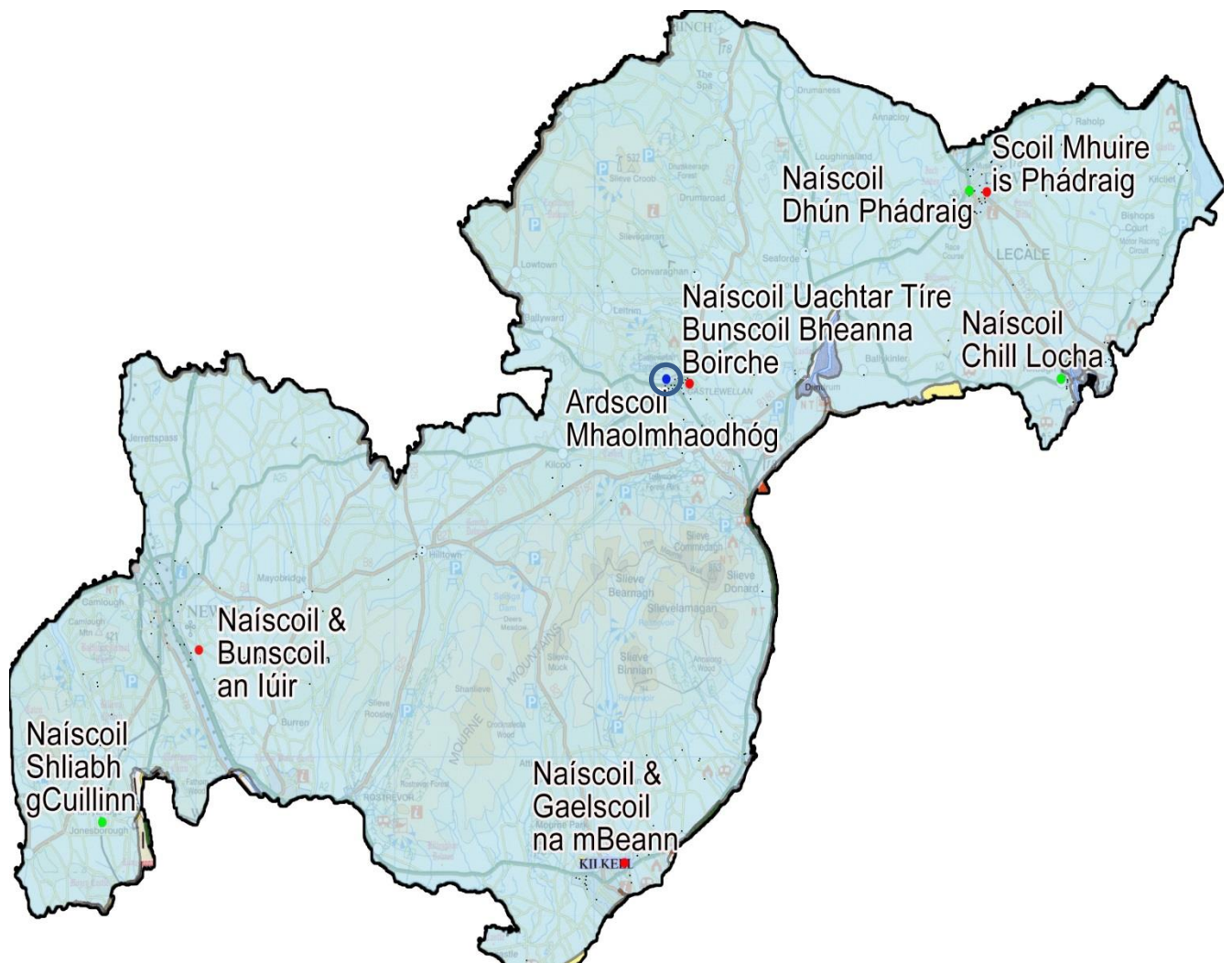
**ACTION:** DE, EA, CnaG and Coláiste Feirste to collaborate to ensure demand for IM Post-Primary is met and further provision secured for the north of the city.

## 6.3 Newry & South Down

### 6.3.1 Summary of Current Provision

This area consists of South Down and Newry and at post-primary level it is served by an Irish-medium stream at St Malachy's in Castlewellan, a Catholic-maintained, non-selective post-primary school with 5 pupils in 2011/12 and there are currently 120 pupils within the stream.

The following map shows the location of the various IME pre-school, primary and the post-primary schools within the area.



All of the IM providers within this area are in Newry, Mourne and Down LGD.



## Gaelscoileanna (IM Primary Schools)

There are three Gaelscoileanna and one Irish-medium Unit within the area as follows:

School Name	Location	Management Type	Current Provision	Approved Enrolment	Intake Sept '18	Intake Sept '19
Bunscoil an Iúir	Newry	Other Maintained	96	129	11	17
Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche	Castlewellan	Other Maintained	100	145	14	13
Gaelscoil na mBeann	Kilkeel	Other Maintained	76	87	12	14
Scoil Mhuire 's Phádraig	Downpatrick	Unit within CCMS School	99	105	19	12
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>371</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>56</b>

The three schools above have variable enrolments and the Unit in Downpatrick is close to the threshold to become a free-standing school.

## Naíscoileanna (IM Pre-schools)

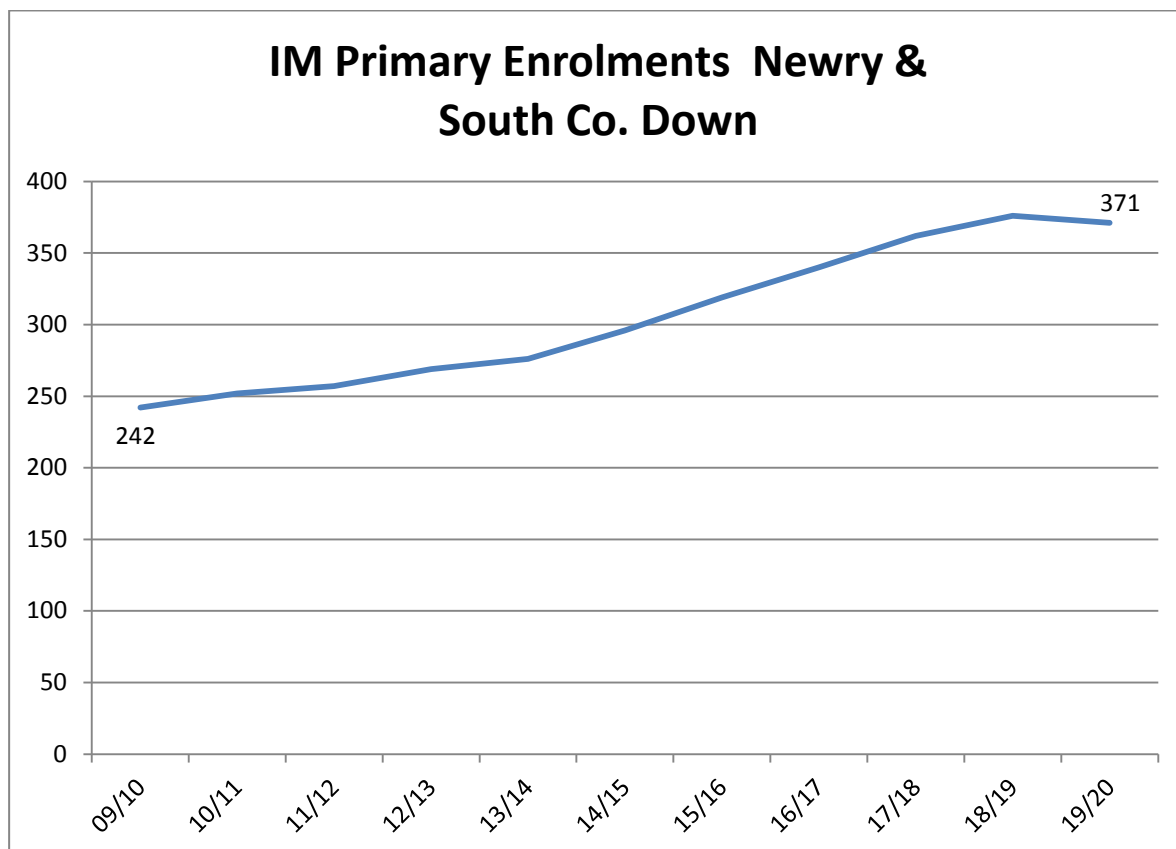
There are five voluntary Naíscoileanna within the area as follows:

Name	Location	Description	2019/20 Enrolment	1 <sup>st</sup> Preferences Sept. 2019
Naíscoil an Iúir	Newry	Voluntary Pre-school	16	10
Naíscoil na mBeann	Kilkeel	Voluntary Pre-school	23	23
Naíscoil Shliabh gCuilinn	Jonesborough	Voluntary Pre-school	22	22
Naíscoil Dhún Pádraig	Downpatrick	Voluntary Pre-school	21	8
Naíscoil Bheanna Boirche	Castlewellan	Voluntary Pre-school	26	20
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>108</b>	<b>83</b>

Enrolments in all naíscoileanna are strong with all close to capacity, however, there remains significant scope for increasing enrolments in Newry and Kilkeel.

### 6.3.2 Enrolment Trends

The following graph shows the relatively steady growth profile associated with the growth of the sector over the last 10 years.



The above graph reflects the strength of the sector within this area and a very strong foundation that will help bring about a viable and thriving post-primary sector.

The following tables detail the underlying enrolment trends in the Naíscoileanna and Gaelscoileanna within the area.

Numbers of Children Graduating from Naíscoileanna								
Naíscoil / Pre-School	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Naíscoil an Iúir	14	16	16	16	16	13	14	16
Naíscoil na mBeann	11	14	15	12	12	20	18	23
Naíscoil Shliabh gCuilinn	10	11	23	23	23	18	16	22
Naíscoil Chamlocha	13	10	10	-	-	-	-	-
Naíscoil Dhún Pádraig	21	21	20	22	22	23	17	21
Naíscoil Uachtar Tíre	26	23	24	32	32	31	27	26
Naíscoil Chill Locha	10	9	8	8	7	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>108</b>

Breakdown of Primary Admissions								
Year	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Bunscoil an Iúir	13	10	11	21	14	17	11	17
Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche	14	9	15	15	22	20	14	13
Gaelscoil na mBeann	10	11	11	8	8	15	12	14
Scoil Mhuire agus Pádraig	13	12	19	17	14	15	19	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Growth in Last 5 years - annual equivalent and gross</b>							<b>5.9%</b>	<b>33%</b>

Total Enrolments at Gaelscoileanna								
Year	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Bunscoil an Iúir	86	79	78	87	89	97	97	96
Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche	84	83	85	86	98	105	105	100
Gaelscoil na mBeann	20	28	40	46	54	64	73	76
Scoil Mhuire agus Pádraig	79	86	93	100	99	96	101	99
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>371</b>
<b>Growth in Last 5 years - annual equivalent and gross</b>							<b>4.6%</b>	<b>25%</b>

Whilst the above figures demonstrate fluctuating admission patterns within the Gaelscoileanna, making it difficult to predict potential future enrolment, there is clear evidence of sustained growth over the last decade. Total enrolments have grown by nearly 40% in the last seven years within local IM primary schools.

Gaelscoileanna operating below the operational viability threshold of 15 pupils per annum continue to have support from CnaG and all three standalone schools in the area are close to minimum enrolment threshold. CnaG will allocate resources to these Gaelscoileanna to help them bring about stable admissions that exceed the threshold. Over the course of the coming year CnaG will also provide general marketing support and assistance to the Naíscóileanna and Gaelscoileanna within this area to seek to build and stabilise the enrolment patterns within the area.

Generally the figures demonstrate growth in admissions and enrolments in the area over the past five years with a slight dip in the 2019/20 year. Even taking this dip into account, over the five year period the R1 admissions have grown by a massive 56% (9.2% per annum) and overall enrolments have likewise shown growth of an impressive 25% (average 4.6% per annum).

### 6.3.3 Transfer Rates

#### Naíscoil – Gaelscoil

The following table demonstrates the transfer rates between the Naíscoileanna and the Gaelscoileanna within the area since 2012.

IM Preschool to Primary Transfer Rate								
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Graduating from Naíscoileanna	105	105	104	116	113	112	105	92
No. Progressing to IM Primary	50	42	56	61	56	67	56	56
Transfer Rate	48%	40%	54%	53%	50%	60%	53%	61%

The transfer rates within this area have, on average, increased over recent years. The transformation to statutory preschool provision in Castlewellan and Kilkeel should see this transfer rate rise further still in the years to come.

#### Gaelscoil – Iarbhunscoil (IM Post-Primary School)

St Malachy's High School in Castlewellan has an Irish-medium stream and had its first year intake of 5 pupils in 2011/12. Over recent years, the admissions to the stream have been consistently 20+ pupils. Annual transfer of R7 leavers into the stream grew steadily as the stream established itself in the area and admissions are now at a consistent level as illustrated in the table below.

IM Primary to IM Post-Primary Transfer Rate					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Graduating from Rang 7	44	36	33	43	46
No. Progressing to Ardscoil Naomh Mhaolmhaodhóg	10	21	26	24	24
Transfer Rate	23%	58%	79%	56%	52%

### 6.3.4 Accommodation

The need to commission a detailed baseline assessment of the accommodation constraints of the IME sector has been mentioned above. The following table provides a summary of the state of the accommodation within the area and current constraints.

Bunscoil an Iúir	
Current Status	This is an independent maintained school in a transitional phase seeking a new site. The school has met the capital viability status.
Description of Buildings	The school is located in unsuitable modified office buildings with a dilapidated mobile unit as a staff room/office, located within a business enterprise park. The site is unsuitable for current and long term needs of the school and presents considerable and urgent health and safety concerns.
Current Constraints	The school currently has very old temporary classrooms, inadequate indoor and outdoor play facilities, inadequate staff room, kitchen, storage and offices for staff and visitors and no sports hall or dining area. Current premises are inadequate for the requirements of the school. The school urgently requires a new site with adequate and appropriate accommodation. The EA are currently investigating two potential sites.
Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche	

Current Status	This is an independent Maintained school and has secured capital viability status
Description of Buildings	The school is located within two modern modular buildings erected in 2014 with 4 classrooms. On a site that is currently suitable for the current needs of the school. A further double-classroom is currently being installed.
Current Constraints	The accommodation within the school is currently inadequate. It has no multipurpose hall, limited play area, limited staff and office accommodation, no rooms for parent meetings or external support services, SEN / Health Visitors etc and limited storage.
<b>Gaelscoil na mBeann</b>	
Current Status	This is an independent Maintained school; the school has secured capital viability status.
Description of Buildings	Current premises are a mix of modular and temporary mobile classroom buildings situated behind St Columban's College and are inadequate for the requirements of the school.
Current Constraints	A lack of certainty regarding a permanent school-site has hampered progress and development of the school. There are 4 classrooms in 2 portacabins with an office space and staff room. There is no dining area or sports hall. Pending confirmation of DP 559 for Statutory Nursery Unit, additional accommodation will be required. The current site is leased to the school from Catholic Schools' Trustees who have indicated that there is only two years remaining on the lease and the site may be sold thereafter. There is limited play area and parking facilities and this will be exacerbated when additional accommodation is placed on site. School does not have any extra Office space/ room for visitors eg Health & Social Services, Occupational Therapists, Literacy support teachers and other withdrawals.
<b>Scoil Mhuire 's Phádraig</b>	
Current Status	This is an IME unit attached to an English-medium Primary School under the control of the CCMS.
Description of Buildings	The school is housed partially within a permanent building and partially within modular buildings.
Current Constraints	The current EA limit on enrolment needs to be reviewed as it is potentially restricting parental choice and the growth of and access to IME in this area. There is currently insufficient space available at the EM school site to adequately provide for current complement of pupils' requirements re: language immersion environment; separate play space; dining area; and assembly hall. The highly restricted site acts as a barrier to further growth of both the IMU and host-school.

### 6.3.5 Potential for Growth in IME

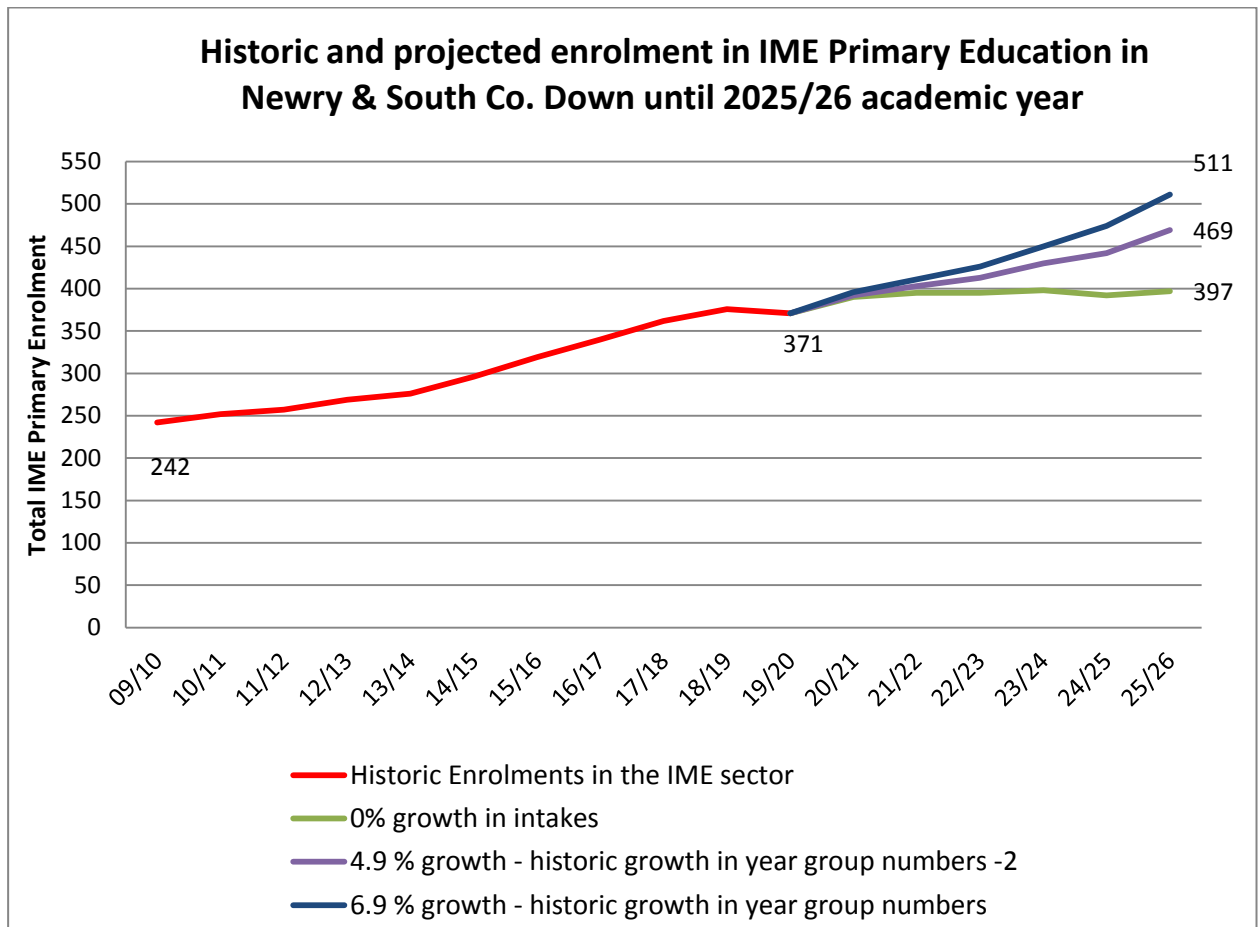
IME in the area has grown steadily over the past ten years increasing by 47%, an equivalent of 3.94% per annum. There remains significant capacity for growth in enrolments within the existing naíscóileanna and gaelscóileanna within the area. However, there are a number of constraints that need to be addressed over the coming years to accommodate growth. The quality of the accommodation in the Primary sector and the capacity of the existing sites within the catchment are potential constraining factors on the ability of the sector to grow and need to be addressed.

Recent growth and approval of several Development Proposals has created significant latent potential for the expansion of the sector and substantial scope remains to expand primary admissions. Targeted support will be provided to naíscóileanna within the area to stabilise and grow their enrolments and to grow and expand IME provision generally.

Subject to resolving the ongoing accommodation issues linked to gaelscóileanna, there remains significant potential for growth within the schools, through filling surplus places and extending enrolments within existing schools.

### 6.3.6 Projections – Primary

As indicated above, the last five years have seen strong growth in enrolments within the catchment area, with a growth figure averaging 5.9% per annum over five years. It is expected that growth rates in IME will remain strong. An additional 1% has been added to this growth figure for the optimistic scenario (6.9%) and a reduction of 1% in this historic growth has been used for the realistic scenario (4.9%). Again 0% growth has been assumed as our pessimistic scenario. The following graph shows the effects of the above projections on the total enrolments in the sector over the coming seven years.



Our realistic growth scenario demonstrates growth of almost over 26.4% in the overall size of the sector within the area from 371 to 469. This has significant implications for the development needs of the sector over the coming years, in terms of additional accommodation, additional teachers and teaching resources. A zero increase in enrolments demonstrates that the sector grows a modest 7% in terms of its overall enrolment and the optimistic scenario shows a growth in the sector of around 38%.

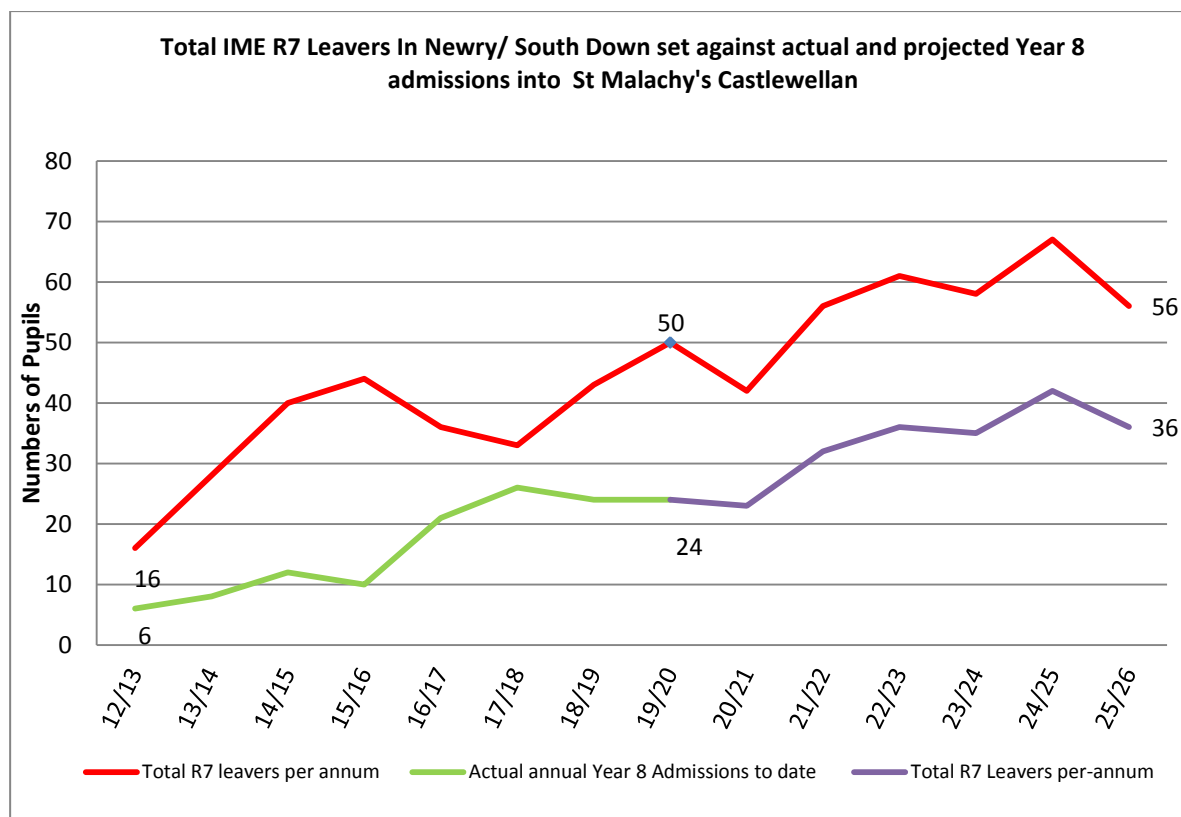
### 6.3.8 Projections – Post-Primary

The potential pupil numbers for the post-primary sector are based on the enrolments of the various primary schools within the catchment area. This provides 7 years of reliable data for projecting the Long Term Enrolment.

The below table shows how post-primary enrolments could build over the coming 6 years, based on increasing the transfer rate from 55% in the 2020 to 64% by 2025. The projected figures assume that two thirds of pupils continue with IME into 6<sup>th</sup> form.

Projected Transfer from IM Primary to Post-Primary						
Year of Transfer	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26
<b>St Malachy's Castlewellan</b>						
Total Numbers Graduating from R7	42	56	61	58	67	56
Transfer Rate	55%	57%	59%	60%	64%	64%
Admissions Year 8 St Malachy's	23	32	36	35	43	36
Projected Enrolment St Malachy's	134	151	172	185	202	214

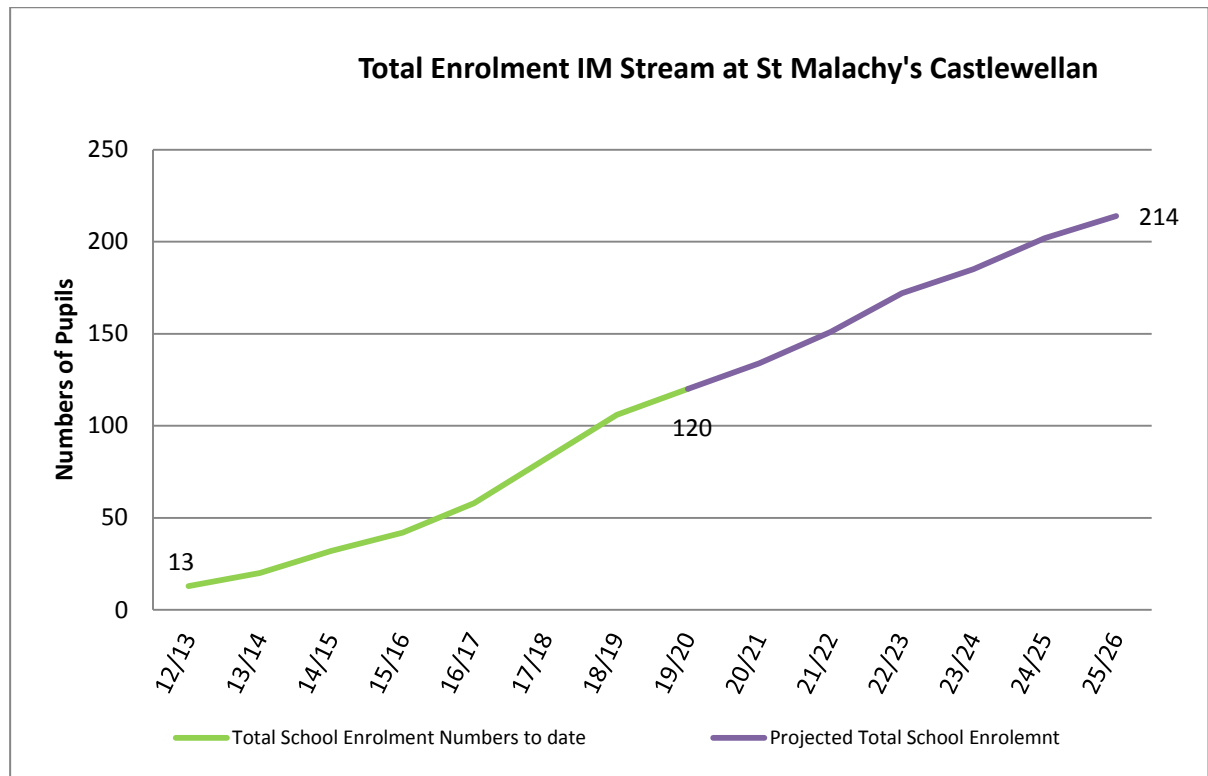
The following graph shows the historic and projected transfer pattern between IM primary and Post-primary within the area.



The above graph illustrates that there is potential for increased growth in admissions in the coming years. However, without an increase in the enrolments in the Primary sector within the catchment

and/or a higher than estimated transfer rate, it will be difficult to see the potential numbers for the transformation of the stream into a viable free-standing school in the Medium Term.

The following graph demonstrates the historic and projected total enrolment of the IM Stream at St Malachy's Castlewellan.



The above demonstrates that the IM Stream has significant potential to grow over the coming years as higher numbers of IME children graduate to post-primary.

### 6.3.8 Area Planning / Development Objectives

Based on the above analysis and projections a range of development and area planning objectives have been identified.

The following objectives within the area are based on an assessment of the needs of the various IME schools/ units and assume the realistic growth scenario for growth in IME primary enrolments.

There are a number of urgent Development Priorities within this area as follows:

1. **Bunscoil an Iúir – Secure long-term site and accommodation fit for the needs of the school.** The school urgently requires a new site with adequate and appropriate accommodation to enable it to grow to sustainability.

**Action:** CnaG and DE, in conjunction with the school, to urgently identify and secure a suitable alternative site to secure the long-term future of IME in the area as soon as possible. Feasibility study on identified sites to be completed by DE.



- 2. Gaelscoil na mBeann – secure long-term site and accommodation fit for the needs of the school.** This growing school urgently requires a permanent site with adequate and appropriate accommodation to enable it to grow to sustainability.

**Action:** CnaG and DE, in conjunction with the school, to urgently identify and secure a permanent site to secure the long-term future of IME in the area as soon as possible.

**3. Downpatrick – Expansion of IME provision**

Scoil Mhuire 's Phádraig enrolment is currently at capacity. Potential exists to further develop IME in the area. CnaG will continue to discuss strategic development of IME within the area with CCMS including consideration of a standalone school or separate site unit.

**Action:** CnaG and CCMS to engage with the school and the local IM community and school to explore options for the future of the provision.

**4. Gaelscoil na mBeann – Development Proposal for Increase in Enrolment**

Gaelscoil na mBeann has surpassed the school's Approved Enrolment, with further growth anticipated after establishment of IM statutory nursery provision at the school. CnaG, in conjunction with the school, to progress a Development Proposal which reflects the current and anticipated enrolment at the school.

**Action:** School to develop nursery unit provision subject to outcome of current DP and CfC for same.

CnaG and school to bring forward DP/CfC for increased enrolment and admission numbers and address current and arising accommodation needs.

**5. Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche – Additional Accommodation Required**

Two extra classrooms are required to cater for classes from Nursery to Primary 7. This work is already being progressed and it is essential that it is completed in a timely fashion for the beginning of the 2020 academic year. The school has been nominated by CnaG for the Capital Build call issued in Oct 2019.

**Action:** CnaG to continue to liaise with school and DE Infrastructure Directorate to progress the additional accommodation.

- 6. Build long-term Enrolments to help build long-term sustainability** – It is important to build a steady enrolment pattern across the area to ensure sustainability levels.

**Action:** CnaG and schools to continue to work together to increase profile of IME in the region and build upon current enrolment trends.

## 6.4 County Armagh

### 6.4.1 Summary of Current Provision

This area consists of most of county Armagh including Armagh City, Lurgan, Portadown and Crossmaglen. This area is served at post-primary level by St Catherines Armagh. Geographically, Crossmaglen is closer to Coláiste Lú in Dundalk and is also within travelling distance of Coláiste Oiriall in Monaghan town. However, the established school transport links with Armagh city mean that Crossmaglen easily falls within this particular catchment area.

The following map shows the location of the various IME pre-school, primary and the post-primary schools within the area.



The IM providers within this area cover the following LGDs:

Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon:	Naíscoil na Banna, Naíscoil na Caille, Naíscoil an Chéide, Naíscoil Chois Locha, Naíscoil na Páirce Glaise, Bunscoil Proinsias, Bunscoil Eoin Baiste, Bunscoil na mBráithre Chríostaí, Coláiste Chaitríona
Newry, Mourne and Down:	Naíscoil an Chreagáin, Gaelscoil Phádraig Naofa

### **Gaelscoileanna (IM Primary Schools)**

There is no stand-alone Gaelscoil provision within the area but there are four Irish-medium Units within CCMS English-medium schools as follows:

School Name	Location	Management Type	Current Provision	Approved Enrolment	Intake Sept '18	Intake Sept '19
Bunscoil na mBráithre Críostaí	Armagh	Unit within CCMS School	195	203	30	30
Bunscoil Eoin Baiste	Portadown	Unit within CCMS School	75	71	8	19
Gaelscoil Phádraig Naofa	Crosmaglen	Unit within CCMS School	168	203	25	22
Bunscoil Naomh Proinsias	Lurgan	Unit within CCMS School	171	145	25	31
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>609</b>	<b>622</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>102</b>

The IMUs demonstrate very healthy enrolments and three of the four units have exceeded the threshold required to be set up as free-standing schools. Current admission levels suggest that each school community is capable of sustaining a standalone IM school.

### **Naíscoileanna (IM Pre-schools)**

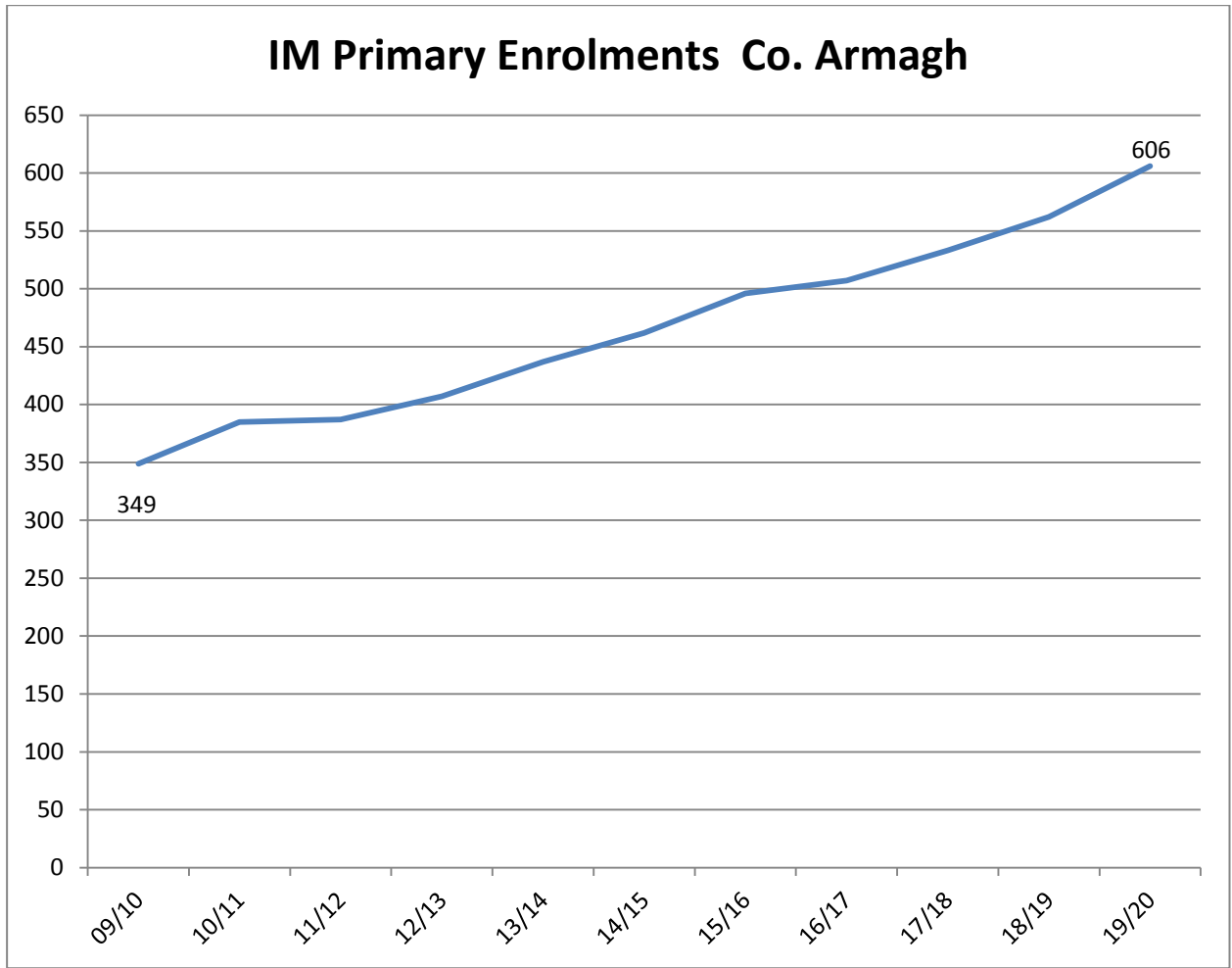
There are six voluntary and one statutory Naíscoil within the area as follows:

Name	Location	Description	2019/20 Enrolment	1 <sup>st</sup> Pref Sept. 2019
Naíscoil Ard Mhacha	Armagh	Statutory	27	28
Naíscoil na Páirce Ghlaise	Armagh	Voluntary	27	26
Naíscoil na Caille	Armagh	Voluntary	11	9
Naíscoil an Chreagáin	Silverbridge	Voluntary	17	12
Naíscoil Chois Locha	Lurgan	Voluntary	25	21
Naíscoil na Banna	Portadown	Voluntary	23	13
Naíscoil an Chéide	Keady	Voluntary	25	32
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>155</b>	<b>141</b>

Apart from the three Naíscoileanna in Armagh and Lurgan, there is significant scope for expanding provision within the Naíscoil sector. Indeed, the significant demand in Armagh City would suggest that there is scope for further pre-school and primary provision.

#### **6.4.2 Enrolment Trends**

The following graph shows the relatively steady growth profile associated with the growth of the sector over the last 10 years.



The above graph reflects the strength of the sector within this area and a very strong foundation that will help bring about a viable and thriving post-primary sector. Primary enrolments have grown by over 31% in the last five years and this well-established trend marks this area as a key area for future growth.

The following tables detail the underlying enrolment trends in the náiscoileanna and gaelscoileanna within the area.

Numbers of Children Graduating from Náiscoileanna								
Náiscoil / Pre-School	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Náiscoil Ard Mhacha	26	26	30	26	30	26	26	27
Náiscoil na Páirce Ghlaise	22	23	25	26	26	24	26	27
Náiscoil na Caille	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	11
Náiscoil an Chreagáin	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	17
Náiscoil Chois Locha	24	24	24	23	24	23	24	25
Náiscoil na Banna	12	15	13	16	10	14	22	23
Náiscoil an Chéide	-	-	-	5	7	24	24	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>155</b>

Breakdown of Primary Admissions								
Year	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Bunscoil na mBráithre Críostaí	20	24	29	30	30	31	30	30
Bunscoil Eoin Baiste	9	10	10	9	9	7	8	19
Gaelscoil Phádraig Naofa	13	17	24	23	23	26	25	22
Bunscoil Naomh Proinsias	20	26	24	21	21	23	25	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Growth in Last 5 years - annual equivalent and gross</b>							<b>3.2%</b>	<b>17%</b>

Total Enrolments at Gaelscoileanna								
Year	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Bunscoil na mBráithre Críostaí	124	139	152	164	164	185	195	195
Bunscoil Eoin Baiste	42	45	48	54	58	57	61	75
Gaelscoil Phádraig Naofa	102	103	111	122	128	139	151	168
Bunscoil Naomh Proinsias	139	150	151	156	157	152	155	168
<b>Total</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>606</b>
<b>Growth in Last 5 years - annual equivalent and gross</b>							<b>5.6%</b>	<b>31%</b>

Over the last 5 years the total annual combined R1 intake in the area has increased by a relatively modest figure of 17% from 83 to 102 pupils, representing 3.2% annual growth in intakes.

Over the same period, the total IME primary enrolment within the area has grown from 462 to 606, representing 31% growth over the period, equating to an average of over 5.6% compound per annum. This growth serves to reinforce the fact each of the units within the area are capable of establishing themselves as standalone schools, with three of the four units well in excess of the minimum enrolment threshold.

Generally the figures demonstrate strong growth in admissions and enrolments in the area over the past five years - R1 admissions have grown by 28% (5.1% per annum) and overall enrolments have likewise shown growth of an impressive 31% (average 5.6% per annum).

Armagh City is of particular note with three preschools in the city and another located close by in Keady. With 90 children in IM preschool across these four settings in 2019/20, there is clear scope for additional IM primary provision above the 26 approved places currently available at the IMU, Christian Brothers' PS.

### 6.4.3 Transfer Rates

#### Naíscoil – Gaelscoil

The following table demonstrates the transfer rates between the Naíscoil and the Gaelscoil within the area in the last few years.

IM Preschool to Primary Transfer Rate								
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Graduating from Naíscoil	77	100	104	108	112	113	127	145
No. Progressing to IM Primary	52	77	87	83	83	87	88	102
Transfer Rate	68%	77%	84%	77%	74%	77%	69%	70%

The above table shows a reasonably steady and healthy transfer rate between the Naíscoil and Gaelscoil sector. The drop in transfer rate does not reflect the entire picture; current primary provision is at capacity in three from four schools. With such strong growth in preschool admissions, there is clear requirement for further expansion of provision at primary level considering the current transfer rate and growth trends.

#### Gaelscoil – Iarbhunscoil (IM Post-Primary School)

St Catherine's college has had an Irish-medium stream for many years and has historically drawn from schools in Co. Armagh and Tyrone as well as Newry. However, the setting up of the stream in St Joseph's Grammar School in Donaghmore in September 2010, provided an Irish-medium post-primary option for schools in East and mid-Tyrone.

The following table illustrates the combined totals of the pupils graduating from the schools in Tyrone and Armagh and the transfer rates between the Gaelscoil and the two IM Post-primary schools.

IM Primary to IM Post-Primary Transfer Rate					
	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Graduating from Rang 7	43	60	69	58	62
No. Progressing to St Catherine's	35	23	29	38	33
Transfer Rate	81%	38%	42%	66%	53%

Transfers to St Catherine's have fluctuated significantly year-on-year between 81% to 42%. Last year the transfers were 53% and the last three years averaged at 53%. The numbers entering IME post-primary education has the potential to increase significantly over the coming years as the numbers of pupils transferring from Gaelscoil increases year on year and there is significant potential to increase the average percentage of pupils that transfer into IME Post Primary.

#### 6.4.4 Accommodation

CnaG has identified the need to commission a detailed baseline assessment of the accommodation constraints of the IME sector and we hope that this will be carried out as soon as possible. Pending this, the following table provides a summary of the state of the accommodation within the area and a summary of any constraints that are associated with the accommodation.

<b>Bunscoil na mBráithre Críostaí</b>	
Current Status	This is an IME unit attached to an English-medium Primary School Christian Brothers, Armagh under the control of the CCMS.
Current Constraints	IMU has exceeded Approved Enrolment (180) and enrolment continues to grow. Presently, school only has room for 7 classes but anticipates demand rising in the area.
<b>Bunscoil Eoin Baiste</b>	
Current Status	This is an IME unit attached to an English-medium Primary School St John The Baptist, Portadown under the control of the CCMS.
Current Constraints	No current constraints identified
<b>Gaelscoil Phádraig Naofa</b>	
Current Status	This is an IME unit attached to an English-medium Primary St Patrick's Crossmaglen, under the control of the CCMS.
Current Constraints	No constraints currently. Recent DP approved (2017) to increase enrolment to 203 and IMU to 7 class base.
<b>Bunscoil Naomh Proinsias</b>	
Current Status	This is an IME unit attached to an English-medium Primary School St. Francis Lurgan, under the control of the CCMS.
Current Constraints	No current constraints identified.
<b>Coláiste Chaitríona</b>	
Current Status	This is an IME post primary stream attached to an English-medium school, St Catherine's, Armagh, under the control of the CCMS.
Current Constraints	The stream has moved to an independent free standing building. This is now known as Coláiste Chaitríona, as distinct from the main school, Saint Catherine's College. The current constraints include the lack of adequate sports facilities for boys. There is no room for further growth and development to cater for rising demand.

#### 6.4.5 Potential for growth in IME

Primary-level IME within this area is very strong with strong annual enrolments. There is clear potential for growth in annual intakes within the sector, together with significant latent demand due to the rising enrolments over the last 7 years.

There is significant potential to increase primary intakes too with recent new Naíscóil provision within Armagh and Keady proving successful. Due to the high enrolments at pre-schools within the city, options continue to be explored in order to cater for the increasing demand for primary IME. CnaG will work with the local IM community to deliver this provision if it is deemed feasible.

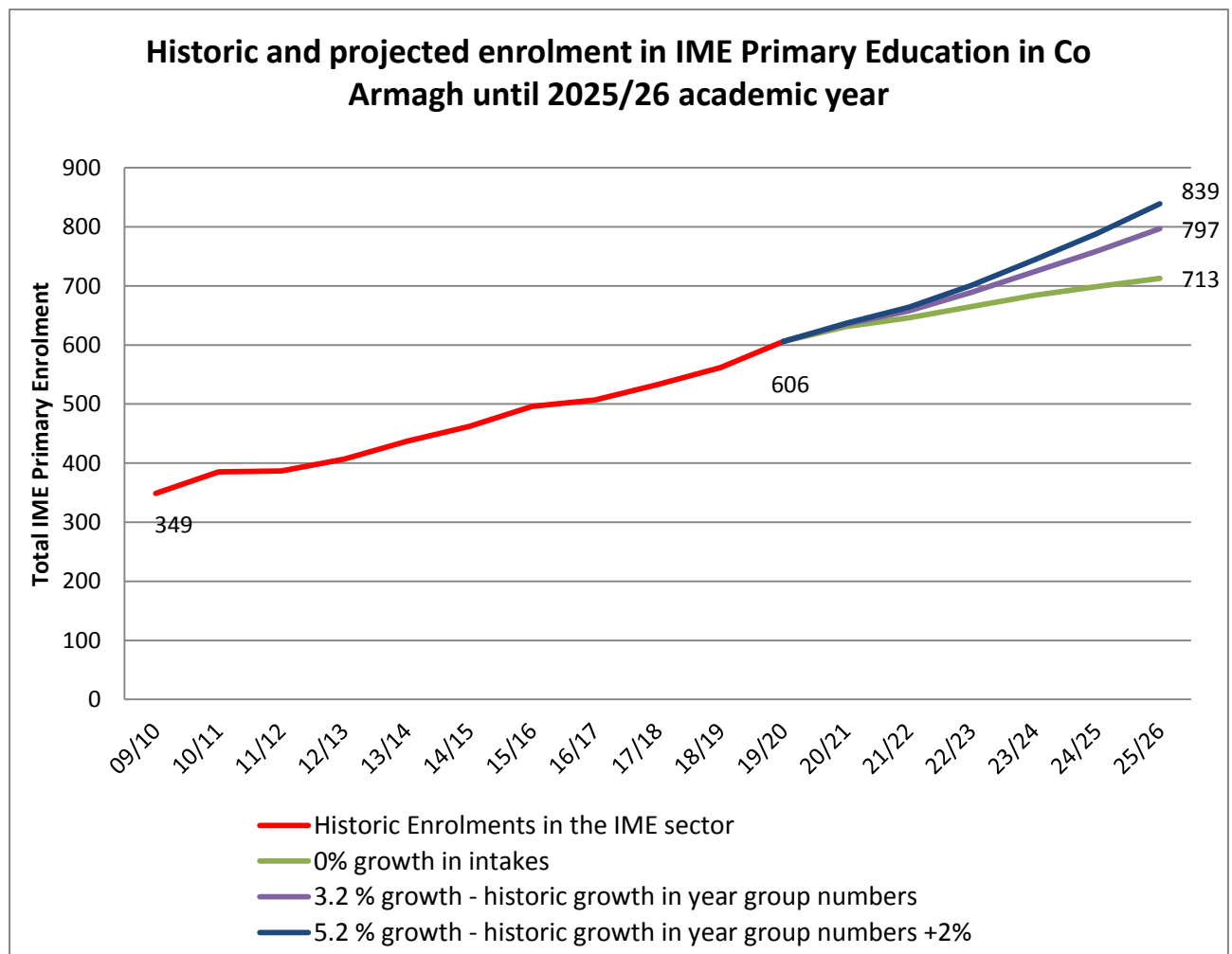
The enrolments at the IM primary Units are at a level that would justify the formation of free-standing provision within these areas, and CnaG is of the view that this should be considered and that parental consultation should be carried out to determine if this would be the preferred approach for Irish-medium Education within these areas.

Free-standing provision would perform a strategically important function within these areas by creating an Irish-medium sector that will fulfil a strategic role in the development of an Irish-language

community, and this would allow IME to further grow and expand to become a significant sector in its own right.

### 6.4.6 Projections – Primary

The last five years have seen modest growth within the sector, averaging 3.2% per annum. CnaG believes that this growth is sustainable over the coming years and for the purposes of our projections, the 3.2% growth figure has been used for the realistic growth projection. For the optimistic scenario we have added 2% to this historic growth figure to produce an estimate of 5.2% which is, we believe, achievable. The following graph shows the projected enrolment based on these growth rates.



Our realistic growth scenario of 3.2% demonstrates growth of 191 pupils or 31.5% in the overall size of the sector within the area from 606 to 797. This has significant implications for the development needs of the sector over the coming years, in terms of additional accommodation, additional teachers and teaching resources. Even the pessimistic scenario with zero growth in enrolments demonstrates that the latent demand grows the sector by over 107 pupils or almost 18%.



### 6.4.7 Projections - Secondary

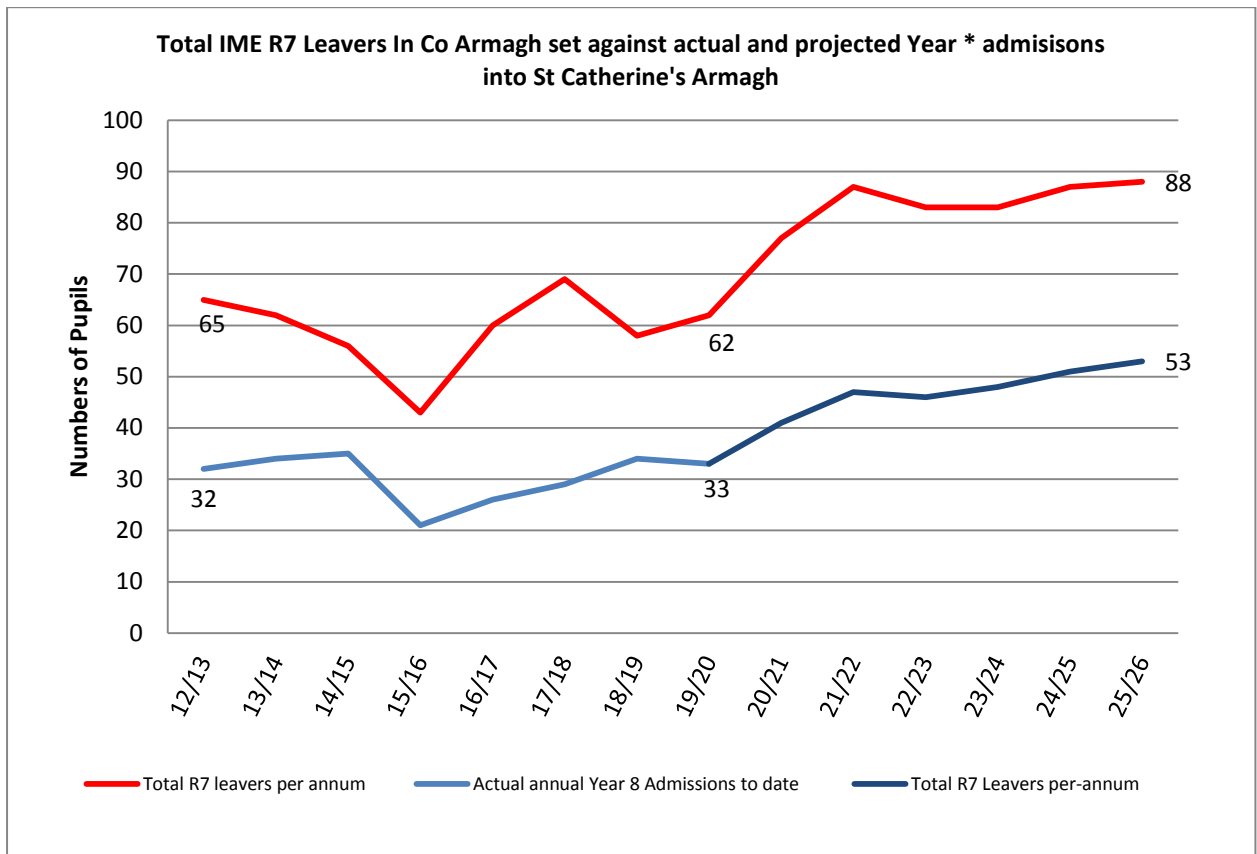
The potential pupil numbers for the secondary sector are based on the enrolments of the various primary schools within the catchment area. This provides 7 years of reliable data for projecting the long-term enrolments of post primaries in the area.

The transfer rates over the past four years have averaged around 53% and we believe that, given the right conditions, this rate could increase to 65% over the coming years. The following table and graphs outline the projected secondary enrolment over the coming years, given the numbers of children that are due to transfer into secondary, and the transfer rate increasing from 53 to 60% by the 2025/26 academic year.

<b>Projected Transfer from IM Primary to Post-Primary</b>						
<b>Year of Transfer</b>	<b>20/21</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>25/26</b>
<b>St Catherine's Armagh</b>						
Total Numbers Graduating from R7	77	87	83	83	87	88
<b>Transfer Rate</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Admissions Year 8 St Catherine's</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Projected Enrolment St Catherine's</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>238</b>

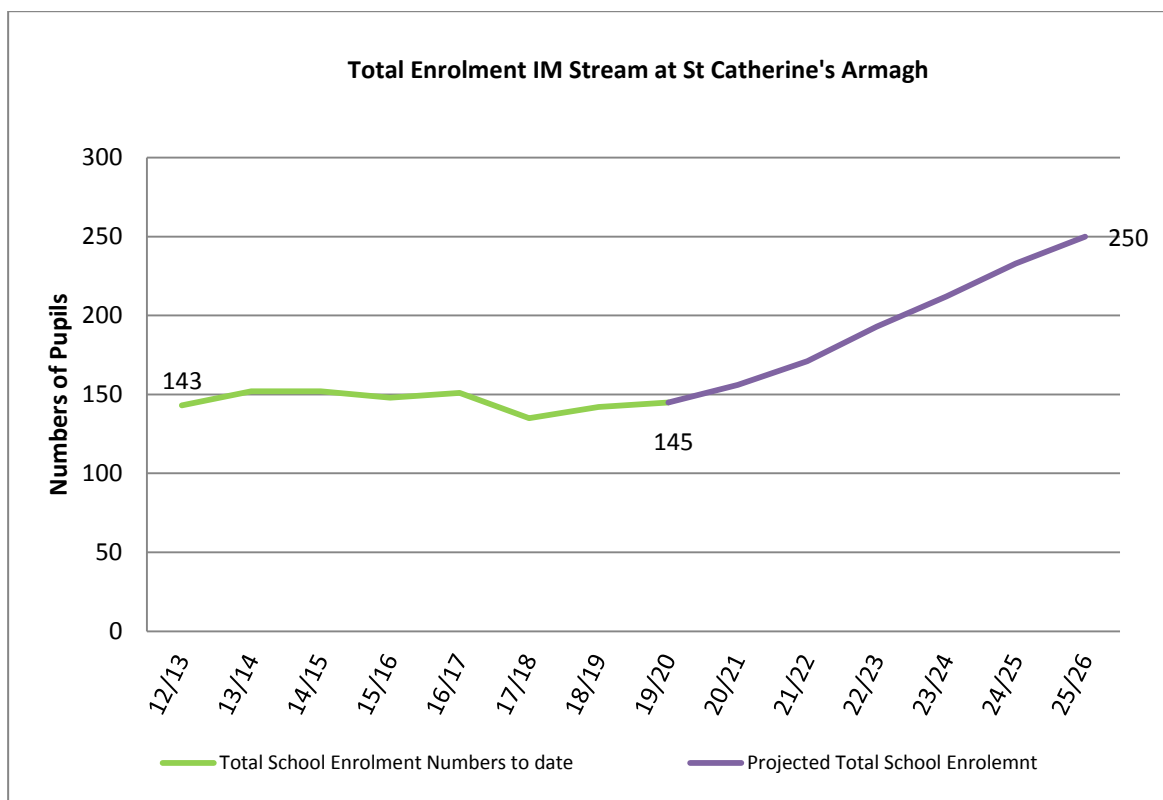
The above demonstrates that even with a relatively modest increase in the average transfer rate that the school reaches an enrolment close to 50 by September 2021 of over 50 children by September 2024.

The following graph illustrates the gap between the R7 leavers and the Year 8 starts to date and the projections until 2025.



The above graph demonstrates the significant potential that exists to increase the transfer rate of children from IM primary to IM post primary. However, if this were to happen there are significant capacity issues in relation to St Catherine's

The following graph indicates the historic and projected total enrolment in the IM stream at St Catherine's and its potential to grow significantly even with only a modest increase in the transfer rate.



The enrolment patterns indicate that there would be the potential to expand provision within the area. Over the course of the coming year CnaG will be engaging with St Catherine's and all other interested parties to seek to increase provision within the area in line with demand.

#### 6.4.8 Area Planning / Development Objectives

Based on the above analysis and projections, a range of development and area planning objectives have been identified.

The following objectives within the area are based on an assessment of the needs of the various IME schools/ units and assume the realistic scenario for growth in IME primary enrolments. There are a number of urgent Development Priorities within this area as follows:

##### 1. Armagh – Expansion of IME Primary provision

Drawing on the pattern of growth in Armagh City, the full uptake of available places at the current IMU provision at CBS Armagh, recent and planned expansion in local IM preschool provision, CnaG has identified the need for further development of a standalone IM primary school in the north of the city and surrounding area.

**Action:** CnaG will work with the local Irish language community in the development of new provision at preschool and primary level for a new catchment area of the north side of the city and environs.

##### 2. Lurgan – Expansion of IME

Bunscoil Naomh Proinsias enrolment is currently at capacity. CnaG will continue to discuss the potential for strategic development of IME within the area with the CCMS to identify a range of options to meet future demand in the area.

**Action:** CnaG will continue to discuss strategic development of IME within the area with CCMS and options going forward.

### **3. Crossmaglen – Expansion of IME provision**

Gaelscoil Phádraig Naofa enrolment is currently at capacity. CnaG will continue to discuss the potential for strategic development of IME within the area with the CCMS to identify a range of options to expand provision in advance of any required consultation or development proposal.

**Action:** CnaG will continue to discuss strategic development of IME within the area with CCMS and options going forward.

### **4. Post-Primary provision in Armagh City**

Coláiste Chaitríona IMU, which is the sole provider of post-primary IME in the area, currently operates at, or close to, full capacity. As the numbers of pupils leaving Rang 7 continue to rise, there is a clear need to strategically plan for the future expansion of post-primary IME.

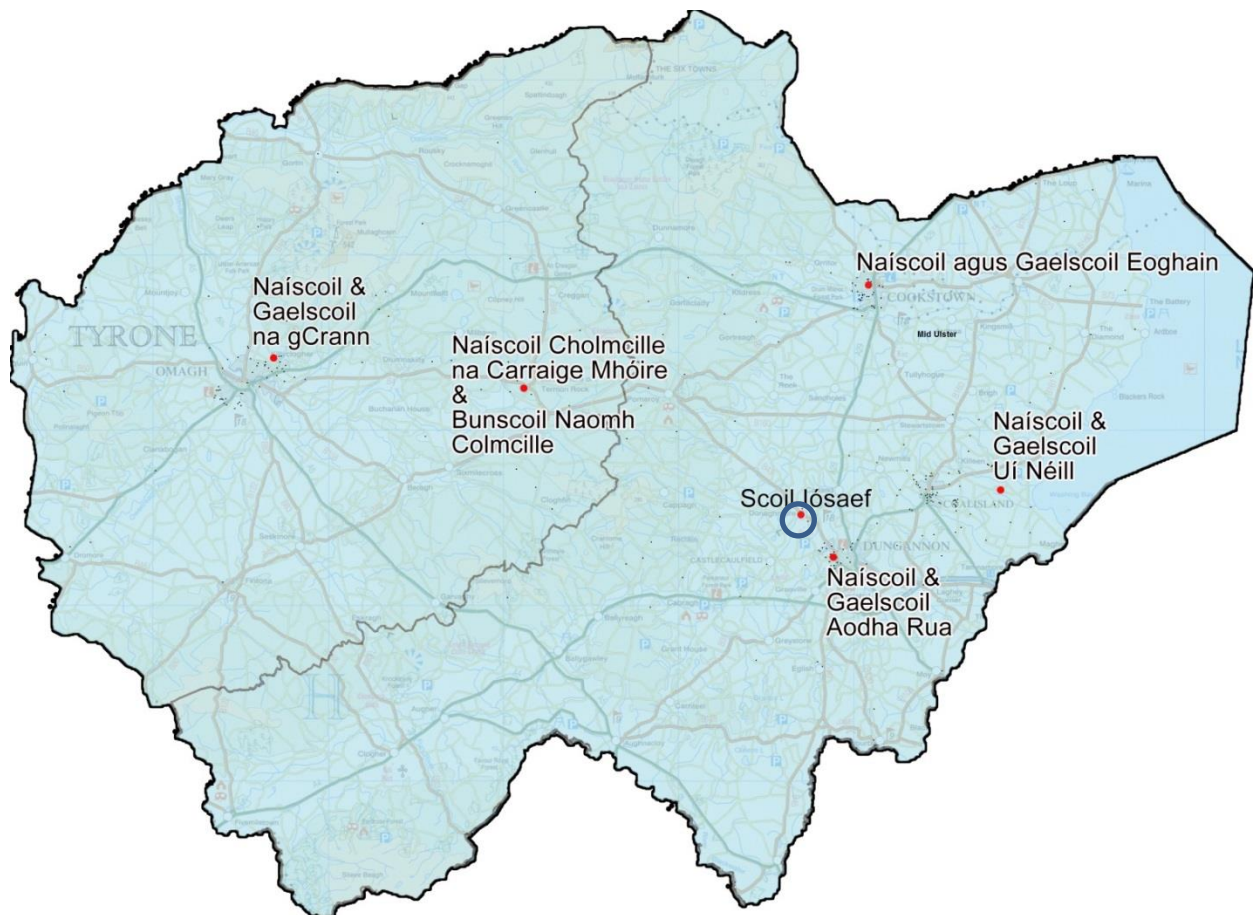
**Action:** CnaG will engage with DE and CCMS to continue to discuss strategic development of Post-Primary IME within the area including consideration of a standalone school.

## 6.5 East / Mid Tyrone

### 6.5.1 Summary of Current Provision

This area runs from the Western shores of Lough Neagh to Omagh, and at post-primary level is served by an Irish-medium stream in St Josephs in Donaghmore.

The following map shows the location of the various IME pre-school, primary and the post-primary schools within the area.



Fermanagh and Omagh: Naíscoil Cholmcille an Carraige Mhóire, Bunscoil Naomh Colmcille, Naíscoil & Gaelscoil na gCrann

Mid Ulster: Gaelscoil Aodha Rua, Gaelscoil Eoghain, Gaelscoil Uí Néill, Scoil Iósaef

## Gaelscoileanna (IM Primary Schools)

There are four stand-alone Gaelscoileanna within the area and one Irish-medium Unit within a CCMS English-medium school as follows:

School Name	Locaiton	Management Type	Current Provision	Approved Enrolment	Intake Sept '18	Intake Sept '19
Gaelscoil Uí Néill	Coalisland	Independent Maintained	136	185	24	16
Gaelscoil Aodha Rua	Dungannon	Independent Maintained	141	135	27	21
Gaelscoil Eoghain	Cookstown	Independent Maintained	104	130	26	16
Gaelscoil na gCrann	Omagh	Independent Maintained	162	160	30	25
Bunscoil Naomh Colmcille	Carrickmore	Unit within CCMS School	79	70	10	14
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>622</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>92</b>

The above schools and unit demonstrate reasonably healthy enrolments that should support the growth of the post-primary sector.

## Naíscóileanna (IM Pre-schools)

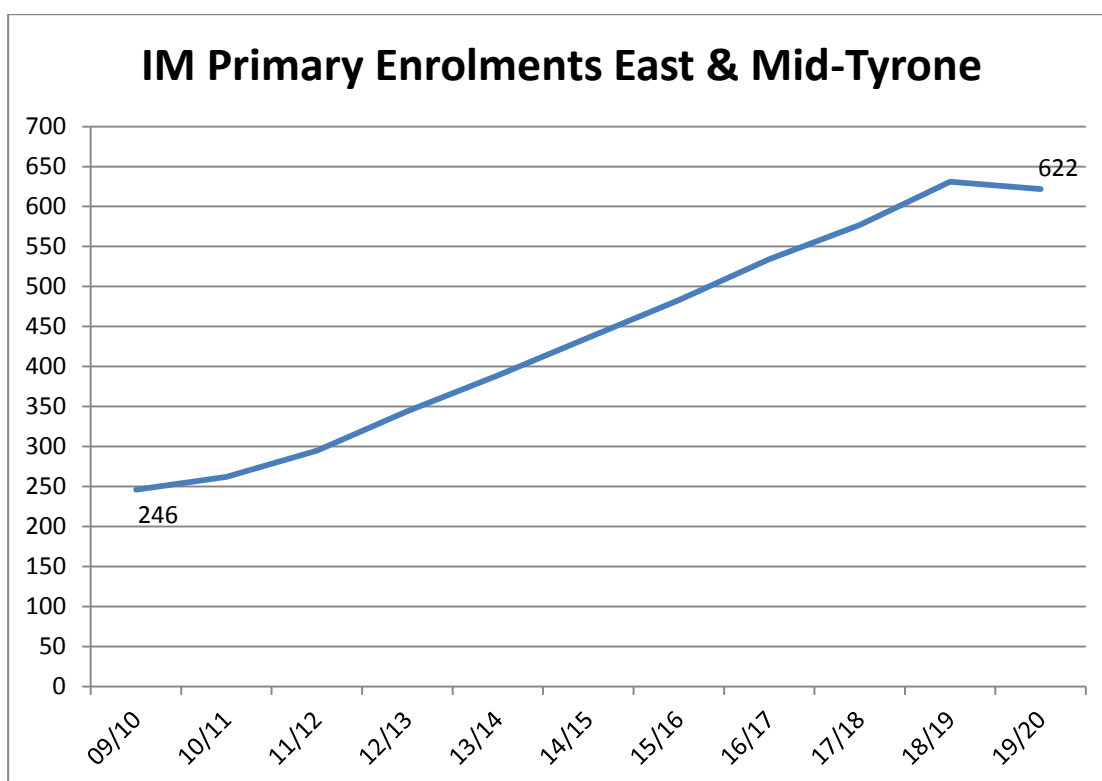
There are two voluntary and three statutory Naíscóileanna within the area as follows:

Name	Location	Description	2019/20 Enrolment	1 <sup>st</sup> Pref Sept. 2019
Naíscóil Aodha Rua	Dungannon	Voluntary	27	22
Naíscóil Uí Néill	Coalisland	Statutory	24	21
Naíscóil Eoghain	Cookstown	Statutory	22	12
NS Cholmcille na Carraige Mhóire	Carrickmore	Voluntary	25	12
Naíscóil na gCrann	Omagh	Statutory	29	23
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>127</b>	<b>90</b>

Most of the above Naíscóileanna demonstrate strong enrolments, with some scope for increasing both enrolment and 1<sup>st</sup> Preference applications within the area.

### 6.5.2 Enrolment Trends

The following graph shows the relatively steady growth profile associated with the growth of the sector over the last 10 years.



The above graph reflects the strength of the sector within this area and a very strong foundation that will help bring about a viable and thriving post-primary sector. Enrolments have grown by nearly 30% over the past five years and this trend stretches back for many years.

The following tables detail the underlying enrolment trends in Naíscoileanna and Gaelscoileanna within the area.

Numbers of Children Graduating from Naíscoileanna								
Naíscoil / Pre-School	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Naíscoil Aodha Rua	23	23	24	24	24	26	26	27
Naíscoil Uí Néill	26	26	26	30	23	29	23	24
Naíscoil Eoghain	16	16	21	15	26	27	21	22
Naíscoil Cholmcille na Carraige Mhóire	26	26	26	26	21	24	24	25
Naíscoil na gCrann	19	12	26	19	26	26	28	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>127</b>

Breakdown of Primary Admissions								
	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Gaelscoil Uí Néill	26	20	26	22	26	21	24	16
Gaelscoil Aodha Rua	19	18	19	20	19	22	27	21
Gaelscoil Eoghain	10	12	21	11	19	11	26	16
Gaelscoil na gCrann	16	22	18	23	25	19	30	25
Bunscoil Naomh Colmcille	6	12	8	14	10	12	10	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Growth in Last 5 years - annual equivalent and gross</b>							<b>0.4%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>

Total Enrolments at Gaelscoileanna								
Year	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Gaelscoil Uí Néill	152	165	163	160	158	155	152	136
Gaelscoil Aodha Rua	31	48	67	88	106	128	143	141
Gaelscoil Eoghain	13	19	41	54	76	82	103	104
Gaelscoil na gCrann	90	97	105	120	131	143	156	162
Bunscoil Naomh Colmcille	58	60	60	61	63	69	70	79
<b>Total</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>622</b>
<b>Growth in Last 5 years - annual equivalent and gross</b>							<b>5.2%</b>	<b>28.8%</b>

Over the last 5 years the total annual combined R1 intake in the area has fluctuated and has grown very little. There is significant anecdotal evidence that the ongoing protracted accommodation concerns at each of the four Gaelscoil have begun to impact upon admissions and it is imperative that these issues are resolved at the respective sites.

During the last few years despite the limited growth in admissions the overall enrolment of the schools have increased as smaller R7 numbers leave to be replaced by larger R1 numbers. Overall enrolment has increased from 483 to 622, representing 29% growth over the period, equating to an average of over 5% compound per annum.

Generally the figures demonstrate modest growth in admissions and enrolments in the area over the past five years with a slight dip in the 2019/20 year. Even taking this dip into account, over the five year period the R1 admissions have grown by 8.2% (1.6% per annum) whilst overall enrolments have grown by an impressive 42% (average 7.4% per annum). If the slight dip in enrolments in the 2019/20 year can be redressed, the area has considerable potential to continue to grow in future years.

### 6.5.3 Transfer Rates

#### Naíscoil – Gaelscoil

The following table demonstrates the transfer rates between Naíscoileanna and Gaelscoileanna within the area in the last few years.

IM Preschool to Primary Transfer Rate								
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Graduating from Naíscoileanna	92	110	103	123	114	120	132	122
No. Progressing to IM Primary	77	84	92	90	99	85	117	92
Transfer Rate	84%	76%	89%	73%	87%	71%	89%	75%

The above table shows a very healthy and steady transfer rate between the Naíscoil and Gaelscoil sector. The higher transfer rates of nearly 90% illustrate both the potential transfer rates to be achieved each year and the scope for further growth through in Primary admissions from the current preschool cohort.



## Gaelscoil – Iarbhunscoil (IM Post-Primary)

The Irish-medium Stream in St Joseph's Grammar school in Donaghmore was established in September 2010, to provide an Irish-medium post-primary option for schools in East and mid-Tyrone.

The following table shows the relative transfers from the East Tyrone area (i.e., Gaelscoileanna in Cookstown, Dungannon and Coalisland) and Mid- Tyrone (Omagh & Carrickmore).

IM Primary to IM Post-Primary Transfer Rate					
	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
<b>West Tyrone</b>					
Graduating from Rang 7	25	26	20	29	55
No. Progressing to St Joseph's	21	19	17	22	41
Transfer Rate	84%	73%	85%	76%	75%
<b>Mid Tyrone</b>					
Graduating from Rang 7	19	14	20	25	22
No. Progressing to St Joseph's	8	8	5	3	0
Transfer Rate	42%	57%	25%	12%	0%
<b>Combined</b>					
Total Graduating from Rang 7 both areas	44	40	40	54	77
No. Progressing to St Joseph's	29	27	22	25	41
Overall Transfer Rate	66%	68%	55%	46%	53%

Transfers to IME post-primary within the area show significant fluctuations from year-to-year with an average of around 52% over the past three years. The above table illustrates that a relatively small percentage of the children who attend IME primary in Mid- Tyrone progress to IME Post-primary, whilst a significant percentage of the children in the East Tyrone progress to St Joseph's.

### 6.5.4 Accommodation

We have identified the need to commission a detailed baseline assessment of the accommodation constraints of the IME sector, and we hope that this will be carried out over the coming months. However, the following table provides a summary of the state of the accommodation within the area, and a summary of any constraints that are associated with the accommodation.

School	Description of current status	Description of Buildings	Current Constraints
Gaelscoil Uí Néill	This is an independent maintained school and has secured capital viability status	The school is currently housed in Prefabricated mobiles and modular buildings.	A new site has been identified, however the site is not accessible for a further two years.
Gaelscoil Aodha Rua	This is an independent maintained school and has recently secured capital viability status.	The school is located within Modular Buildings with limited outside space and storage space.	The school remains on a temporary site rented from the local GAA club, and is under pressure to vacate the site as soon as possible. Capital build approval secured in 2016. 3 prospective sites currently subject to feasibility studies. Limited external play facilities on site.
Gaelscoil Eoghain	This is an independent maintained school and has secured capital viability status.	The school is located within modern modular accommodation, and at present additional modular accommodation is being provided which will use up existing space.  The site is limited and unsuitable for the long-term development needs of the school.	Currently in process of identifying site with DE and local council. It is expected that this accommodation will be too small for the needs of the school before any new build is completed. A new nursery unit provision has been provided and at present additional modular accommodation is being installed. There is no space for further development. The school has been nominated to the 2019 Capital Build List.
Gaelscoil na gCrann	This is an independent maintained school and has secured capital viability status.	The school is currently housed within a mixture of mobile modular buildings. There are three temporary classrooms and three classrooms within the modular building.  Approval for new school-build received Jun 2014. Projected date for completion is Sept 2020.	New build under way with expected completion date for September 2020.
Bunscoil Naomh Colmcille	This is an IME unit attached to an English-medium Primary School St Columbcille's, Carrickmore, under the administration of the CCMS.	The unit is housed within a permanent building along with the mother school.	The school does not have any immediate constraints, but may have additional accommodation requirements as the unit expands and grows over the coming years.

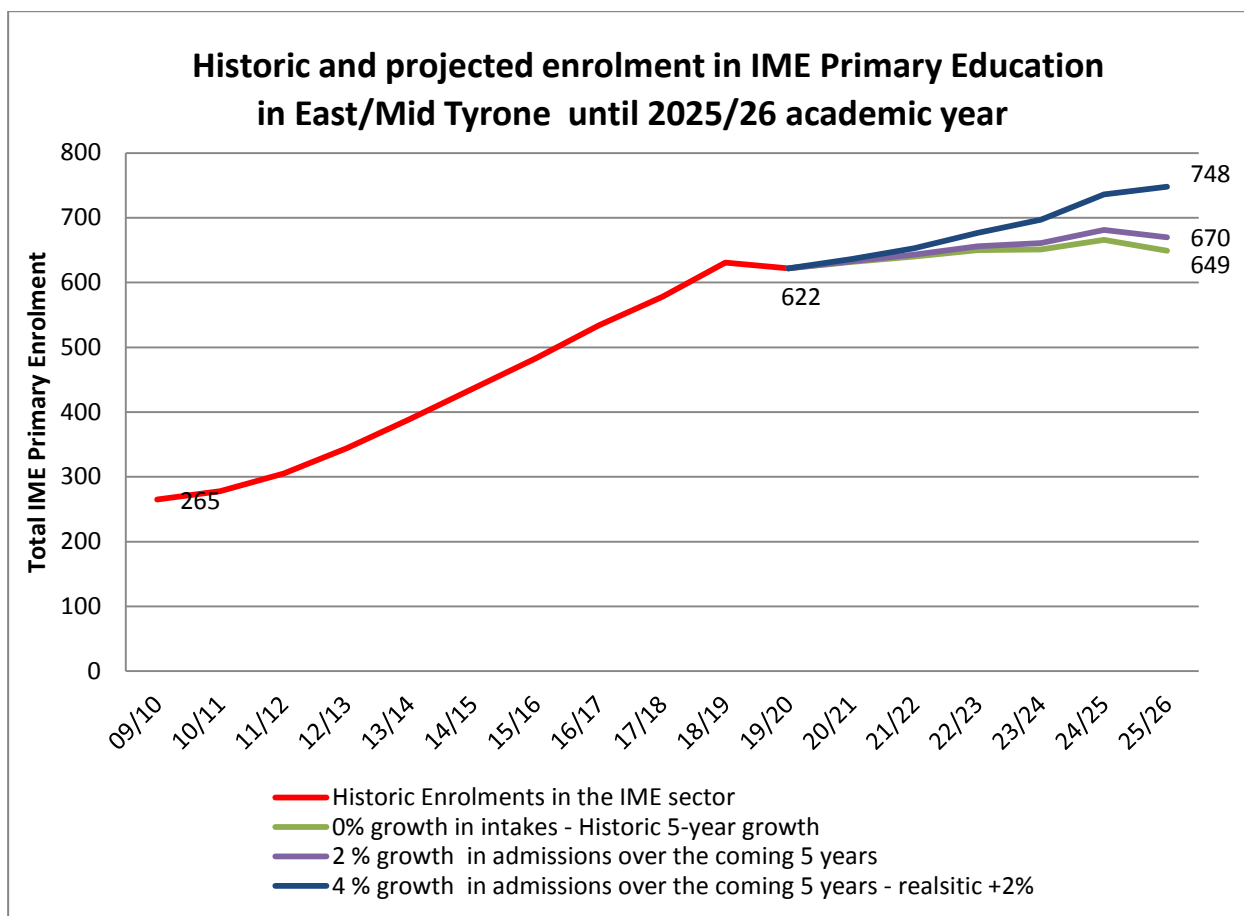
Within this catchment area, the four standalone schools are currently at various stages of attaining sites and new buildings having been placed on the Capital Build list. The ongoing uncertainty and delays in site acquisitions could potentially have a detrimental effect upon future admissions.

### **6.5.5 Potential for Growth in IME**

Whilst the Primary-level admissions within this area have shown modest growth of 2.2% in the last five years, the overall enrolment has grown by nearly 29% to 622 pupils in 2019/20. This growth represents 5.2% per annum. There remains the potential for further growth in these numbers by growing enrolment within the existing naíscoileanna and by increasing the transfer rate from pre-school to primary level. However, this will need to be accompanied by a strategy to support this growth and ensure the delivery of the required accommodation and other facilities to accommodate this growth.

### **6.5.6 Projections – Primary**

Having considered the limited growth in admissions over the last five years and the potential for growth in primary enrolments, we are using a conservative figure of 2% for the realistic growth projection within this catchment and a figure of 4% for the optimistic scenario. The following graph shows the projected enrolment based on these estimated growth rates. Again, we have assumed zero growth for the pessimistic scenario.



The pessimistic scenario of no increase in admissions will result in the overall enrolment within the sector increasing slightly with a net rise of 27 pupils. Our realistic growth scenario of 2% shows that numbers will have increased by 48 pupils or 7.7% by the 2025/26 academic year and the optimistic scenario shows an increase of 126 pupils or 20.3% in overall enrolment.

### 6.5.7 Projections – Post-Primary

The potential pupil numbers for the secondary sector are based on the enrolments of the various primary schools within the catchment area. This provides 7 years of reliable data for projecting the long-term enrolments of post primaries in the area.

As indicated in section 6.5.3 above the transfer rates from schools within the East Tyrone area are significantly higher than those within the Mid-Tyrone area. This is as a direct result of the proximity and quality of transport links of the various schools with St Josephs. Indeed, in the last five years only 7 children have transferred to St Joseph’s from Gaelscoil na gCrann.

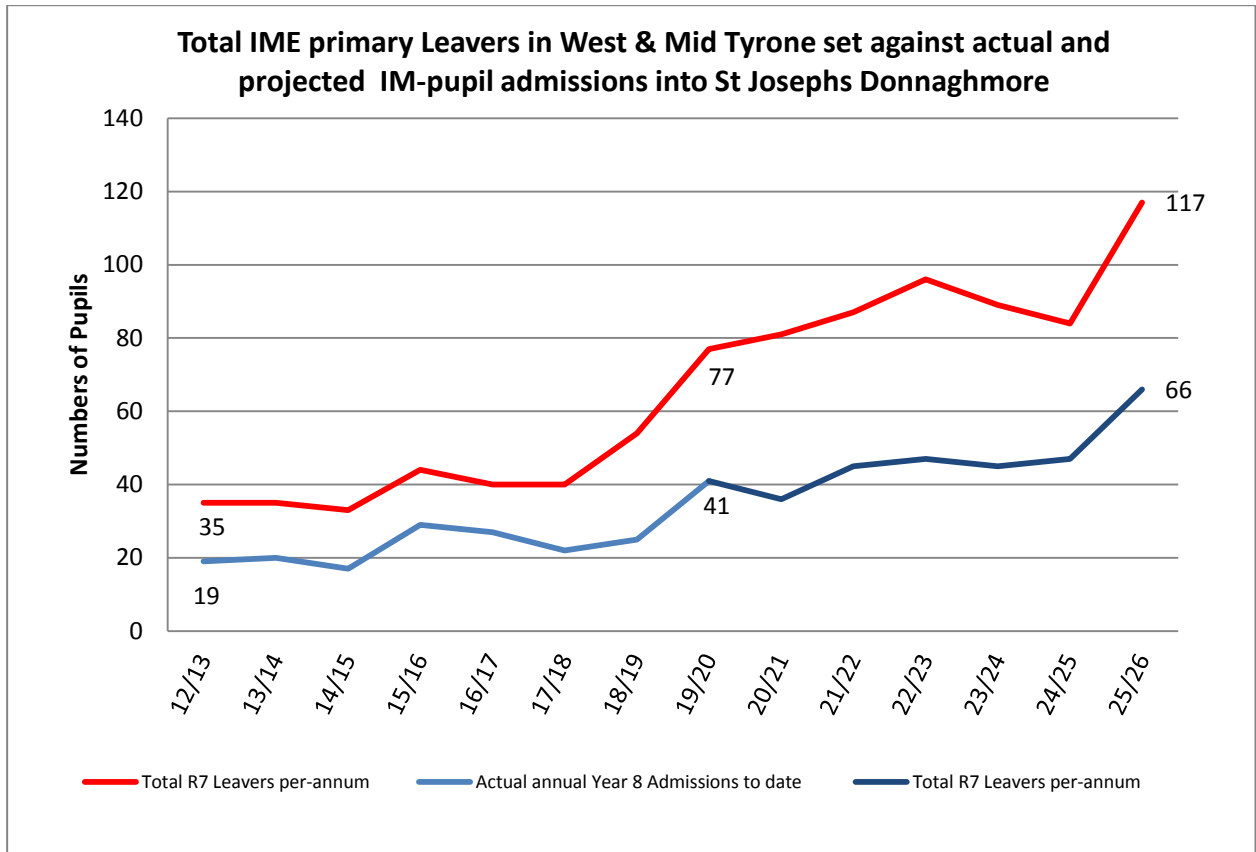
For the purpose of our projections we have assumed that the transfer rate for schools in East Tyrone will increase from 67% to 75% over the six years until the 2025/26 school year. We have assumed that the intake from the schools in Mid Tyrone will rise from around 15% to 20% over this same time period.

The following table and graphs illustrate the projected growth in the IM post primary transfer based on these assumptions.

<b>Projected Transfer from IM Primary to Post-Primary in Mid and West Tyrone</b>						
<b>Year of Transfer</b>	<b>20/21</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>25/26</b>
<b>Mid Tyrone</b>						
Numbers Graduating from R7	47	59	57	54	54	77
Projected numbers transferring to St Joseph's	31	41	40	39	41	58
<b>Transfer Rate</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>West Tyrone</b>						
Numbers Graduating from R7	34	28	39	35	30	40
Projected numbers transferring to St Joseph's	5	4	7	6	6	8
<b>Transfer Rate</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Both areas Combined</b>						
<b>Numbers Graduating from R7 from both areas</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>Admissions Year 8 St Joseph's</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Admissions as %age of total enrolment from of two areas</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>56%</b>
<b>Projected total Enrolment St Joseph's</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>296</b>

The low transfer rate from the Mid-Tyrone schools in Omagh and Carrickmore mean that by 2025 only 56% of the total IM primary leavers are likely to be opting for IM secondary provision. It is clear from the figures that the IM stream at St Josephs is not being considered as an option by all but a few parents of Gaelscoil na gCrann and the unit at St Colmcille's in Carrickmore.

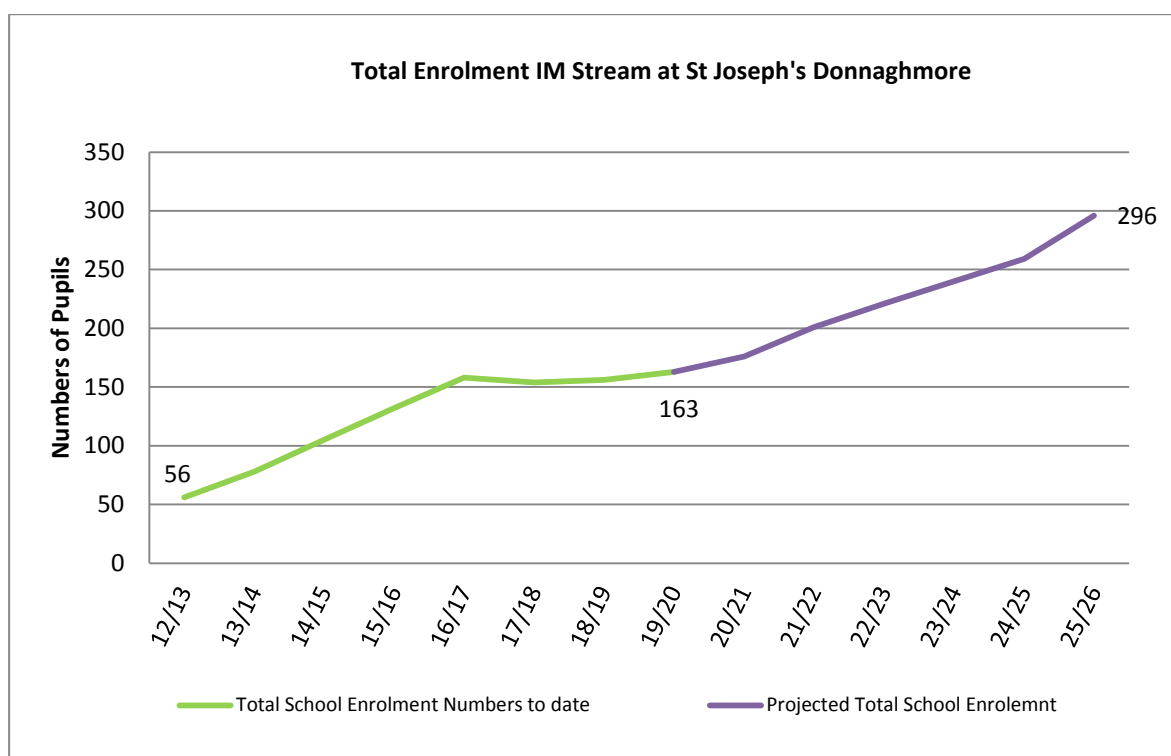
The following graph demonstrates the projected annual admissions related to the numbers of leavers within the area.



It is estimated that by 2025, over 50 children within the area are not opting to continue with IME to post-primary with most of these being within the Omagh/ Carrickmore areas.

The above graph also indicates that there is a potential issue in relation to capacity, since St Joseph’s have indicated that they do not have the capacity to increase their IM provision to accommodate more than an annual intake of 50 children. It is estimated that within East Tyrone alone there will be 58 children seeking admission to St Joseph’s by 2025.

The following graph shows the projected growth in total enrolment of St Joseph’s Donaghmore until 2025.



The above graph demonstrates that the enrolment at St. Joseph’s IM Stream is expected to grow to approximately 296 pupils by 2025. The annual admission numbers indicate that free-standing provision would potentially be a viable option for the area, but that would require the agreement of the current providers (St Joseph’s) and the other interested parties within the area.

With regards to the wider catchment area, we understand that there is an increasing demand from parents in the Omagh area for Post-primary provision in this area and that they have already made an approach to one of the local post-primary schools to facilitate the setting up of a post-primary IM stream.

CnaG is currently in the process of considering the best way forward to meet the demands of IM post-primary provision Mid-Tyrone/ East Tyrone area including a planned consultation with a range of stakeholders. Following this consultation CnaG will review its strategy for IM post-primary provision within this area. This is likely to include recommendations to deliver additional provision within this area in order to address the low transfer rate of children from primary IME to post primary IME especially from the Omagh area.

### 6.5.8 Area Planning / Development Objectives

Based on the above analysis and projections, a range of development and area planning objectives have been identified.

The following objectives within the area are based on an assessment of the needs of the various IME schools & units and assume the realistic growth scenario for growth in IME primary enrolments.

#### **1. Gaelscoil Uí Néill – Suitable site and school build required**

Whilst a site has been identified for the new building, this particular site may not be accessible due to current sitting tenant. As a well-established school in the area with healthy enrolment, it is imperative that the long-term future of IME in Coalisland is secured and a site and permanent accommodation provided.

**Action:** CnaG, InaG, and DE in conjunction with the school to identify and secure appropriate site and to proceed to build as soon as possible.

#### **2. Gaelscoil na gCrann – Completion of new build**

The new school building for GS na gCrann is currently under construction, with an expected completion and opening by September 2020.

**Action:** GS na gCrann build Project Board to continue to monitor progress to ensure successful opening to pupils by Sept 2020.

#### **3. Gaelscoil Aodha Rua – Suitable site and school build required**

The school secured capital approval in 2016 but to date, no site has been procured. It is essential to the future of IME in Dungannon that a permanent site with appropriate facilities is secured. 3 potential sites are currently subject to feasibility studies.

**Action:** CnaG, InaG, and DE in conjunction with the school to identify and secure appropriate site and to proceed to build as soon as possible.

#### **4. Gaelscoil Eoghain – Suitable site and school build required**

As a growing school with capital viability status, it is essential to the future of IME in Cookstown that a permanent site with appropriate facilities is secured. A double modular classroom is currently being placed onsite to address urgent and increasing accommodation needs. However, as a new site and full school building is urgently required CnaG has nominated GS Eoghain for the 2019 Capital Build List.

**Action:** CnaG to work with InaG, DE and the school to identify and secure a suitable alternative site and to progress to new school build as soon as possible.

#### **5. Bunscoil Naomh Colmcille – Increase in Enrolment**

Bunscoil Naomh Colmcille is an IMU which is exceeding capacity and has potential for further growth. CnaG will continue to discuss the potential for strategic development of IME within the area with the CCMS to identify options.

**Action:** CnaG to discuss the strategic development of IME in the area and the need to increase enrolment at the school in the short term.

#### **6. Scoil Iósaef, An Domhnach Mór – Increase in Enrolment**



The post-primary IM stream at St. Joseph's, Donaghmore has experienced a steady growth over recent years and with increased primary enrolments, it is reasonable to expect further growth in demand for places. A Development Proposal and Case for Change is currently published to increase admissions and enrolment to 50 pupils per year. It is anticipated this new enrolment figure could be exceeded within the next 5 years. There is a need to plan for the strategic development of IM post-primary for the area with relevant partners.

**Action:** CnaG is to work with the school, DE, GBA and the Trustees, to develop options for full IME post-primary provision in the future in keeping with growth in demand.

## **7. Review of Post-Primary Provision Generally**

As previously highlighted, a relatively high number of pupils leaving IME primary in the Omagh and Carrickmore areas are not opting to travel the considerable distance to Donaghmore. In addition, there are potential capacity issues for St. Joseph's that would restrict the numbers available to Omagh children. As a result CnaG has identified the need to undertake consultations with all interested parties in the primary and post primary sectors throughout this area and to explore options to increase access to and uptake of IME post-primary education, especially within the Omagh area.

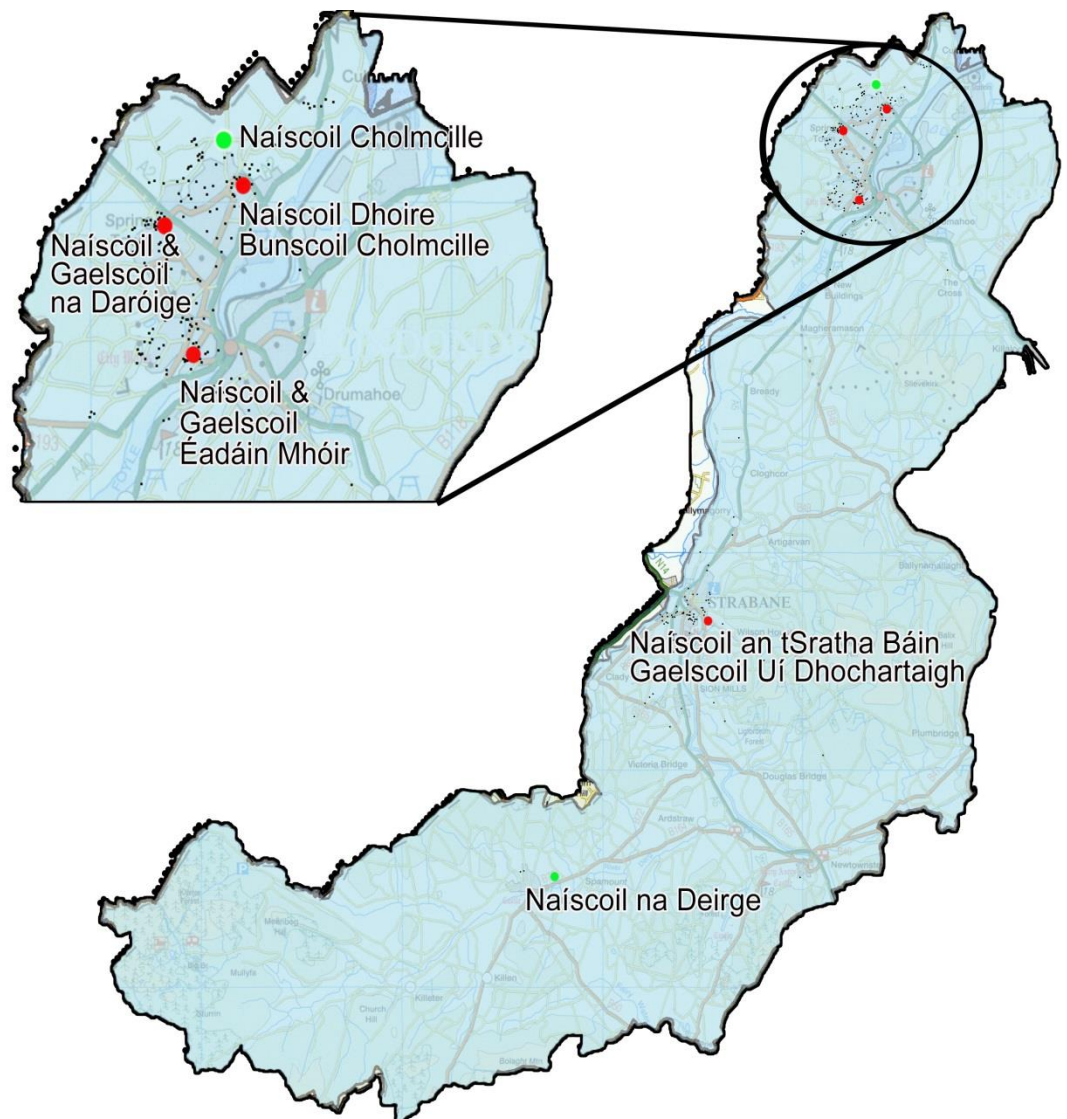
**Action:** CnaG to work with DE, EA, and other relevant partners, to develop options for IME post-primary provision in the future in keeping with growth in demand.

## 6.6 Derry & Strabane

### 6.6.1 Summary of Current Provision

The area consists of Derry City and Strabane and the following map shows the location of the IME schools within the catchment, including nearby schools in Co. Donegal. This immediate area currently does not have IM post-primary provision and pupils within this catchment area. Currently, the strategic provider of IM post-primary is Gaelcholáiste Dhoire in Dungiven with some pupils attending Coláiste Áiligh in Letterkenny.

In 2019, CnaG produced a strategic plan for the development of IM primary provision in Derry City, “Area Planning Recommendations for Irish-medium Primary Provision in Derry City”. This document is attached (Appendix 2). There are ongoing discussions with DE, EA and CCMS regarding the implementation of the recommendations.



All schools within this catchment area fall within Derry and Strabane District Council.

## Gaelscoileanna (IM Primary Schools)

There are four Gaelscoileanna within the area as follows:

School Name	Location	Provision Started	Current Provision	Approved Enrolment	Intake Sept '18	Intake Sept '19
Bunscoil Cholmcille	Steelstown Road Derry	Catholic Maintained	91	196	22	15
Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir	Brandywell, Derry	Other Maintained	156	182	29	24
Gaelscoil na Daróige	Ballymagroarty Derry	Other Maintained	88	81	15	21
Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh	Strabane	Other Maintained	140	160	23	17
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>475</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>77</b>

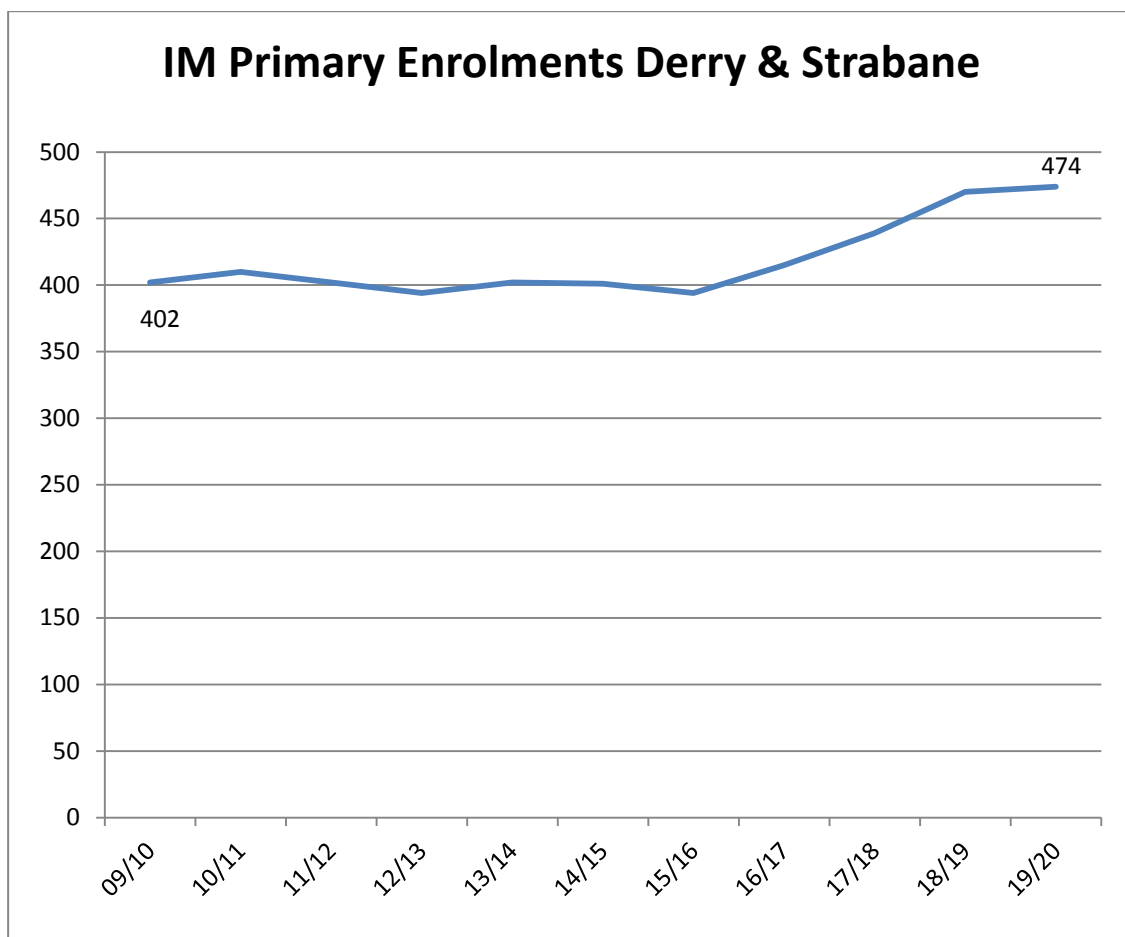
## Naíscoileanna (IM Pre-schools)

There are six Naíscoileanna within the area as follows:

Name	Location	Description	2019/20 Enrolment	1 <sup>st</sup> Pref Sept. 2019
Naíscoil Dhoire	Derry	Statutory	26	26
Naíscoil Éadain Mhóir	Derry	Statutory	26	21
Naíscoil na Daróige	Derry	Voluntary	22	17
Naíscoil an tSratha Báin	Strabane	Statutory	26	26
Naíscoil na Deirge	Castledearg	Voluntary	8	7
Naíscoil Cholmcille	Derry	Voluntary	15	5
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>123</b>	<b>102</b>

### 6.6.2 Enrolment Trends

Over the last decade, the overall numbers of children in IME within the area have fluctuated year to year, but over the timeframe, the growing demand for IME is clearly evident as shown on the below graph.



Following a period of stagnation, IME in this area has grown over the last five years. The largest growth in this period has occurred at Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir and following the approval of a DP for increased admissions, the school is quickly approaching a seven-class base. The implications of this overall growth are to be felt across each school community and the resulting accommodation and site concerns require immediate action.

The following tables detail the underlying historic enrolment trends in each of the schools within the area.

Numbers of Children Graduating from Naíscóileanna								
	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Naíscóil an tSratha Báin	26	25	26	26	26	26	26	26
Naíscóil na Deirge	6	8	8	6	9	10	10	8
Naíscóil Éadain Mhóir	21	26	28	26	26	26	31	26
Naíscóil Cholmcille	-	-	6	8	12	7	14	15
Naíscóil Dhoire	26	26	25	26	26	26	26	26
Naíscóil na Daróige	14	15	17	14	15	19	20	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>123</b>

Breakdown of Primary Admissions								
Year	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Bunscoil Cholmcille, Doire	12	15	11	11	14	18	22	15
Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir	11	13	20	22	27	34	29	24
Gaelscoil na Daróige	9	11	12	7	11	10	15	21
Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh	17	25	20	25	24	23	23	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Growth in Last 5 years - annual equivalent and gross</b>							<b>4.1%</b>	<b>22%</b>

Total Enrolments at Gaelscoileanna								
Year	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Bunscoil Cholmcille, Doire	97	91	88	84	82	86	88	91
Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir	113	113	110	108	123	136	146	156
Gaelscoil na Daróige	55	61	69	69	66	68	76	88
Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh	129	137	134	133	144	149	140	140
<b>Total</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>475</b>
<b>Growth in Last 5 years - annual equivalent and gross</b>							<b>3.4%</b>	<b>18%</b>

There has been steady in recent years in IME enrolment in the area. Each of the four schools, similar to many across the IME sector, have experienced long delays in securing adequate sites, appropriate accommodation and/or replacement of existing unacceptably poor temporary accommodation. There is little doubt that this has impacted upon the ability of schools to grow.

Despite these physical constraints the growth figures demonstrate exceptionally strong growth in admissions and enrolments in the area over the past five years - R1 admissions have grown by 49% (averaging 8.3% per annum) and overall enrolments have also grown 19% (average 3.4% per annum).

### 6.6.3 Transfer Rates

#### Naíscoil – Gaelscoil

The following table demonstrates the transfer rates between Naíscoileanna and Gaelscoileanna within the area in the last few years.

IM Preschool to Primary Transfer Rate								
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Graduating from Naíscoileanna	91	93	100	110	106	114	114	127
No. Progressing to IM Primary	49	64	63	65	77	85	89	77
Transfer Rate	54%	69%	63%	59%	73%	75%	78%	61%

There is a degree of fluctuation in the transfer rate from preschool to primary IME within this area. The overall pattern is one of growth, although the most recent shows a drop in transfer rate. It should be noted that the number of available preschool places (138) is significantly higher than the number of available Primary 1 places (95) across the four schools in this area.

Additionally, pupils in Naíscoil na Deirge in Castlederg have to travel a substantial distance to attend their nearest IM primary school and as a result, most pupils do not avail of primary IME. The opportunity should be taken to seek to provide IM primary provision closer to this Naíscoil provision.

The ongoing development of IME in Derry City is a cause of celebration as, for three years in a row, the total Primary 1 admissions across the three schools have been 60 or more pupils. This proves the viability of a permanent three-school solution in the city as both Gaelscoil na Daróige and Bunscoil Cholmcille continue to build their enrolments. CnaG will provide targeted support to these schools to help them increase and sustain admissions over the coming years in order to meet the viability and sustainability thresholds.

#### Gaelscoil – Iarbhunscoil (IM Post-Primary School)

The immediate council area does not currently have an IM post-primary school. Currently, the strategic provider of IM post-primary is Gaelcholáiste Dhoire, Dungiven and year on year, an increasing number of pupils are choosing to avail of the provision as shown from the below table.

Transfer from IM Primary to Post-Primary						
	Year of Transfer	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
<b>Derry City &amp; Strabane</b>						
Total Numbers Graduating from R7		79	75	39	56	58
Numbers transferring to Gaelcholáiste Dhoire		0	9	13	13	16
Transfer Rate		0%	12%	33%	23%	28%

As admissions continue to grow, it should be anticipated that in the future, there will be evidence that would support the future establishment of a standalone post-primary IME school in Derry City.

Over the years a small number of pupils have also transferred from the area to the Post-primary schools in Letterkenny and Buncrana.

## 6.6.4 Accommodation

The following table provides a summary of the state of the accommodation of Gaelscoileanna within the area, and constraints associated with the accommodation.

<b>Bunscoil Cholmcille</b>	
Current Status	Capital Viability Status
Description of Buildings	The school is housed entirely in mobile classrooms; most of the classrooms within the school are in excess of 25 years old, physically and functionally obsolete with significant health and safety issues. Most classrooms are significantly smaller than the DE recommended 60m <sup>2</sup> .
Current Constraints	<p>The accommodation within the school is currently inadequate; it has no internal and very limited external play areas, limited grassed area or playing pitch, no sports hall, no dining room, limited staff and office accommodation and storage.</p> <p>The open nature of the school site is an additional concern with pupils required to go to a separate building out of eye line of teachers in order to access toilet facilities. School has requested a fence via Minor Works application amongst other issues.</p> <p>There is urgent need for replacement of current classrooms, provision of a school hall, canteen, and resolution of all Health and Safety issues. DE is to address some of the most urgent accommodation needs in 2020.</p>
<b>Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir</b>	
Current Status	Capital Viability Status
Description of Buildings	The school is housed in mobile classrooms and has a modular-built multi-purpose hall. It is located on a site that is suitable for neither the current nor future needs of the school due to continuous growth in enrolment.
Current Constraints	<p>The ancillary facilities, site and accommodation of this school are inadequate and fall far short of the DE accommodation handbook standards. There are no adequate outdoor play spaces, no green area, no play pitch, poor storage, inadequate staff room and no rooms for parent meetings or external support services, SEN / Health Visitors etc.</p> <p>School has been provided with a multipurpose space that needs updated. Due to additional classrooms on site, the school does not have adequate play space.</p> <p>The school has been nominated for the 2019 Capital Build List.</p>
<b>Gaelscoil na Daróige</b>	
Current Status	No Capital Viability status.
Description of Buildings	The school is housed entirely in mobile accommodation on a site that is totally unsuitable for its current needs. In 2018, a modular unit was provided for dinner facilities, however, it is inadequate in size and is utilised for multiple purposes due to lack of other accommodation.
Current Constraints	<p>The ancillary facilities, site and accommodation of this school are inadequate and fall far short of the DE accommodation handbook standards. The school has no internal play area, very limited external play areas, no grassed area, no playing pitch, no sports hall, no parking area and very limited staff accommodation offices and storage.</p> <p>Most of the buildings on the site are physically and functionally obsolete. Despite these combined circumstances leaving the school at a distinct disadvantage when seeking to increase its enrolment, the school continues to experience significant growth. Consequently the school is in urgent need of additional fit-for-purpose classrooms, sufficient School Meals Accommodation and multi-purpose hall to cater for current and future enrolment. The school urgently needs to relocate to a site that is suitable for the current and long-term needs of the school. In the short-term, the current school site could be expanded by incorporating adjacent plots, allowing for the expansion of the school to meet urgent growing demand.</p> <p>DE has instructed LPS to explore potential land acquisition in short-term.</p>
<b>Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh</b>	

Current Status	Capital Viability status
Description of Buildings	The entire school is housed in mobile accommodation that is no longer fit for purpose.
Current Constraints	<p>The ancillary facilities, site and accommodation of this school are inadequate and fall far short of the DE accommodation handbook standards. There is no internal and limited external play facilities, no grassed area or playing pitch, no sports hall or dining area and limited staff facilities, offices, no rooms for parent meetings or external support services, SEN / Health Visitors etc. and limited storage. Some of the classrooms on the site are aged mobile classrooms and are physically and functionally obsolete.</p> <p>In 2016, the school was accepted onto the Capital Build list and whilst a school site has been secured, work has not yet commenced on site.</p>

There are serious concerns in each school within this catchment area. At each of the Other Maintained schools, there are serious deficiencies in the facilities and sites available. These schools are suffering from a lack of basic facilities such as dining halls, sports facilities, staff rooms and appropriate rooms for health/SEN visits etc. It is certain that these deficiencies are hindering the quality of educational experience on offer for each child.

In the case of Bunscoil Cholmcille, these similar facilities are not only lacking, but the entire accommodation in which the school is situated is wholly inappropriate for use. The school is located within mobile classrooms, some of which are more than 25 years old, and not at all conducive to a positive learning environment. These issues must be resolved as soon as possible as outlined in the *CnaG Area Planning Recommendations for IM Primary Provision in Derry City*.

### **6.6.5 Assessment of the potential growth in the IME sector**

The last few years have shown a steady increase in enrolments within the area. Each of the three schools in Derry City has increased their enrolment on a yearly basis for several years now. The quality of the accommodation is almost certainly one of the constraining factors, with none of the four primary schools being located within a permanent, purpose-built school building, with all of them being located within very constrained and over-crowded sites.

The two schools that are currently below the enrolment threshold in particular have very poor accommodation which is well below standard. The condition of the IM sector accommodation within this area is in stark contrast to the school buildings of most of the English-medium provision, where the vast majority of schools are accommodated within high-quality, permanent accommodation, on very well-appointed sites.

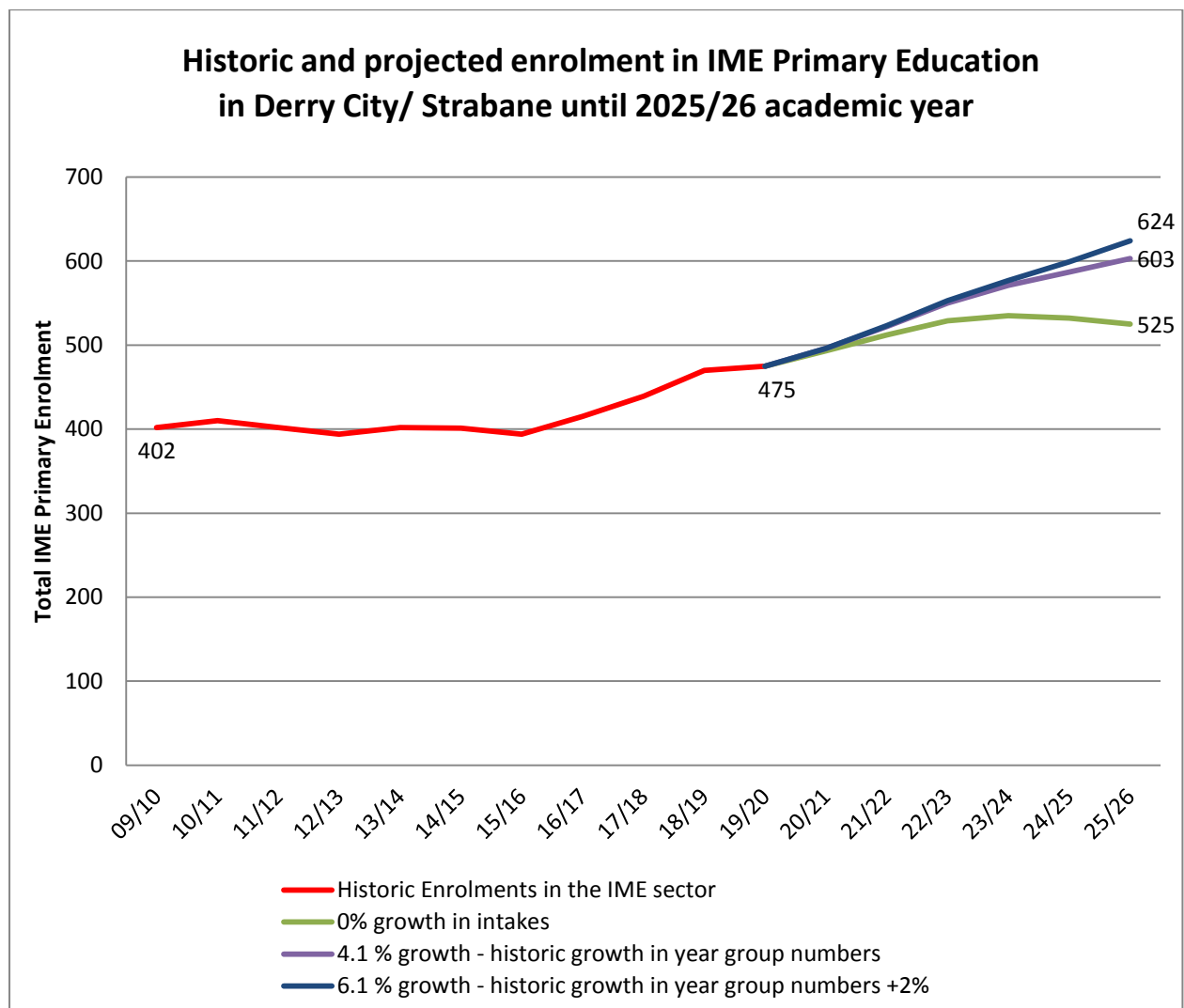
Each school within this area has demonstrated the ability to attract 20+ pupils in Primary 1 and as a result, are clearly capable of sustaining further growth. The latent growth that is evident in Derry City in particular will see total enrolments continuing to rise over the coming years. As stated repeatedly, the need for adequate accommodation located on sufficiently large sites is a major priority for this area and upon provision of these basic tenants of education, CnaG envisage even higher levels of growth above the 18% experienced over the previous five years.



### 6.6.6 Projections – Primary

As indicated above, the last five years have seen steady growth in intakes to the sector, totalling 22%, or approximately 4.1% per annum. This growth has occurred despite the very poor condition of most of the IME accommodation in the city. The recent resolution of the DE embargo on area planning actions and capital expenditure in the city and the consequent addressing of some of the current accommodation issues that have restricted the sector’s growth should facilitate a significant expansion of the sector. Pending the delivery of improved accommodation for the IME primary schools within the city we have not assumed that the growth in intakes will increase. We have therefore assumed that the historic growth over the past 5 years will continue and will review this in future years.

CnaG believes that the historic growth figure over the past 5 years of 4.1% is very achievable and this has been used as the realistic scenario figure. Zero growth in enrolments has again been used for the pessimistic scenario and an uplift of 2% has been used for the optimistic scenario of 6.1%.



The realistic growth scenario of 4.1% demonstrates the growth of enrolment of around 128 pupils or almost 27% in the overall size of the sector from 475 to 603. This will have implications for the development needs of the sector over the coming years, in addition to those already existing, and will include additional accommodation, teachers, teaching resources etc.

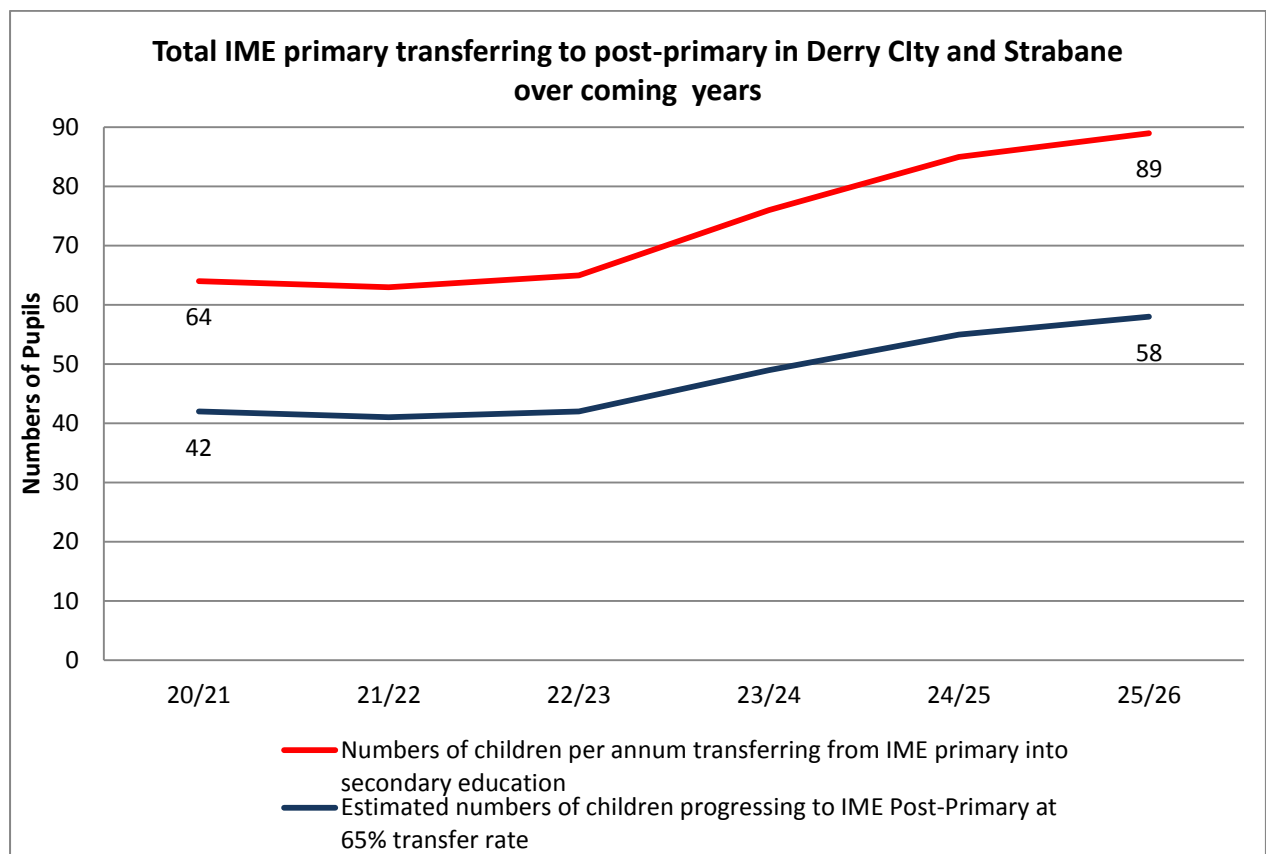
The optimistic growth scenario would see an additional 149 pupils in the sector locally and a growth of 31.4%. This scenario is very achievable and acts to reinforce the need for permanent site and accommodation solutions at each of the IM primary providers in the catchment area.

As highlighted in the CnaG Area Planning Recommendations paper, the rate of growth experienced in Derry City in IME is considerably lower than that experienced in West Belfast, an area of similar demographic. Approximately 3.5% of children in Derry City attend IME, as opposed to 10.5% in West Belfast. CnaG believes that a significant proportion of this differentiation is explained by the very-poor levels of accommodation and sites available for all three schools in Derry City. This also demonstrates the huge untapped potential for growth that exists within the city, subject to accommodation issues being resolved.

### 6.6.7 Projections – Post-Primary

The potential pupil numbers for the secondary sector are based on the enrolments of the various primary schools within the catchment area. This provides 7 years of reliable data for projecting the long-term enrolments of the post primaries in the area.

The following graph shows the numbers of pupils transferring from IM primary to post-primary level over the coming years.



The above graph demonstrates that there is a strong enrolment in IM primary education and that, assuming 65% transfer rates, there is the potential to develop free-standing IM post-primary provision within the city in the medium term. IM post-primary education in the city has had a troubled past with the setting up of an independent unfunded post-primary school in the 1990s which closed in 2000. On the closure of this provision, most of the remaining pupils transferred to St. Brigid's College, Carnhill.

Whilst St Brigid's has never taken the step to formally progress the setting up of a Stream / Unit it has over the years provided an important option for children who have attended IME education. Currently the school provides a number of subjects at KS3 & KS4 through the medium of Irish for children who have attended IM primary education. The efforts of the school over the years in providing support in the absence of formal IME provision need to be acknowledged and taken into consideration in developing a long-term Irish-medium provision within the city.

CnaG is concerned about the low numbers of children who are progressing from IME primary education in the catchment and proposes to engage with a range of interested parties within the city to consider the most appropriate way forward for increasing access and uptake for children within the city to IME post-primary education. Currently a relatively small, but growing number of children from this area attend Gaelcholáiste Dhoire in Dungiven as shown in the below table.

<b>Transfer from IM Primary to Post-Primary</b>					
<b>Year of Transfer</b>	<b>15/16</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>18/19</b>	<b>19/20</b>
<b>Derry City &amp; Strabane</b>					
Total Numbers Graduating from R7	79	75	53	56	45
Numbers transferring to Gaelcholáiste Dhoire	0	9	13	13	16
<b>Transfer Rate</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>36%</b>

CnaG is of the view that with the continued strengthening of the IME primary sector within the city that there is the potential for the delivery of formal IM Post-primary provision within the city in the medium term.

Pending IME post primary provision within the city, good transport provision has made Gaelcholáiste Dhoire a viable option for those parents who wish to continue with IME post-primary within the city and in September 2019 over 1/3 of the pupils leaving IME primary sector in the area went to Gaelcholáiste Dhoire.

It is important that any new provision, be that by way of a stream/ unit or via a free-standing school, is carefully planned and all interested parties including DE, IME primary schools and the Irish-language community in the area are consulted and involved.

The proximity of Gaelcholáiste Dhoire also holds significant potential to help support the chosen approach to the development of IM post-primary provision in the city in the future through collaboration and co-operation. However, Gaelcholáiste Dhoire is still in a very critical phase of its development and it would not be in a position to support IME post-primary provision in the Derry City Strabane for a number of years.

Pending the setting up of IM post-primary provision in Derry City CnaG strongly encourage the DE and EA to continue to support the decision of parents who wish to travel to Gaelcholáiste Dhoire if they want to continue with their IM post-primary education.

### **6.6.8 Area Planning / Development Objectives**

Based on the above analysis and projections, a range of development and area planning objectives have been identified in keeping with the CnaG Area Planning Recommendations for Irish-Medium Primary Provision in Derry City, submitted to DE June 2019.

The following objectives within the area are based on an assessment of the needs of the various IME schools, and assume the realistic growth scenario for growth in IME primary enrolments.

There are a number of urgent Development Priorities within this area as follows:

#### **1. Bunscoil Cholmcille – Site and Accommodation**

As a well-established school in the area with growing enrolment, it is imperative that the long-term future of the school is secured and permanent accommodation provided either on the current or alternative site. As one of the oldest Gaelscoil in the north and the first in Derry City, it is not acceptable to have spent 30+ years in temporary accommodation.

There is an immediate requirement to address the Health and Safety issues at the school, replace outdated and not fit for purpose accommodation with new modular accommodation, and the provision of a new modular-built multi-purpose hall.

**Action:** CCMS (working alongside CnaG and DE) to ensure the provision of short-term and longer-term solutions to the serious accommodation and site problems of the school as identified in CnaG Area Planning Recommendations paper.

#### **2. Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir – Site and Accommodation**

As the largest school in Derry, Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir has recently been provided with additional classrooms to respond to the growing demand. However, this reduced the play and outdoor space in what was an already restricted site. It is imperative that a suitable site and permanent accommodation is provided. The school has been nominated by CnaG for the 2019 Capital Build List.

**Action:** DE/LPS in conjunction with the school to identify and secure appropriate site and to proceed to build as soon as possible.

#### **3. Gaelscoil na Daróige – Site and Accommodation**

Gaelscoil na Daróige has already exceeded its Approved Enrolment and with a growing enrolment cannot in the long-term remain on the current cramped site. Not only is a permanent site and accommodation required but interim measures are also needed to cater for all pupils in the immediate future. At present, DE has been investigating a site

adjacent to the current school site which, if procured, would enable the school to focus on securing a permanent site for IME in the area.

**Action:** CnaG and school (working alongside EA and DE) to ensure the short-term and long-term solutions to the serious accommodation and site problems of the school as identified in CnaG Area Planning Recommendations paper.

#### **4. Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh – Site and Accommodation**

In 2016, the school was accepted onto the Capital Builds list. A permanent site for the school has been secured, however work has not yet begun on the build. As stated above, it is imperative that the accommodation is delivered quickly to allow the school to continue to grow and consolidate its position in Strabane.

**Action:** GS Uí Dhochartaigh Project Board to continue to monitor progress.

#### **5. Bunscoil Cholmcille – Development Proposal to Right-size Approved Enrolment**

The current Approved Enrolment of the school is significantly higher than the historic enrolment, with around 50% of places filled in recent years. There is a clear need to bring the enrolment number into line with current and projected figures. This, in turn, would reduce the number of seemingly unfilled places across the city.

**Action:** CCMS and School to bring forward DP to right-size the school's Approved Enrolment figure.

#### **6. Gaelscoil na Daróige – Transformation of current voluntary preschool to Statutory Unit**

The committee of the voluntary preschool, Naíscóil na Daróige, have expressed their continued desire to transform to a statutory unit within Gaelscoil na Daróige. To that end, the school has worked closely with the naíscóil in building enrolments which have grown steadily to numbers consistently over 20. CnaG is supportive of this development which will assist the school towards sustainability and is supporting the school in the development of a Development Proposal and CfC.

**Action:** CnaG to work with school to prepare DP and CfC for establishment of a statutory pre-school unit in early 2020.

#### **7. IME Post-Primary Provision in Derry City**

As previously highlighted, increasing pupil numbers are entering IME primary provision in Derry City and this growth is expected to continue. CnaG identifies the need to explore long-term options for post-primary provision for Derry City in line with demand.

**Action:** CnaG is to work with DE, EA, and other relevant partners, to develop options for IME post-primary provision in the future in keeping with growth in demand.

## 8. Potential for IM Primary Provision in Castleberg

Currently, most pupils attending Naíscoil na Deirge do not progress on to Primary IME. The main reason for this is the distance between Castleberg and the nearest provision located in Strabane. There is a need to explore options for potential primary provision in Castleberg in order to allow these children to continue to avail of IME.

**Action:** CnaG to engage with EA and CCMS to explore options for potential IME provision in the Castleberg area.

## 6.7 Rural Co. Derry

### 6.7.1 Summary of Current Provision

This area consists of most of rural county Derry, excluding Derry City. At post-primary level this area is served by Gaelcholáiste Dhoire, an independent-maintained, post-primary school which is located in Dungiven Castle, which opened in September 2015.

The following map shows the location of the various IME pre-school, primary and post-primary schools within the area.



The IM providers within this area are located in the following LGDs:

Causeway, Coast and Glens: Naíscóil Ghleann an Iolair, Naíscóil Ghreanacháin, Gaelscoil Léim an Mhadaidh, Gaelscoil Neachtain, Gaelcholáiste Dhoire

Mid Ulster: Naíscóil na Fíobha, Naíscóil Mhachaire Rátha, Naíscóil na Charn Tóchair, Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí, Gaelscoil na Spéiríní, Bunscoil Naomh Bríd

## Gaelscoileanna (IM Primary Schools)

There are four Gaelscoileanna and one Irish-medium Unit within the area as follows:

School Name	Location	Management Type	Current Provision	Approved Enrolment	Intake Sept '18	Intake Sept '19
Gaelscoil Léim an Mhadaidh	Limavady	Other Maintained	101	100	13	22
Gaelscoil Neachtain	Dungiven	Other Maintained	121	130	22	21
Bunscoil Naomh Bríd	Maghera	Other Maintained	162	154	24	27
Gaelscoil na Speiríní	Ballinscreen	Other Maintained	60	58	10	7
Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí	Magherafelt	Other Maintained	109	120	17	20
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>553</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>97</b>

Schools within the area have reasonably healthy and increasing enrolments, and the Unit at Tirkane has exceeded the threshold to be set up as a free-standing school.

## Naíscóileanna (IM Pre-schools)

There are seven voluntary and two statutory Naíscóil within the area as follows:

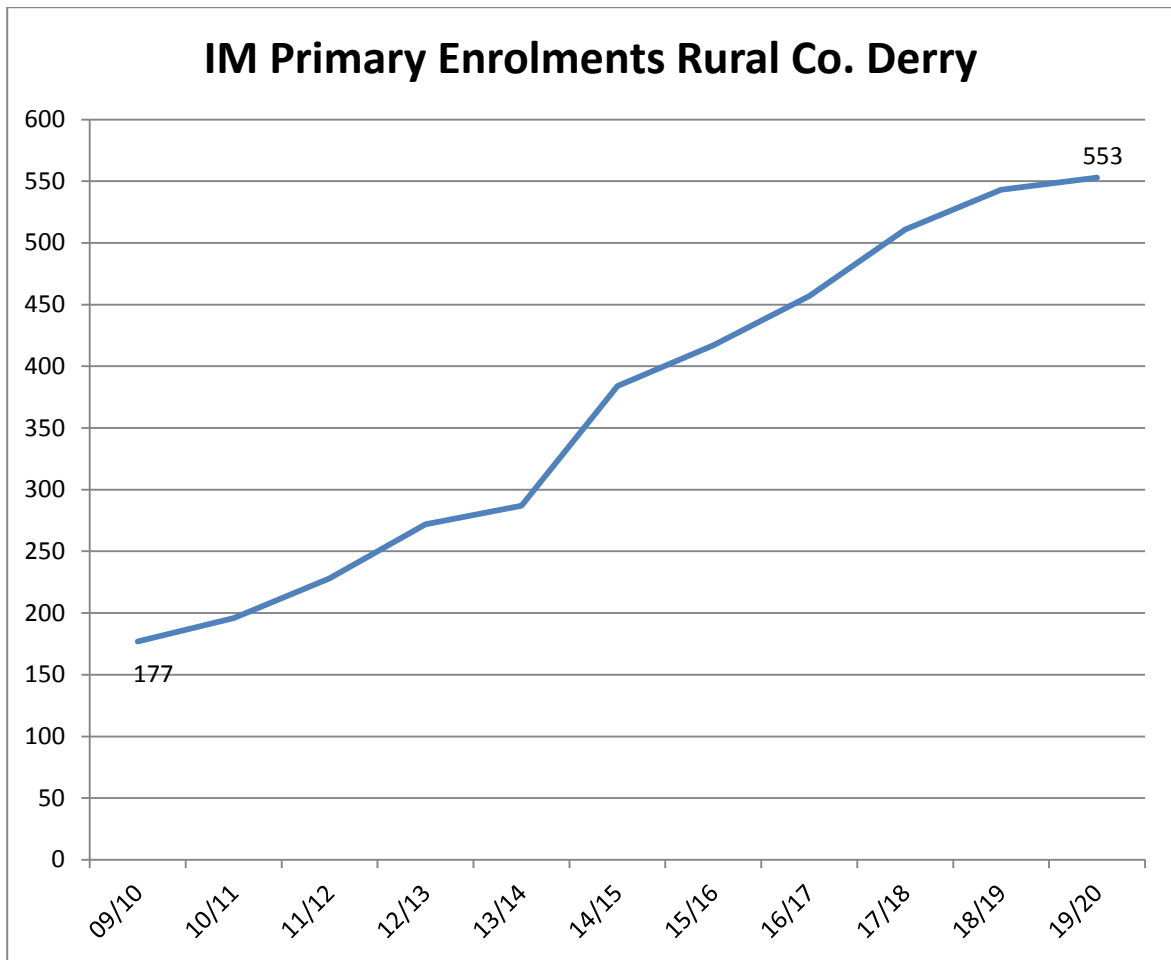
Name	Location	Description	2019/20 Enrolment	1 <sup>st</sup> Pref Sept. 2019
Naíscóil Léim an Mhadaidh	Limavady	Voluntary	24	19
Naíscóil Neachtain	Dungiven	Statutory	26	18
Naíscóil Mhachaire Rátha	Maghera	Voluntary	15	13
Naíscóil na Speiríní	Ballinscreen	Voluntary	18	20
Naíscóil an tSeanchaí	Magherafelt	Statutory	22	16
Naíscóil Charn Tóchair	Carntogher	Voluntary	26	18
Naíscóil Ghleann an Iolair	Glenullin	Voluntary	8	6
Naíscóil Ghreanacháin	Swatragh	Voluntary	7	7
Naíscóil na Fíobha	Toome	Voluntary	11	8
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>157</b>	<b>125</b>

Most of the Naíscóileanna have scope for increasing their enrolments and further growing the sector within this area. There is a need to strengthen admissions around the most recently established preschools and CnaG are working with the respective committees to that end.

### 6.7.2 Enrolment Trends

The following graph shows the relatively steady growth profile associated with the growth of the sector over the last 10 years.





The above graph reflects the strength of the sector within this area, and a very-strong foundation that will continue to support the emerging and thriving post-primary located in Dungiven.

Out of all areas the County Derry area has experienced the highest growth rate in IME over the last 10 years – growing from a relatively low number of 177 pupils by over 300% over this time period. Total enrolments in the last 5 years have grown by over 44% from 384 pupils to 553 illustrating the growing confidence locally in IME and rapidly growing needs of the sector in the area.

The following tables detail the underlying enrolment trends in Naíscoileanna and Gaelscoileanna within the area.

Numbers of Children Graduating from Náiscoileanna								
Náiscoil / Pre-School	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Náiscoil Léim an Mhadaidh	12	20	21	17	19	13	26	24
Náiscoil Neachtain	24	18	22	7	20	21	24	26
Náiscoil Mhachaire Rátha	16	15	12	19	16	11	13	15
Náiscoil Charn Tóchair	14	9	13	15	13	15	15	18
Naiscoil na Spéiríní	8	11	12	19	11	13	13	22
Náiscoil an tSeanchaí	17	25	24	20	26	19	19	26
Náiscoil Ghleann an Iolair	-	-	16	10	16	20	16	8
Náiscoil Ghreanacháin	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	7
Náiscoil na Fíobha	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>157</b>

Breakdown of Primary Admissions								
Year	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Gaelscoil Léim an Mhadaidh	8	11	17	15	15	16	13	22
Gaelscoil Neachtain	14	23	14	14	13	23	22	21
Bunscoil Naomh Bríd	14	21	20	20	27	27	24	27
Gaelscoil na Spéiríní	8	4	8	9	13	9	10	7
Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí	17	16	18	21	16	20	17	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Growth in Last 5 years - annual equivalent and gross</b>							<b>4.7%</b>	<b>26%</b>

Total Enrolments at Gaelscoileanna								
Year	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Gaelscoil Léim an Mhadaidh	30	36	53	68	82	94	93	101
Gaelscoil Neachtain	63	68	90	86	93	109	122	121
Bunscoil Naomh Bríd	99	88	110	115	127	140	151	162
Gaelscoil na Spéiríní	33	36	41	49	49	56	61	60
Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí	47	59	90	99	106	112	112	109
<b>Total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>553</b>
<b>Growth in Last 5 years - annual equivalent and gross</b>							<b>7.6%</b>	<b>44%</b>

The above figures demonstrate that most of the schools have strong enrolment patterns. Indeed, Bunscoil Naomh Bríd IMU continues to be oversubscribed and there is an urgent need to consider a range of options to respond to the increasing demand in this area.

Recent successful efforts in building enrolment at Náiscoil na Spéiríní demonstrate that its primary enrolments are likely to increase in the coming years.

Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí and Gaelscoil na Spéiríní have experienced some stagnation in enrolments in the last few years, which is perhaps a result of their very poor accommodation, especially when compared to other EM primary schools in the area. Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí urgently require a move to a permanent facility.

With the establishment of Náiscoil na Fíobha in nearby Toome as a feeder-preschool, further growth in enrolments are anticipated at Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí underlining the requirements for relocation to a new school site and building.

Generally the figures demonstrate very strong growth in admissions and enrolments in the area over the past five years - R1 admissions have grown by 28% (5.0% per annum) and overall enrolments have likewise grown by an impressive 44% (average 7.6% per annum).

### 6.7.3 Transfer Rates

#### Naíscoil – Gaelscoil

The following table demonstrates the transfer rates between Naíscoileanna and Gaelscoileanna within the area in the last few years.

IM Preschool to Primary Transfer Rate								
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Graduating from Naíscoileanna	91	91	98	120	107	121	112	147
No. Progressing to IM Primary	61	75	77	79	84	95	86	97
Transfer Rate	67%	82%	79%	66%	79%	79%	77%	66%

This shows a relatively steady transfer rate from IM pre-school to primary. With an average transfer rate of 73% over the past five years, there is sufficient scope for higher admissions into the local IM primaries. Two additional preschools have been established in the last few years (Naíscoil Ghreanacháin & Naíscoil na Fíobha) and as they establish themselves in their respective localities, it is expected that they will contribute an increasing number of pupils to the local Primary 1 intakes in the years to come.

It will be important to give particular consideration to the potential to increase the transfer rates from the Naíscoil in Glenullin to its nearest IM primary provider, ie Bunscoil Naomh Bríd, IMU at Tirkane and the implications for development at that location.

#### Gaelscoil – Iarbhunscoil (Post-Primary)

This area is served at Post-Primary IME by Gaelcholáiste Dhoire, located in Dungiven.

Gaelcholáiste Dhoire took its first intake of pupils in September 2015 and from a total of 23 R7 pupils attracted 13, and attracted a further 3 pupils from Year 8, who opted to repeat their Year 8 at Gaelcholáiste Dhoire. If we consider the trend in the transfer of pupils from IM primary in the catchment, the transfer of R7 pupils at 57% in its first year has slowly increased over the intervening periods to 63% in 2019. As indicated in the previous section of this report, the school attracts a number of pupils from Derry City and Strabane since these areas do not currently have IME post-primary provision. The transfer from this area has increased significantly since the setting up of the school from zero in September 2015 to 36% in September 2019.

This slightly complicates the analysis and projections of the post-primary sector in this area. We have therefore shown the numbers transferring from each of the respective areas separately and used separate transfer rates for these. The historic transfer rates are shown in the following table.

<b>Transfer from IM Primary to Post-Primary</b>					
<b>Year of Transfer</b>	<b>15/16</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>18/19</b>	<b>19/20</b>
<b>Rural Co. Derry</b>					
Total Numbers Graduating from R7	23	43	38	47	63
Numbers transferring to Gaelcholáiste Dhoire	13	23	22	29	40
<b>Transfer Rate</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>63%</b>
<b>Derry City &amp; Strabane</b>					
Total Numbers Graduating from R7	79	75	53	56	45
Numbers transferring to Gaelcholáiste Dhoire	0	9	13	13	16
<b>Transfer Rate</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>Admissions Year 8 Gaelcholáite Dhoire</b>					
	<b>13</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>56</b>

#### 6.7.4 Accommodation

We have identified the need to commission a detailed baseline assessment of the accommodation constraints of the IME sector, and we hope that this will be carried out over the coming months. However, the following table provides a summary of the state of the accommodation within the area and a summary of any constraints that are associated with the accommodation.

<b>Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí</b>	
Current Status	Capital Viability Status
Description of Buildings	The school is located partially within a former statutory pre-school built c1895 with 2 classrooms within a permanent building; 2 within a new modular building and one within a prefabricated mobile which is at the very least approximately 20 years old.
Current Constraints	<p>There are serious constraints, which, if not addressed as a matter of urgency, will pose a real risk to the school's ability to deliver an acceptable educational experience for its pupils. Physically it will not be possible to accommodate the expanding enrolment, and this will have a negative effect on the growth of the school.</p> <p>The accommodation within the school is very limited for the current enrolment. There are no internal or external sports facilities, very limited external play facilities, no canteen, no resource areas, limited and dangerous parking and the open site has very many child-protection and health and safety concerns. There is no linked up Fire Alarm System in the school and as an open site is very difficult to manage, particularly where children who pose a flight risk are concerned. All sporting and library facilities must be accessed off site leading to the necessity for increased staffing, resulting in a negative budgetary impact.</p> <p>A recent survey of dining facilities in the school, or lack of, recommends that facilities as they currently stand be condemned. The site on which the school is located belongs to the Education Authority and is not suitable as a permanent site for the school. The standard of accommodation and the lack of general facilities are in stark contrast to the conditions within the local English-medium sector, and are a major constraining factor in the development and growth of this school.</p>
<b>Gaelscoil na Speiríní</b>	
Current Status	Capital Viability Status

Description of Buildings	The school is located within three modern mobile classrooms on the grounds of a former CCMS school.
Current Constraints	The school has limited external play area and no internal or external sports facilities. It has access to the adjacent pre-school building for limited internal sporting facilities. The site on which the school is located is rented from the Diocesan Trust and is not suitable as a long-term site for the school. Enrolment has exceeded the Approved Enrolment with no further space for expansion. New site location and buildings urgently required.
<b>Gaelscoil Léim an Mhadaidh</b>	
Current Status	Capital Viability status.
Description of Buildings	The school is located in 5 classrooms (two modular buildings with two classrooms in each and one second-hand temporary building with the Primary 1 classroom).
Current Constraints	The school still remains in temporary accommodation on a temporary site. The school has no internal or external sports facilities, no canteen and limited outdoor play space/facilities. The school site has now been sold to a new owner, a property developer. They plan to build 34 homes adjacent to school beginning in early 2020 intending to use the school entrance/exit creating serious Health & Safety risks. There is planning permission for apartments for where the school currently sits. School has less than two years remaining on current lease. New site location and buildings urgently required. Potential relocation site at the former Roe Valley IPS, currently under investigation by DE. The school has been nominated for the DE 2019 Capital Build List.
<b>Bunscoil Naomh Bríd</b>	
Current Status	This is an IME unit attached to an English-medium Primary School; St Brigid's Tirkane, under the control of the CCMS.
Description of Buildings	The school is housed partially within a permanent building and partially within modular buildings. There are three classrooms within the permanent building and a total of three classrooms within a new modular building.
Current Constraints	The IMU is housed in a total of six classrooms. One of which is less than building standard size (40 sq M). A new singular modular classroom has recently been provided on foot of a DP for growth in 2019. The current trend for growth continues and the new Approved Enrolment has already been exceeded, and further accommodation and site will be required shortly to deal with anticipated further expansion. Area Planning options for a way forward to be investigated.
<b>Gaelscoil Neachtain</b>	
Current Status	This is a controlled Primary school with Capital Viability Status.
Description of Buildings	The school is housed within a refurbished former English-medium Controlled primary school and is a very-high quality building.
Current Constraints	The school does not have any immediate constraints, but may have additional accommodation requirements as the school expands and grows over the coming years.
<b>Gaelcholáiste Dhoire</b>	
Current Status	Gaelcholáiste Dhoire has not yet secured Capital Viability Status
Description of Buildings	The schools located within the former Dungiven Castle building and other modular buildings directly adjacent to the Castle. Additional accommodation has been added on an annual basis to meet the basic classroom needs of the school.
Current Constraints	The current site is very constrained and the school does not have a sports hall or assembly hall. It does not have a canteen or any other ancillary accommodation such as a staff room, resource area, library, or any purpose built music, technology or arts rooms. The school has a DE-approved business plan to provide a range of accommodation that will meet the medium, term needs of the school including the purchase of an adjacent former sports pavilion and the construction of a new classroom block, a technology suite and an arts suite. Pending the implementation of this business plan the accommodation available to the school will be very constrained indeed. It is anticipated that the Sports Pavilion will be available to the school during the 2020/21 school year and the other accommodation will be available during the following academic year.

With the exception of Gaelscoil Neachtain, the accommodation / site/ facilities of the IM schools within this catchment area compare very unfavourably with the English-medium sector, and CnaG has identified this as a significant constraining factor for the development of the IME sector within the area.

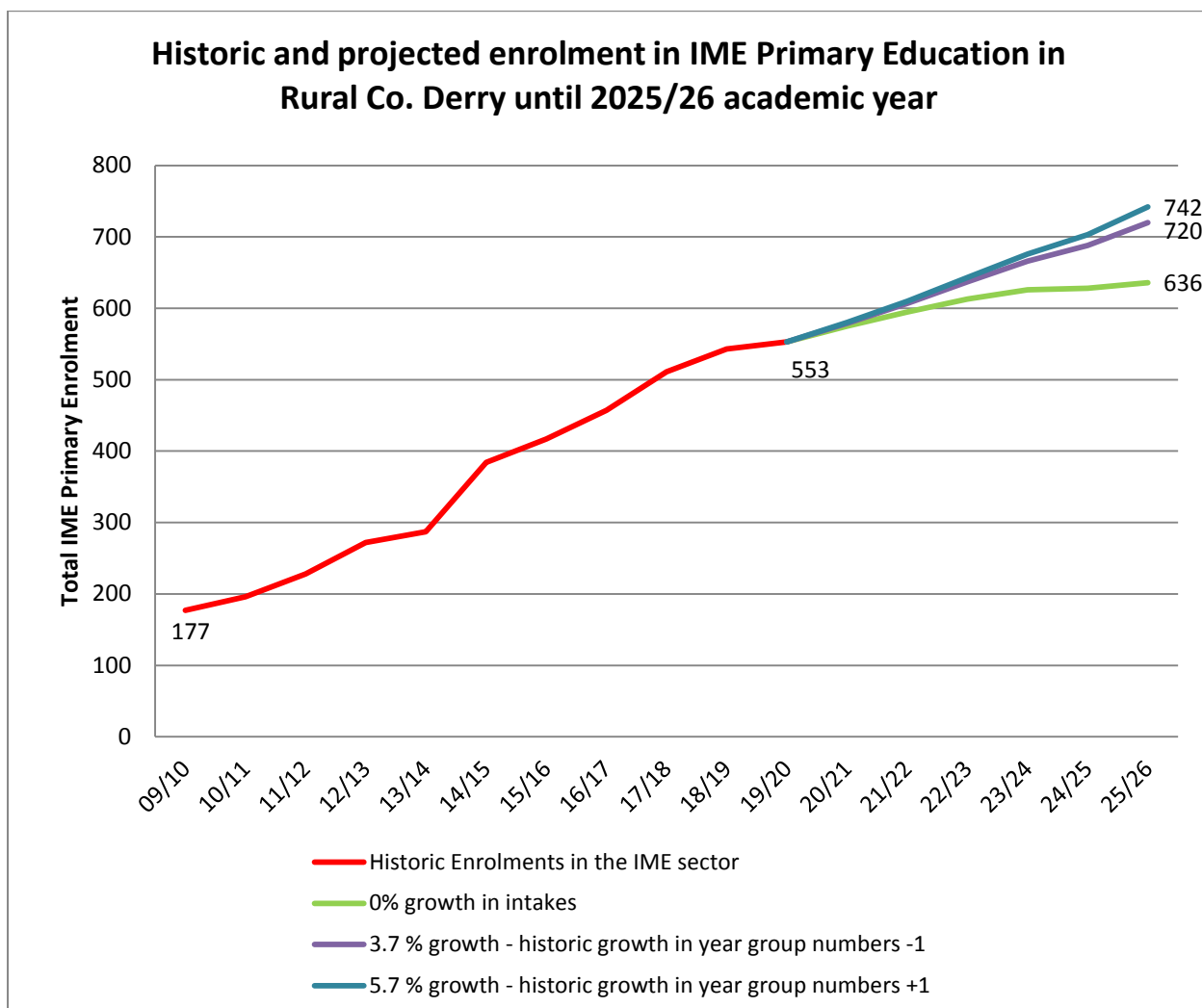
### **6.7.5 Potential for Growth in IME**

IME in the area has grown rapidly over the past ten years and this has been assisted with the setting up of new Naíscoileanna and Gaelscoileanna. There remains significant capacity for growth in enrolments within existing Naíscoileanna and particularly at the recently established provision in Toome and Swatragh, which further increase the capacity within the area. However, there are a number of constraints that need to be addressed over the coming years to accommodate growth. The quality of the accommodation and the capacity of the existing sites within the catchment area are constraining factors on the ability of the sector to grow, and need to be addressed.

Subject to resolving the accommodation and other issues associated with the Gaelscoileanna, there remains significant potential for growth within the IM primary sector. Likewise the resolving of the medium-term needs of the IM post-primary accommodation issues will be likely to improve the transfer to IME post-primary. The IMU at St Brigid's Primary school has also been over-subscribed for many years and there is an urgent need to increase the capacity within this area since the current lack of certainty in securing a place has the potential to negatively impact on the growth of the sector.

### **6.7.6 Projections – Primary**

The last decade has seen strong growth in enrolments within the catchment area, with average intakes increasing by approximately 4.7% per annum over the last five years. It is expected that growth rates in IME will remain quite strong and the projections assume that there may be a slight reduction in this growth over the coming 5 years by 1%. The realistic growth estimate is therefore 3.7% and we have added a 1% to the historic growth figure as the optimistic scenario (i.e., 5.7%) within this area. The pessimistic scenario remains a 0% growth. The following graph shows the effects of the above projections on the total enrolments in the sector, over the coming seven years.

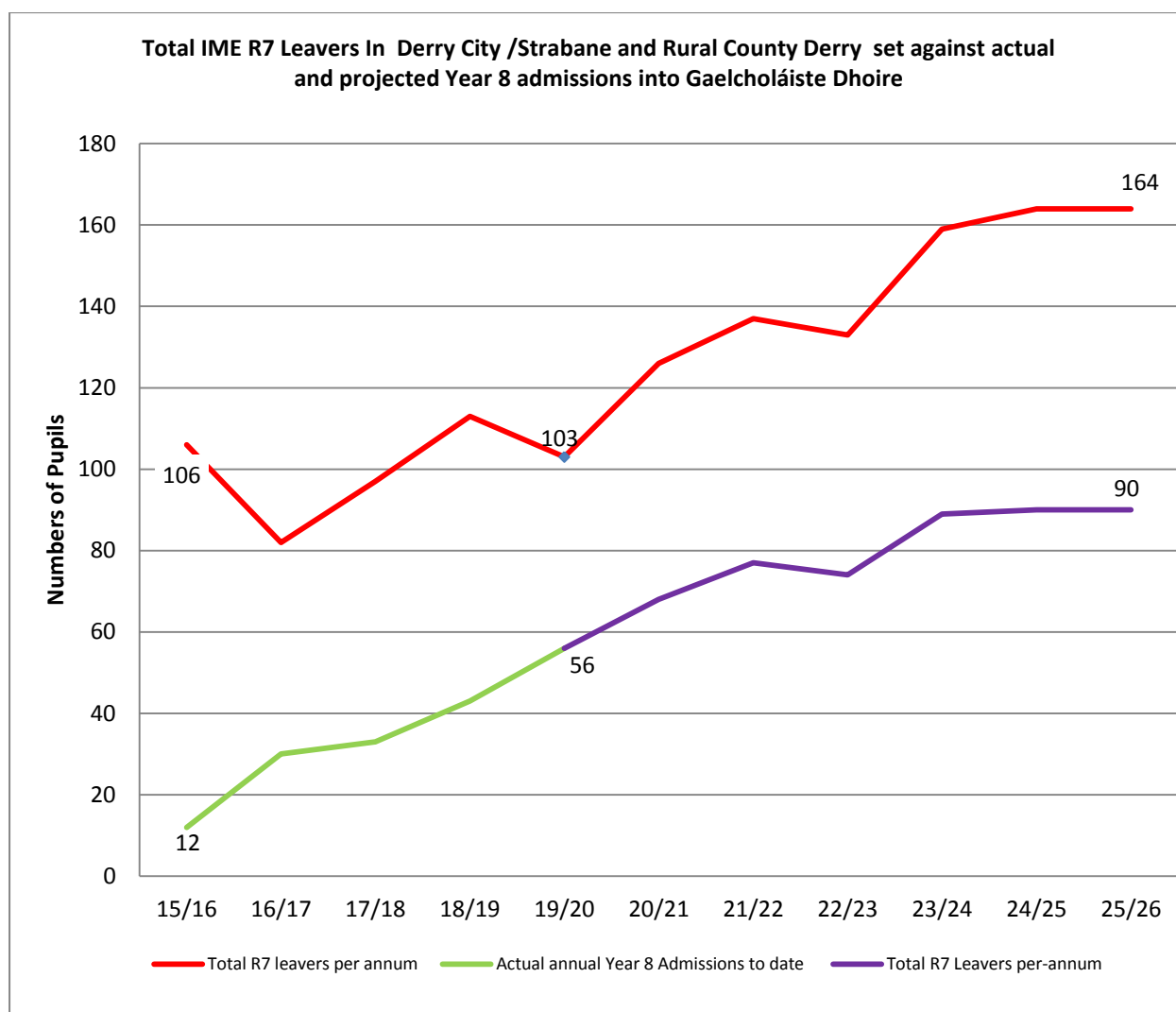


Our realistic growth scenario of 3.7% demonstrates growth of 167 pupils, or 30.2% in the overall size of the sector within the area, from 553 to 720. This has significant implications for the development needs of the sector over the coming years, in terms of additional accommodation, additional teachers and teaching resources. Even the pessimistic scenario with zero growth in enrolments, demonstrates that the latent demand grows the sector by 83 pupils or 15%.

#### 6.7.7 Projections – Post-Primary

We have taken into consideration the growth trend in the transfer rates from IME primary to Gaelcholáiste Dhoire as set out at section 6.7.4 above. Currently these stand at approximately 63% of the children leaving IM primary schools in the rural County Derry catchment and 36% of the children leaving IM primaries in the Derry City/ Strabane catchment area. For the purpose of our projections we have assumed that these rates will increase slightly over the coming 5 years to 65% and 38% respectively. The following table shows the projected annual intake and the overall projected enrolment at Gaelcholáiste Dhoire until the 2025/26 school year.

Projected Transfer from IM Primary to Post-Primary						
Year of Transfer	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26
<b>Rural Co. Derry</b>						
Total Numbers Graduating from R7	67	78	75	77	93	86
Numbers transferring to Gaelcholáiste Dhoire	42	50	48	50	60	56
<b>Transfer Rate</b>	<b>63.0%</b>	<b>63.5%</b>	<b>64.0%</b>	<b>64.5%</b>	<b>65.0%</b>	<b>65.0%</b>
<b>Derry City &amp; Strabane</b>						
Total Numbers Graduating from R7	58	52	62	73	78	82
Numbers transferring to Gaelcholáiste Dhoire	21	19	23	27	30	31
<b>Transfer Rate</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>36.5%</b>	<b>37.0%</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>38.0%</b>	<b>38.0%</b>
<b>Admissions Year 8 Gaelcholáiste Dhoire</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>87</b>
<i>Admissions as %age of total enrolment from of two areas</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>53%</i>	<i>52%</i>	<i>51%</i>	<i>53%</i>	<i>52%</i>
<b>Projected Enrolment GCD</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>480</b>





The above figures demonstrate that even with a very modest increase in the transfer rates from County Derry and Derry City that the annual intakes to Gaelcholáiste Dhoire will increase to 90 by September 2025. If post-primary provision were to be established in Derry City before 2025/26 the numbers attending Gaelcholáiste Dhoire from rural Co. Derry are likely to be around 60 rising thereafter to well over 70 with the increasing numbers of children graduating from the IM primary sector.

### **6.7.8 Area Planning / Development Objectives**

Based on the above analysis and projections, a range of development and area planning objectives have been identified.

The following objectives within the area are based on an assessment of the needs of the various IME schools/ units and assume the realistic growth scenario for growth in IME primary enrolments.

There are a number of urgent Development Priorities within this area as follows

#### **1. Bunscoil Naomh Bríd, Maghera - Expansion of IME provision.**

BS Naomh Bríd was subject to a Development Proposal for growth of admission and enrolment in 2018. Already the school is exceeding capacity and there is an urgent need to develop a local Area Planning solution to strategically deal with rising demand for IME in the area.

**Action:** CnaG and CCMS in conjunction with the Trustees and school to explore potential long-term solution to meet the growing demand for IME in the area, and meet the requirement stipulated by the DE approval of Development Proposal (DP 531).

#### **2. Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí – Relocation of Provision**

GS an tSeanchaí has additional pupils now coming from new Naíscoil na Fíobha in Toomebridge. The school is very over-crowded at the current location and urgently requires relocation to a suitable site to allow for continued growth. The statutory pre-school unit of the school has relocated this year to the site of the former Magherafelt Primary school. There are ongoing discussions with the DE with regard to the relocation of the rest of the Primary school to the same site making use of former school accommodation plus new modular units.

**Action:** CnaG to continue to engage with DE, EA and school for its relocation to the site of the former Magherafelt Primary School. A preferred option for the development of the site has been identified with DE and EA.

#### **3. Gaelscoil na Speiríní - New site required and building of enrolments.**

Gaelscoil na Speiríní is located on a very restricted site and enrolment has outgrown capacity, and its approved enrolment figures. The numbers at the Naíscoil show a trend for growth capable of developing to sustainability. The restricted site acts as a barrier to the further growth and a new site is urgently required for the school closer to the centre of population at Draperstown.

**Action:** CnaG to continue to work with the school and Naíscoil to build admissions and enrolment, and work with DE to pursue opportunities for relocation to a more suitable site in response to ongoing growth.

#### **4. Gaelscoil Léim an Mhadaidh – Site and Accommodation Required**

The school continues to grow and have exceeded their approved enrolment number for the current site. They have recently been informed by the proprietor of their site (on lease with 2 years left) that they will be requiring the site for development of housing at the end of the lease. There is an urgent requirement for a new site and building for the school as soon as possible.

**Action:** CnaG to work with the school, the DE and EA, to identify and secure appropriate alternative site and to plan for relocation and provision of new school building as soon as possible. Roe Valley IPS former site currently under investigation.

#### **5. Swatragh - Consolidation of NS Ghreanacháin & Development of Primary provision.**

Naíscóil Greanacháin was established in 2018. There is a confirmed and growing demand for IM Primary provision from parents. The nearest IM primary provision at BS Naomh Bríd, Tirkane, is over-subscribed. The local EM Primary school, St.John's, has expressed a willingness to provide an IM unit in Swatragh to meet increasing demand.

**Action:** CnaG to engage with the school and CCMS to bring forward a DP and CFC for the establishment of an IM unit at St.John's Primary school.

#### **6. Naíscóil na Fíobha – Permanent Site and Accommodation.**

Naíscóil na Fíobha was established in 2018, and has been formally established as a feeder provider to GS an tSeanchaí in Magherafelt. There is a need for the NS to relocate to more suitable accommodation to enable further growth in line with demand locally as part of a local Area Planning strategy for IME.

**Action:** CnaG to continue to work with NS na Fíobha, GS an tSeanchaí and local Irish language community to identify a new location.

#### **7. Gaelcholáiste Dhoire – Delivery of approved accommodation.**

The trustees, DE and EA are working to deliver the required accommodation to meet the medium-term needs of the school including the acquisition of the neighbouring former sports pavilion and the construction of a new classroom block, technology suite and arts suite.

**Action:** CnaG to continue to provide any support required to deliver this approved business case.



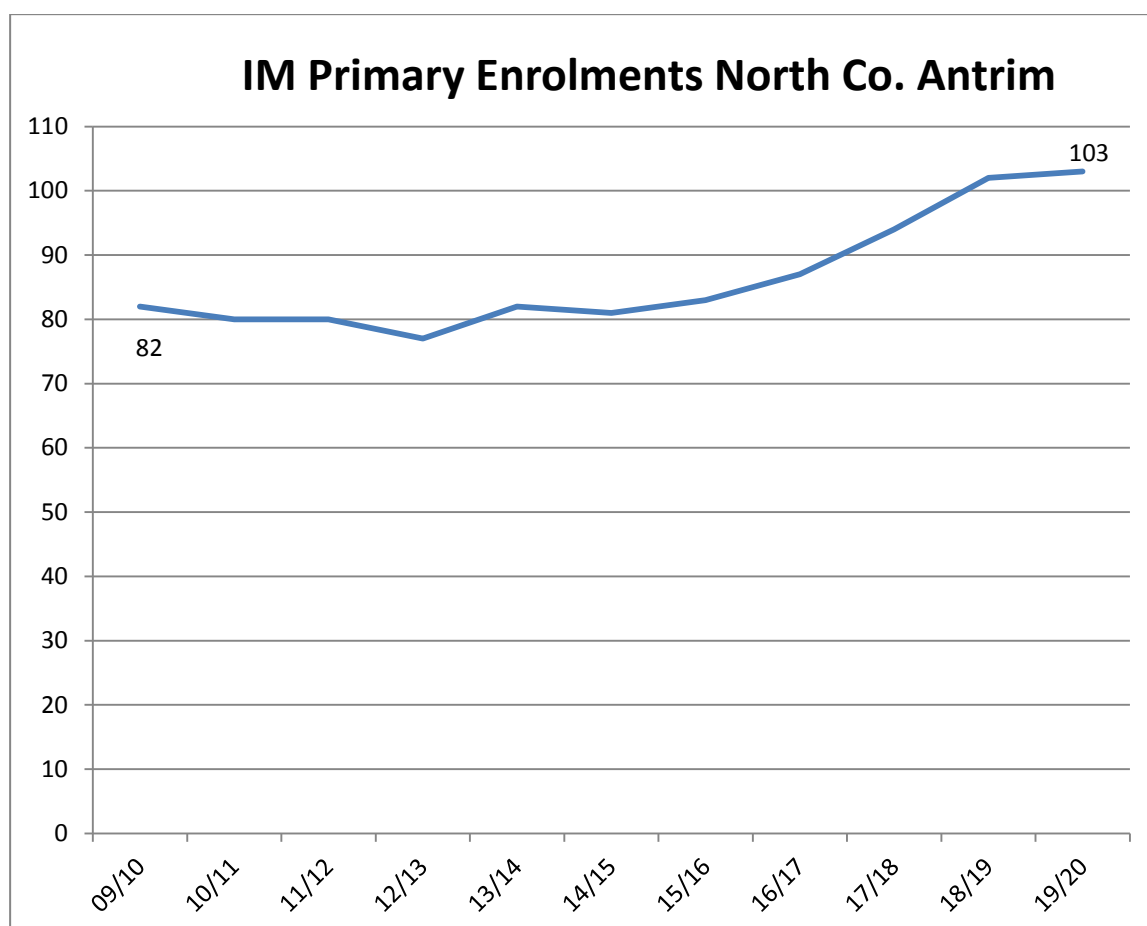
The details of the area's sole Gaelscoil and Naíscoil provision is as follows:

School Name	Location	Management Type	Current Provision	Approved Enrolment	Intake Sept '18	Intake Sept '19
Gaelscoil an Chaistil	Ballycastle	Other Maintained	103	116	15	13

Name	Location	Description	2019/20 Enrolment	1 <sup>st</sup> Pref Sept. 2019
Naíscoil an Chaistil	Ballycastle	Statutory	14	13

### 6.8.2 Enrolment Trends

The following graph shows over the last decade the overall number of children in IME has risen fairly steadily over the past five years. As a result, Gaelscoil an Chaistil is very close to surpassing the target enrolment threshold of 15 pupils per annum/ 105 pupils.



The following tables detail the underlying enrolment trends in Naíscoileanna and Gaelscoileanna within the area.

Numbers of Children Graduating from Náiscoileanna								
Náiscoil / Pre-School	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Náiscoil an Chaistil	22	20	16	25	26	22	14	14

Breakdown of Primary Admissions								
Year	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Bunscoil an Chaistil	12	18	15	17	15	17	15	13
<b>Growth in Last 5 years - annual equivalent and gross</b>							<b>-2.5%</b>	<b>-13%</b>

Total Enrolments at Gaelscoileanna								
Year	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Bunscoil an Chaistil	77	82	81	83	87	94	101	103
<b>Growth in Last 5 years - annual equivalent and gross</b>							<b>4.3%</b>	<b>23%</b>

Gaelscoil an Chaistil has experienced modest yet steady growth over the past ten years, however the pre-school unit and the Gaelscoil have experienced a recent drop in admissions.

Despite this generally the figures demonstrate notable growth in enrolments in the area over the past five years – whilst R1 admissions have grown by a relatively modest 8% (1.6% per annum) and overall enrolments have shown growth of 23% (average 4.3% per annum). There is clearly the potential to build admissions over the coming years and continue to grow the overall enrolment at the school.

### 6.8.3 Transfer Rates

#### Náiscoil – Gaelscoil

The following table demonstrates the transfer rates between the Náiscoil and the Gaelscoil within the area in the last few years.

IM Preschool to Primary Transfer Rate								
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Graduating from Náiscoileanna	15	22	20	16	25	26	22	14
No. Progressing to IM Primary	12	18	15	16	15	17	15	13
Transfer Rate	80%	82%	75%	100%	60%	65%	73%	93%

There is a degree of fluctuation in the transfer rate, however the last five years have seen a year-on-year increase in total enrolment at the school. It will be important to stabilise the enrolment at the Náiscoil to ensure that the Gaelscoil has a stable enrolment that is above the operational viability threshold and to grow the school to become a strong IM provider within its broader catchment area.

#### 6.8.4 Accommodation

We have identified the need to commission a detailed baseline assessment of the accommodation constraints of the IME sector and we hope that this will be carried out over the coming months. However, the following table provides a summary of the state of the accommodation in the school and a summary of any constraints that are associated with the accommodation.

Gaelscoil an Chaistil	
Current Status	Capital Viability Status
Description of Buildings	<p>The school is located within six modern Modular Classrooms with a canteen on a site that is suitable for the current needs of the school.</p> <p>Modular builds which house 4 classrooms, toilets, a servery and a multi-purpose hall which is suitable for indoor sports, dinner hall and school activities; modular build which houses administrative space including office, staff room, special needs room and resource room, and a modular build with brick surround which houses a statutory nursery, toilets, kitchen, office and family room.</p>
Current Constraints	<p>There is a general lack of space on site. However, current accommodation provision is in line with DE Handbook. The main constraint faced by the school at present is the physical separation of all the modular buildings which can make it awkward to navigate through the school and also exposes children to the elements when moving from one space to another.</p>

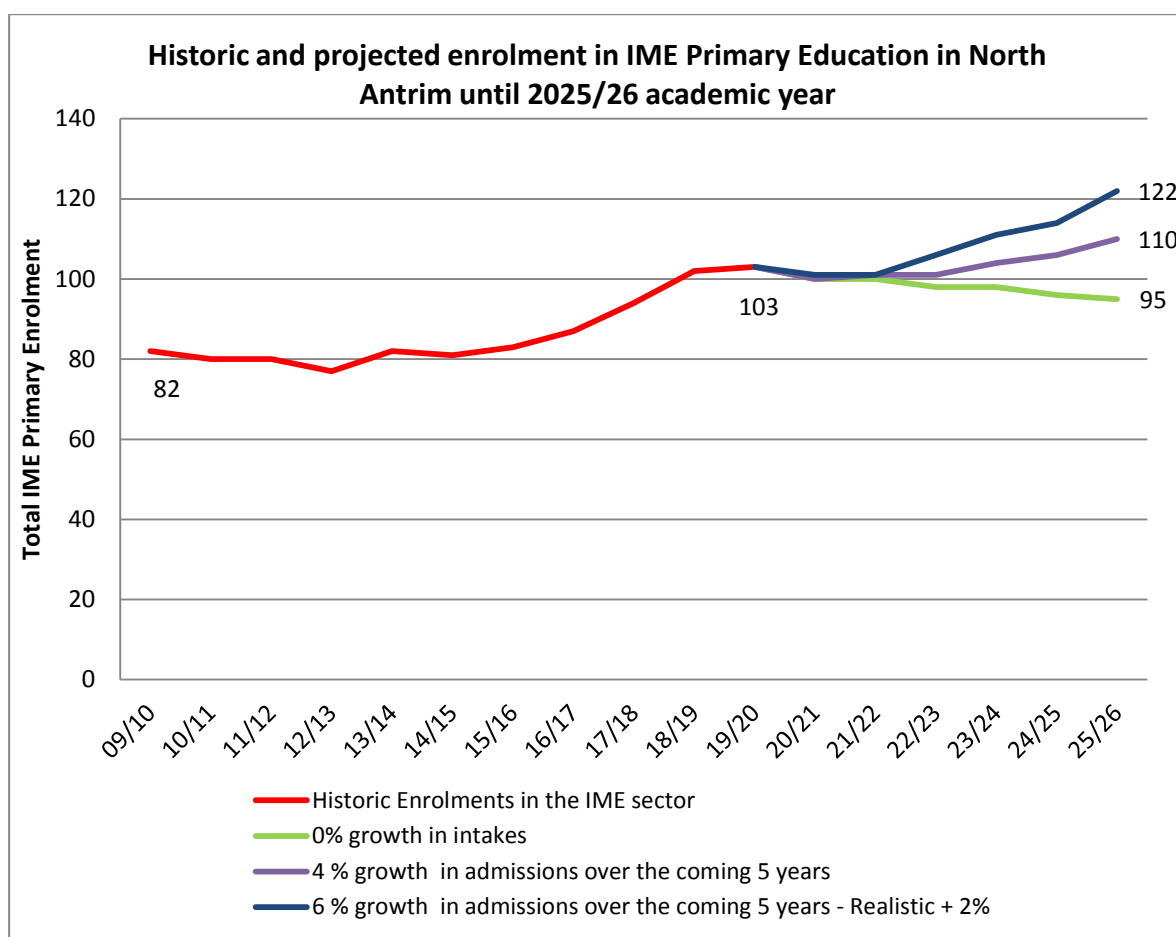
#### 6.8.5 Potential for Growth in IME

There is significant capacity for growth in enrolment within the existing Naíscóil and Gaelscoil, which have the potential to become important IM providers within a wider catchment area.

CnaG will prioritise working with Gaelscoil an Chaistil over the coming years to promote IME locally with a view to building its enrolments within the school.

#### 6.8.6 Projections – Primary

Gaelscoil an Chaistil has the capacity and the potential to build enrolment within its catchment area. CnaG believes that the Gaelscoil has the clear potential to grow to an annual admission of 20+ children within the coming 5 years. However, for the purposes of our projections we have assumed the historic annual growth rate of 1.6% over the coming years and have added 2% to this historic growth rate to produce an optimistic growth figure of 3.6%. The following graph demonstrates the projected enrolments based on these figures.



### 6.8.7 Area Planning / Development Objectives

Based on the above analysis and projections a range of development and area planning objectives have been identified.

**Build Enrolments** - It is important to build stable enrolments at the school and strengthen the school as a strong sub-regional hub for Irish-medium education that will help encourage future development within the sub-region

**Action:** CnaG to continue to work with the school to build admissions and enrolment through: a. working with the Naíscoil to build its annual admissions and; b. maximising the transfer of children from the Naíscoil to the Gaelscoil.

- 1. Expand provision within the North Antrim/ North-east Co Derry area.** Investigate the medium-term possibilities for expanding the geographical coverage of IME provision within North-Antrim and North-East Co. Derry by working with interested communities to build additional and viable provision at pre-school and primary school, especially within the larger conurbations such as Coleraine and Ballymena.

**Action:** CnaG and InaG to work in collaboration with local Irish language / cultural communities in the North Antrim and North-East Co. Derry to identify potential new provision.



## 6.9 Fermanagh

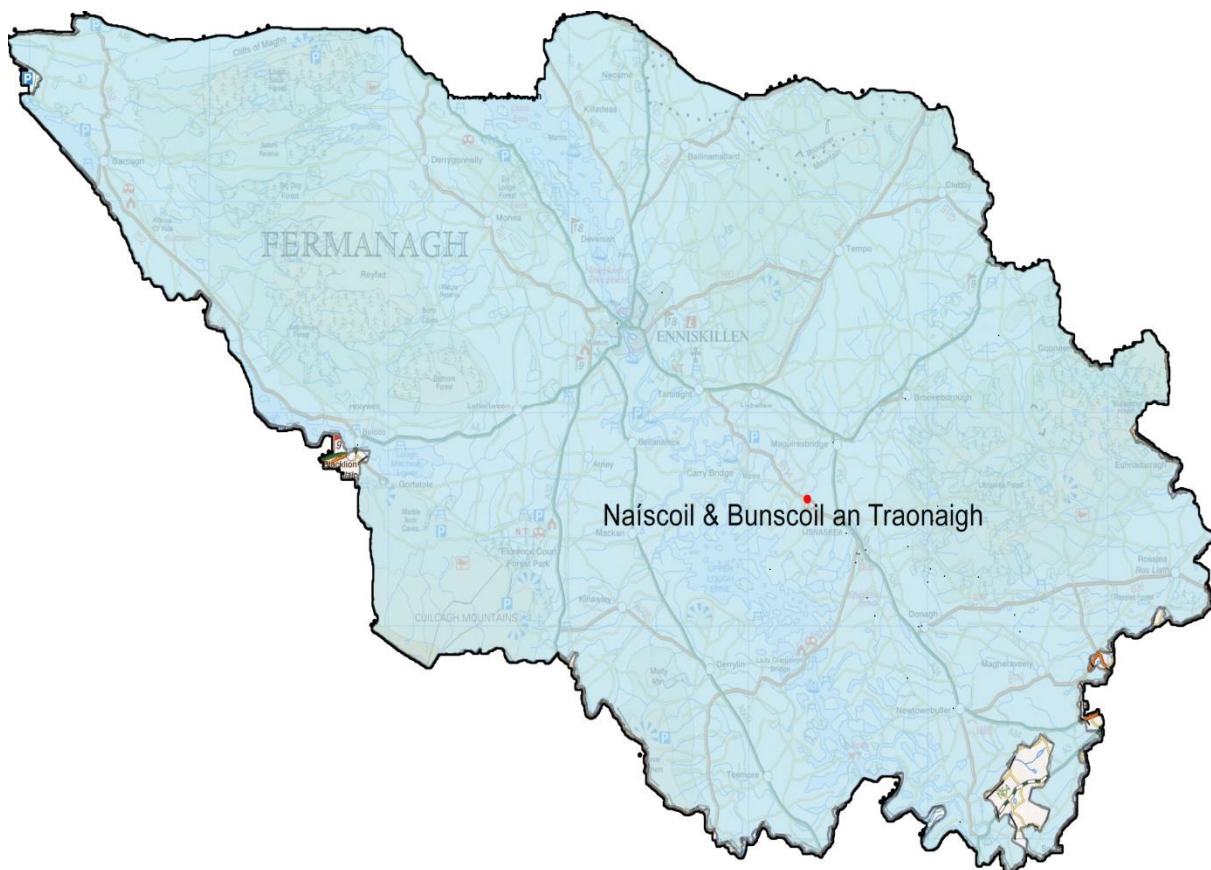
### 6.9.1 Summary of Current Provision

This area currently has no IM post-primary provision available. The area consists of a single school, Bunscoil an Traonaigh and Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta recognises the provision as a strategically important school.

In 2014, the Minister of Education approved the relocation of the school to new site at the former Lisnaskea High School. The ongoing delay in progressing this decision has meant that the school continues in temporary and unsuitable accommodation, on a highly restricted site.

There is currently little prospect of the immediate area justifying either a post-primary free-standing school or a stream. However, consideration must be given to future post-primary provision for the increasing number of pupils emerging from the school.

The general area is shown on the following map;



Naíscoil and Bunscoil an Traonaigh are located within the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area.



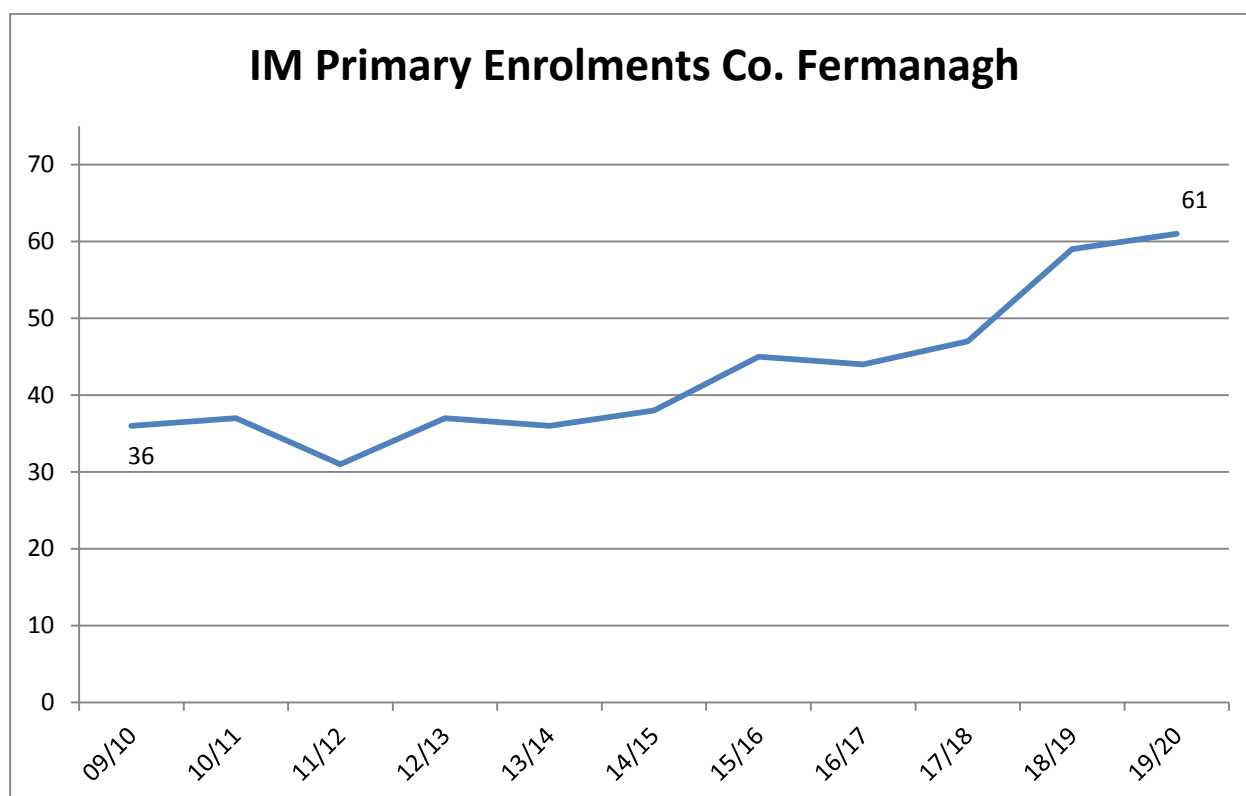
The details of the area's sole Gaelscoil and Naíscoil provision is as follows:

School Name	Location	Management Type	Current Provision	Approved Enrolment	Intake Sept '18	Intake Sept '19
Bunscoil an Traonaigh	Lisnaskea	Other Maintained	60	58	15	13

Name	Location	Description	2019/20 Enrolment	1 <sup>st</sup> Pref Sept. 2019
Naíscoil an Traonaigh	Lisnaskea	Voluntary	7	5

### 6.9.2 Enrolment Trends

Over the last decade the overall number of children in IME in Fermanagh has increased steadily from a low base, shown on the graph below.



The graph illustrates the growing enrolments at Bunscoil an Traonaigh, which have risen consistently over the last seven years. If this trend continues, supported by the long-awaited relocation to an appropriate site, the school will soon reach and surpass the minimum enrolment threshold.

The following tables detail the underlying enrolment trends in Naíscoileanna and Gaelscoileanna within the area.

Numbers of Children Graduating from Naíscoileanna								
Naíscoil / Pre-School	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Naíscoil an Traonaigh	9	8	11	4	9	16	16	7

Breakdown of Primary Admissions								
Year	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Bunscoil an Traonaigh	8	7	7	11	4	8	15	13
<b>Growth in Last 5 years - annual equivalent and gross</b>					<b>13.2%</b>		<b>86%</b>	

Total Enrolments at Gaelscoileanna								
Year	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Bunscoil an Traonaigh	37	36	38	45	44	47	59	60
<b>Growth in Last 5 years - annual equivalent and gross</b>					<b>9.6%</b>		<b>58%</b>	

The Gaelscoil has experienced steady growth over the past few years and the planned move to a new site will assist the school greatly to continue this growth trend over the coming years. However, it is feared that the long delays in progressing the original Ministerial decision to relocate could impact adversely on admissions. Firm steps to progress the relocation are urgently required to rebuild confidence.

A joint action plan has been initiated with both the school and CnaG working to increase the profile and awareness of the school and benefits of IME.

Generally the figures demonstrate strong growth in admissions and enrolments in the area over the past five years, albeit this growth has been from a low base. R1 admissions have grown by 86% (average 13.2% per annum) and overall enrolments have likewise shown growth of an 58% (average 9.6% per annum).

### 6.9.3 Transfer Rates

#### Naíscoil – Gaelscoil

The following table demonstrates the transfer rates between the Naíscoil and the Gaelscoil within the area in the last few years.

IM Preschool to Primary Transfer Rate								
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Graduating from Naíscoileanna	7	9	8	11	4	9	16	16
No. Progressing to IM Primary	8	7	7	11	4	8	15	13
Transfer Rate	114%	78%	88%	100%	100%	89%	94%	81%

The transfer rate from preschool to primary is consistently very high and demonstrates the ability of the voluntary preschool and primary school to work together in a joint approach.

### 6.9.4 Accommodation

The following provides a summary of the constraints associated with the accommodation for the school:

<b>Bunscoil an Traonaigh</b>	
Current Status	Capital Viability Status
Description of Buildings	2 x Double mobile units, which provides three classrooms on a site that is unsuitable to the current and long-term needs of the school and this has been impacting on the growth of the school.
Current Constraints	<p>Bunscoil an Traonaigh has very urgent accommodation needs. The accommodation within the school is currently inadequate; it has no internal and very limited external play areas, no playing pitch, no sports hall, no dining room, limited staff and office accommodation and storage.</p> <p>The current servery is insufficient to cope with the number of pupils in the school and some pupils must eat lunch in their classrooms as a result.</p> <p>There is an urgent requirement for adequate facilities in line with the DE Building Handbook as current facilities have hampered the growth and development of the school.</p> <p>The ongoing delays in the implementation of the Ministerial decision to relocate Bunscoil an Traonaigh to a new site still has no firm timeframe. The former Lisnaskea High School is expected to be demolished before the end of the 2019/20 fiscal year. A firm timeframe for the relocation is urgently required.</p>

### 6.9.5 Potential for Growth in IME

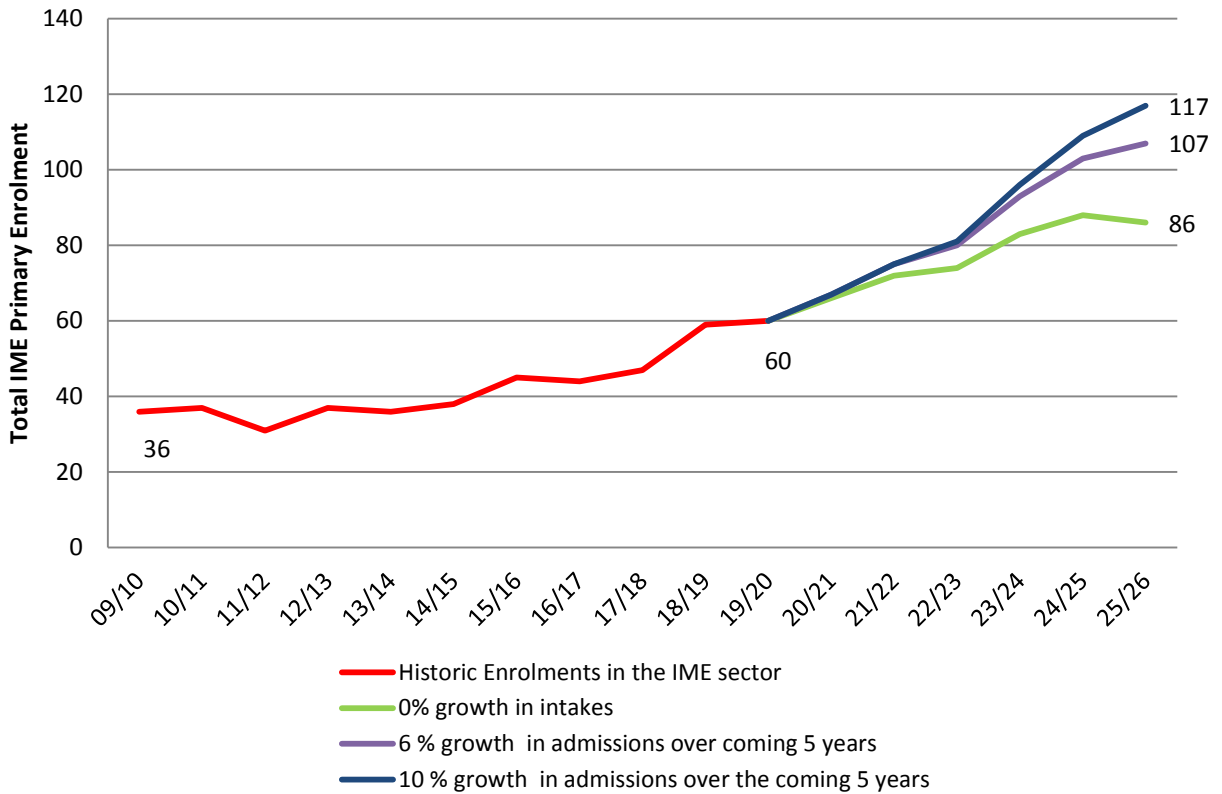
There is significant capacity for growth in enrolment within the existing Naíscoil and Bunscoil, which have the potential to become important IM providers within a wider catchment area. Any growth in Bunscoil admissions must be precluded by growth in preschool enrolments.

CnaG will prioritise working with any communities that would have an interest in setting up IM education within this general Fermanagh/ South/ mid Tyrone areas to help build the capacity and availability of IME to children within this general area.

### 6.9.6 Projections – Primary

Over the last few years in particular the Bunscoil has experienced an upward trend in growth in its enrolments with admissions growing at an average of 13% per annum and overall enrolments increasing at a rate of 9.6%. We believe that the school is well placed to continue to build its enrolment within its catchment area and that, given the proper marketing support and assistance that it should be possible to grow enrolments consistently of 15+ children within a short period of time. Having said that, it will be difficult to continue to maintain the historic increases in the growth of admissions that it has experienced over the past 5 years. The historic growth rate of 13% has therefore been reduced to 10% for the optimistic scenario and for the realistic growth estimate this figure has been reduced by a further 4% to 6%. The following graph demonstrates the projected enrolments based on these figures.

### Historic and projected enrolment in IME Primary Education in Co. Fermanagh until 2025/26 academic year



The realistic scenario of 6% demonstrates growth of 47 pupils or over 78% of current enrolment to 107 pupils, surpassing the minimum enrolment threshold. The pessimistic scenario, which assumes no increase in the current annual admission, demonstrates an increase of 26 pupils or 43%.

### 6.9.7 Area Planning / Development Objectives

Based on the above analysis and projections a range of development and area planning objectives have been identified.

The following objectives within the area are based on an assessment of the needs of the current IME provision and assume the realistic growth scenario for growth in IME primary enrolments.

#### 1. Bunscoil an Traonaigh – Relocation to former Lisnakea HS site

BS an Traonaigh continues to reside on a temporary site with serious accommodation problems. One new unit of modular accommodation has been provided in 2019. However, there remains an urgent requirement to relocate the school to the new site identified at part of the former Lisnaskea High School. The parking site for the school has never been identified and confirmed, and plans for the demolition of existing buildings are due to commence in 2020.

**Action:** CnaG to continue to work with DE, EA, InaG and the school in ensuring the relocation and development of the new school building as soon as possible. There is a requirement to agree the relocation of the feeder naíscoil to the new site as well.

#### 2. Expand provision within the wider Fermanagh/South Tyrone area.

Investigate the medium-term possibilities for expanding the geographical coverage of IME provision within wider Fermanagh and South Tyrone area by working with interested communities to build additional and viable provision at pre-school and primary school.

**Action:** CnaG and InaG to work in collaboration with local Irish language / cultural communities in the wider Fermanagh and South Tyrone area to identify potential new provision.

#### 3. Bunscoil an Traonaigh – Increase in Approved Enrolment

School is exceeding capacity and has potential for further growth. A development proposal is required to increase the Approved Enrolment at the school to better reflect the current and future enrolment.

**Action:** Cnag to support school in development and publication of DP for Increase in Approved Enrolment.

#### 4. New Post-Primary Provision in Fermanagh Area

CnaG identifies the need to explore medium to long-term options for post-primary provision for the wider area. CnaG to work with partners to develop the potential of other preschool and primary provision, in order to create a viable base for post-primary IM provision.

**Action:** CnaG is to work with DE, EA, and other relevant partners, to develop options for further IME provision at all levels.

## **7.0 Concluding Remarks: Sectoral Growth Model vs Geographical Growth Model**

This report forms the basis for planning the co-ordination and development activities of Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta with DE, EA and other partners. It will be used to inform the IM sector and bring about involvement and input of all interested in the planning and development of the sector. The Area Planning priorities and actions within this report will be reviewed and consulted upon on an annual basis to develop and maintain a consensus on the development of the sector within and between all those involved in Irish-Medium education.

It will fundamentally assist in the planning of IME by applying needs modelling within the sector. To this end, the report has adopted two different approaches to considering the growth and development of the Irish-medium sector as follows:

### **Sectoral Growth Model**

In Section 3 this adopted a top-down analysis of the sectoral growth across the north and produced projections related to the historic growth patterns of the sector. This approach was suggested in the Review of Irish-medium Education that was published in 2008.

### **Geographical Growth Model**

This model produced predicted growth based on a bottom-up approach by looking at each individual geographical area and making growth predictions based on the local circumstances, taking into consideration historical growth patterns within the areas in question.

A comparison of these shows a significant degree of agreement, with the more detailed geographical growth model producing slightly higher growth predictions overall. The following table compares the two approaches in relation to one of the areas considered – the projected overall enrolment within the Primary sector in the 2022/23 school year and shows the differences between these two largely alternative approaches.

	<b>Pessimistic</b>	<b>Realistic</b>	<b>Optimistic</b>
<b>Geographical Area Predictions</b>			
West & South Belfast	1,318	1,465	1,534
North Belfast and surrounding areas	596	680	729
Newry and South Co. Down	397	469	511
Co. Armagh	713	797	839
East and Mid-Tyrone	649	670	748
Derry City & Strabane	525	603	624
Rural Co. Derry	636	720	742
North Antrim	95	110	122
Fermanagh	86	107	117
<b>Total of Area Predictions</b>	<b>5,015</b>	<b>5,621</b>	<b>5,966</b>
<b>Sectoral Model Predictions</b>	<b>5,015</b>	<b>5,600</b>	<b>6,079</b>
<b>Difference</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>- 113</b>

The pessimistic scenario is the same in both cases since for all areas we assumed that there would be no increase in current enrolments. The realistic scenario shows remarkable alignment in both cases with a slightly higher prediction for the more detailed geographical approach. The Optimistic scenario shows significantly lower prediction within the geographical approach as opposed to the sectoral.

The use of the two above approaches is very useful in using this model for the annual review of projections based on updated information, where this information can be input to a local geographical model, and we do not have to rely simply on a general sectoral needs model.

This approach is also very useful in planning the needs for resources for the sector, including teachers, accommodation, classroom assistants and pre-school workers, together with estimating training needs, budgets and sectoral support requirements.

As such, this report will form a basis for the annual review of the needs of the sector in general, and not just as a static document. The accompanying statistical information has been arranged in such a way as to allow an annual statistical review to produce updated projections for the sector for the coming years.

It is important to point out that proper area planning of the IME sector is underpinned by the Department of Education fulfilling its Statutory Duty to 'encourage and facilitate' growth and development of Irish-medium Education, both directly and through its funding of the EA.