



Education Authority

Draft Special Schools Area Planning Framework

16 October 2020

Foreword

I am pleased to launch this public consultation on the Education Authority's (EA's) proposed future educational provision for children with special educational needs (SEN) across special schools and specialist provisions in mainstream schools in Northern Ireland.

These proposals have been developed following engagement with a range of key stakeholders with a particular interest in special education including the Department of Education, health and social care professionals and school principals.

The EA is committed to providing services that will support our children and young people to get the best start in life. This is particularly important for children with special educational needs. In supporting children it is important that we recognise the need for a range of specialist provision across our mainstream and special school settings to meet the diverse and changing learning needs of pupils.

We want to ensure that our children have access to excellent provision throughout their educational journey which is appropriate to their needs and close to where they live. These consultations will inform the services that we will provide for children with special educational needs in the future.

As we develop services around the needs of our children and young people in a child-centred and inclusive way, we want to bring clarity and transparency to the process. We will continue to work alongside our partners in health and social care and the voluntary and community sectors as we seek to improve services for children and young people.

I believe that the proposed frameworks for the future delivery of SEN provision across special schools and specialist provision in mainstream schools will help us to enable positive outcomes for children across Northern Ireland and enhance consistency in the accessibility of our services.

As the EA undertakes this important work there is an opportunity for you to have your say in relation to the future of SEN provision across Northern Ireland. The EA is commencing the public consultation before a final decision on future frameworks is reached.

I would therefore ask you to please take the time to read these documents and complete the attached questionnaires. Your contribution is important and will be given full consideration as we seek to improve pupil outcomes for those children and young people who require specialist support and parents' confidence in the educational opportunities provided.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Michele Corkey'.

Michele Corkey
Director of Education

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms Used

ALC	Area Learning Community
APLG	Area Planning Local Group
APWG	Area Planning Working Group
APSG	Area Planning Steering Group
CCMS	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
CCEA	Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment
CnaG	Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta
CSSC	Controlled Schools Support Council
CSTS	Catholic Schools Trustees Service
DE	Department of Education
EA	Education Authority
ELB	Education and Library Board
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
FE	Further Education
GBA	Governing Bodies Association
GMB	General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trade Union
H&VI	Hearing and Visual Impairment
ICO	Information Commissioners Office
KS	Key Stage
LSC	Learning Support Centre
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties
NI	Northern Ireland
NIABF	Northern Ireland Anti Bullying Forum
NICCY	Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children & Young People

NICIE	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education#
NIPSA	Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance
NISCA	Northern Ireland School Caterers Association
P&MD	Physical and Medical Difficulties
PRONI	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
S&L	Speech and Language
SBEW	Social, Behavioural and Emotional Well-Being
SENAC	Special Educational Needs Advice Centre
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SENDO	Special Educational Needs and Disability Order
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulties
TRC	Transferors' Representative Council

Part 1: Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline the EA's vision, rationale and delivery framework with regards to **area planning for special schools** across Northern Ireland. This document is part of the wider Area Planning strategy that relates to the Strategic Area Plan for School Provision: Providing Pathways, 2017-2020 and the associated Action Plan for Primary, Post Primary and Special Schools (2019-2021).

It is important to state that EA recognise the importance of a range of specialist provision across a continuum of support for pupils with special educational needs. This includes support in mainstream schools, through to specialist pupil support classes within mainstream schools and special schools. While this full range of provision exists in some geographical areas of Northern Ireland, there are significant inconsistencies across the region in relation to the accessibility of the full range of provision for some pupils which is recognised and which requires redress. Mainstream provision will be considered in a separate document.

Current special school provision reflects legacy arrangements which were each designed to meet the needs of pupils in the main within legacy boundary areas and were complemented in some areas in particular by other models of support and outreach structures. It is acknowledged that there is a complexity to the progression of this strategy and any change does not undermine the value nor rationale for provision of the past.

Special schools are very different to those in the mainstream sector. All pupils are placed by the EA as the result of a statement of special educational needs which outlines the provision recommended to meet assessed need and there is no cap on pupil numbers, usual open enrolment procedures do not apply. New school buildings are designed with the potential for extension and expansion to enable growth and all staff are funded centrally through the EA.

The delivery framework for area planning is linked to the EA's vision to:

'Inspire, support and challenge all our children and young people to be the best that they can be'.

EA is committed to ensuring that this applies to all children and young people with special educational needs so that the educational provision that they access gives them the best start in life, assists them to become progressively independent and optimises their educational, personal and life outcomes.

1.2 Special School Provision

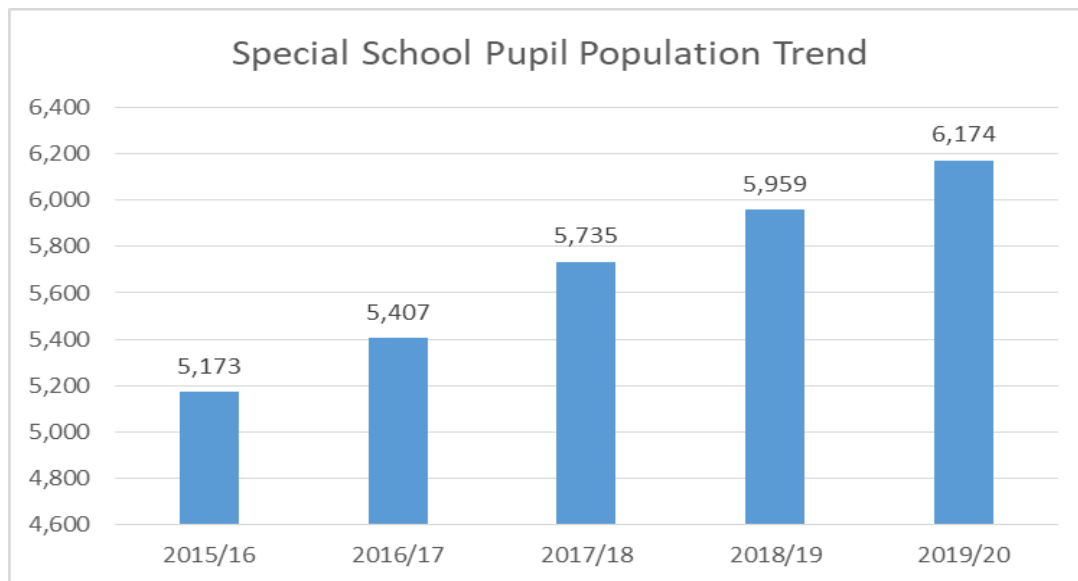
There are currently **40 special schools in Northern Ireland**, supporting children and young people with special educational needs, including those with the most severe and complex learning needs.

According to the **2019/20 DE Census Data**, Northern Ireland has approximately

- **349,500** pupils enrolled in schools;
- **19,200** children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs;
- **11,000** children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs attending mainstream primary and post primary schools with additional support;
- **1,900** pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs in specialist classes within mainstream schools; and
- **6,174** pupils enrolled in special schools.

Figure 1 shows that since the establishment of the EA, pupil growth at special schools has increased by approximately 19% with a total enrolment in 2019/20 of 6,174 pupils.

Figure 1: Special School Pupil Population Trend 2015/16 – 2019/20



Source: Department of Education

Alongside the growth in special school numbers there is an emerging trend relating to an increase in the complexity of pupil need and the profile of pupils requiring a special school placement. This has a direct impact on the size of classes as reduced pupil: adult ratios are required in many circumstances.

During the same period the profile of pupil need has changed significantly with an increase of 37% of pupils now presenting with very significant intellectual or cognitive impairments placed in special schools. This has been a contributing factor in relation to the increased demand for special school places. This is further compounded by an increasing number of pupils with a complex interaction of need, including very complex medical needs as well as severe challenging behavioural needs.

The presence of more than one type of assessed need can present a range of challenges. In a growing number of pupils the challenges presented by the most complex medical and challenging behavioural needs require a significant level of medical and therapeutic input from colleagues within the health and social care trusts and from other support services within the EA.

All of these issues have placed an increased pressure on the staff and accommodation within special schools. Whilst the special school sector has benefitted from significant capital investment in recent years, the growth in the complexity of pupil need is leading to smaller class groupings which in turn require more classroom spaces for teaching and learning. In many schools, average class sizes are around 8 pupils and children and young people with particularly severe and challenging behaviour can require individual classroom space with, in some cases, 3 adults. Design plans for new schools and, where there is other capital investment, are taking this into account and creating more flexible spaces within schools to allow for more flexible small group teaching accommodation and access onto safe, outdoor breakout spaces.

The table below provides an overview of capital investment since the establishment of the EA. This investment has been secured through:

- the Department of Education's Major Capital Works Programme which provides significant investment to fund new school build projects; and
- the Department of Education's School Enhancement Programme (SEP) which provides funding of between £500,000 and £4 million to address immediate and pressing accommodation needs in schools.

Figure 2: Special School Capital Investment












Major Capital Works	Year Completed	School Enhancement Programme	Year Completed
Arvalee School, Omagh	2016	Willow Bridge School, Enniskillen	2017
Castle Tower School, Ballymena	2017	Ceara School, Lurgan	2018
Rossmar School, Limavady	<i>Est 2021</i>	Donard School, Banbridge	2018
Ardnashee School and College, Derry/Londonderry	<i>Est 2023</i>	Rathore School, Newry	2018
		Beechlawn School, Hillsborough	<i>Est 2023</i>
		Knockevin School, Downpatrick	<i>Est 2023</i>
		Longstone School, Dundonald	<i>Est 2023</i>
		Roddensvale School, Larne	<i>Est 2023</i>
		Sandelford School, Coleraine	<i>Est 2023</i>
		Thornfield House School, Newtownabbey	<i>Est 2023</i>
		Clifton School, Bangor	<i>Est 2024</i>
		Hill Croft School, Newtownabbey	<i>Est 2024</i>
		Kilronan School, Magherafelt	<i>Est 2024</i>
		Lisanally School, Armagh	<i>Est 2024</i>
		Riverside School, Antrim	<i>Est 2024</i>
		Sperrinview School, Dungannon	<i>Est 2024</i>

Source: EA









At present, Belfast is the area with the least investment in the special school estate and a priority for the progression of new provision. In some schools, the current physical environment is not fit for purpose and requires urgent consideration within the area planning context. Further details on some of the significant accommodation pressures across special schools as identified by the Education and Training Inspectorate are included in Appendix 2.

Figure 3 shows that across our special school estate there is significant variation in the type of provision offered, with some Local Government Districts offering a greater range of provision than others. This inconsistency in provision can result in children and young people with severe and complex needs often having to travel significant distances to attend their nearest suitable school. For many children this involves travelling across Local Government District boundaries to attend school.

Figure 3: Special School Provision by Local Government District and Type

Local Government District	Special School Provision
Antrim & Newtownabbey	
Ards & North Down	
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	
Belfast	
Causeway Coast & Glens	
Derry City & Strabane	
Fermanagh & Omagh	
Lisburn & Castlereagh	
Mid & East Antrim	
Mid Ulster	
Newry, Mourne & Down	

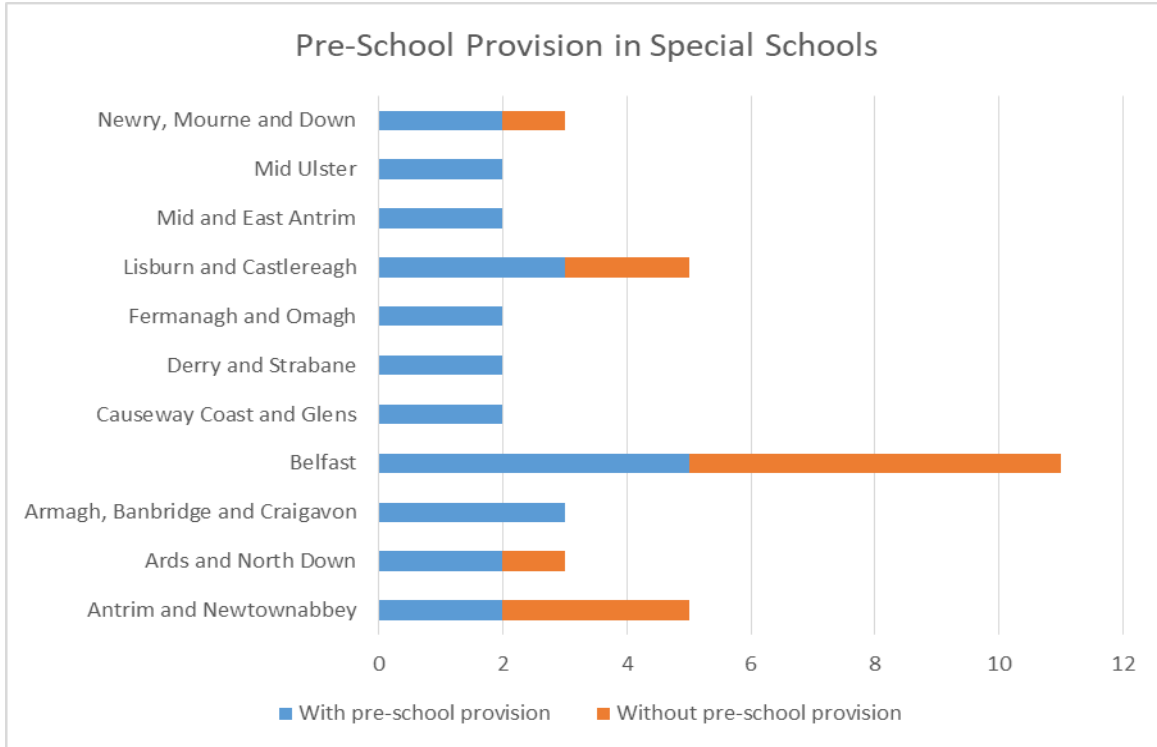
Source: EA

Key	School Type
	Social, Behavioural and Emotional Well-Being (SBEW)
	Hearing and Visual Impairment (H&VI)
	Hospital School
	Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)
	Physical and Medical Difficulties (P&MD)
	Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)
	Speech and Language (S&L)
	Moderate and Severe Learning Difficulties (MLD/SLD)

Half of all special schools in Northern Ireland currently offer wide ranging provision that meets the needs of pupils from moderate to severe and complex learning needs, from age 3-19. These settings provide for consistency of placement, removing the need for transition to other schools; whilst also providing the opportunity for children to attend their nearest special school.

As shown in Figure 4, currently over 60% of special schools whilst not necessarily providing for the full age range (3-19), offer formal pre-school provision. This type of provision across special schools is invaluable and creates the opportunity to foster positive relationships between the parent and the school at an early stage.

Figure 4: Special Schools with Pre-School Provision

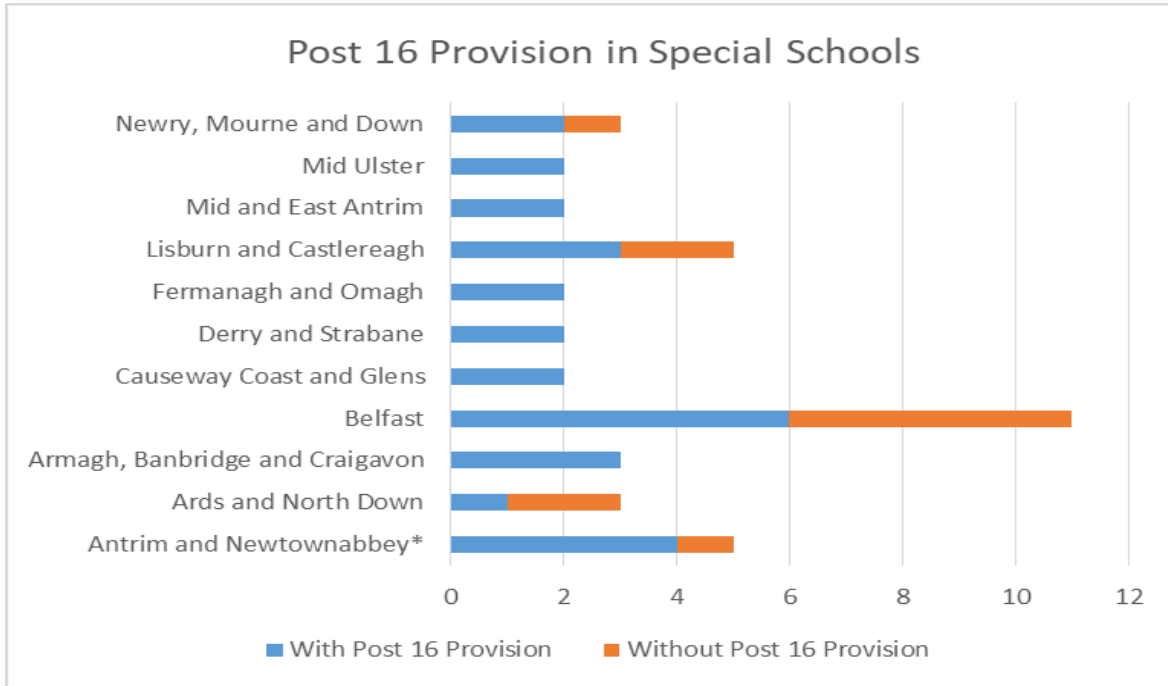


Source: EA

The EA’s Early Years’ Panel considers the needs of identified children in their pre-school years, some of whom are known to the EA from birth. EA recognises the importance of consistent provision of special school education for children aged three across Northern Ireland, as EA seek to make the earliest possible intervention in the lives of children with complex special educational needs and meet anticipated increased demand for early years’ places.

Figure 5 demonstrates that over 70% of special schools offer post 16 provision giving pupils access to transitional pathways that lead to attainment of accredited outcomes where possible. These provisions recognise the importance of preparing the pupils for life beyond school through the development of life-skills. The facilities in these provisions play an essential role in the transition planning and preparation of young people for life after school.

Figure 5: Special Schools with Post 16 Provision



Source: EA

* Rosstulla School, Newtownabbey currently offers provision up to Year 13 only

A range of outreach services are also currently delivered through a small number of special schools. Further details are provided in Appendix 1.

1.3 The Legislative Context – A Summary

When developing a framework for area planning in special schools EA must proceed within a clear legislative and policy framework to ensure that the needs of children with special educational needs are met. Core to the protections for children with special educational needs is **The Education Order (Northern Ireland) 1996** which is a key piece of legislation in regard to children and young people with learning difficulties and special educational needs. The 1996 Order placed responsibility for securing provision for learners with special educational needs with the EA and schools. A number of other key pieces of legislation are summarised in Appendix 3.

More recently, **The Children's Services Co-operation Act (NI) 2015** required improved cooperation amongst departments and agencies and places a duty on children's authorities, as defined by the Act, to co-operate where appropriate, in order to deliver services which will improve the well-being of children and young people. This duty has particular relevance within the area planning context as EA strives to have increased equity in provision across the organisation.

The **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Act (NI) 2016** will have phased implementation. This legislation broadens special educational needs to include disabilities and further strengthens the rights of children and young people with special educational needs to be educated in mainstream schools which is a key strategic priority for the EA. The SEND Act has a focus on raising standards and improving pupil outcomes and places the child firmly at the centre of the processes of early identification, assessment, provision and review.

As the EA commences the implementation of measures linked to the new SEND Act (2016) this will enable further transparency to our provision in both special schools and in pupil support classes within mainstream schools to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs. This will be reflected in the EA's SEND Plan.

Part 2: Why is Change Needed?

2.1 The Rationale for Change

The EA is seeking to provide pupils and parents with a greater level of **consistency** in special school provision across the region. This approach will reduce the need for pupils with the most **severe and complex needs** to experience the uncertainty and anxiety associated with multiple transitions during their school life. Some areas across the region do not currently offer this model of provision.

EA is seeking to deliver a greater level of consistency within the context of the following challenges:

- 1 an increasing demand for special school places;
- 2 an increasing demand for pre-school places in special schools;
- 3 an increasing demand for post 16 opportunities in special schools;
- 4 a changing and more complex profile of special educational needs;
- 5 an inequality and inconsistency in the type of provision offered across the region;
and
- 6 a need to ensure the effective and efficient use of resources.

In seeking to deliver a greater level of consistency the EA wants to:

- 1 improve outcomes for children attending special schools;
- 2 ensure there is capacity to meet current and projected demand for places within special schools working with the relevant policy leads within DE to help inform future capital investment;
- 3 create a regionally consistent model of delivery to enable the health and social care trusts to develop a consistent model of therapy intervention; and
- 4 work with health and social care trusts to ensure there is a consistent, integrated and tiered model of support that addresses the assessed needs of children based on risk stratification within the special school sector.

2.2 Review of Special Education

In March 2015, a Ministerial led Review of Special School Provision in Northern Ireland was published. The review made a total of 12 recommendations which can be found in Appendix 4. Six of these related specifically to the future structure and provision that should be accessible to children and young in special schools across the region and are detailed below:

- “DE funded special schools across the north of Ireland should be developed with a common structure and remit to support learners with significant and/or complex needs.
- Pre-school provision should be accessed at all DE funded special schools.
- Each Board (now EA) reviews the locations of their special schools in their future area plans and collaborates with other boards as part of a regional planning framework to ensure that pupils travel the least distance necessary.

- Special schools should provide for pupils aged 3-19 as common practice and that the current statutory annual review is conducted for all pupils to ensure that the placement at a special school remains appropriate.
- Under the revised model of delivery, pupils should attend their closest suitable special school.¹
- Under the revised model of delivery the ELBs (now EA) should implement a phased and managed process in terms of placement of pupils within the revised arrangements ensuring that all training needs of staff are addressed as part of the planning process.”

These recommendations are the cornerstone of our work as EA seeks to reshape special school provision within a regionally consistent framework to meet the changing needs of our children and young people with special educational needs.

¹ The term ‘suitable special school’ is a term taken directly from the Review of Special School Provision in Northern Ireland (2015) and in the context of this framework means the school which meets the assessed needs of the child.

Part 3: Our Vision and Guiding Principles

3.1 Our Vision for Special Education

- Consistent in the education and interventions offered
- Close to where children live
- For all ages and stages of development
- Flexible to meet changing educational, physical and medical needs

Our vision for children and young people in special schools is to provide the best educational experiences, equality of opportunities and pathways possible leading to positive outcomes and experiences of the highest quality in schools which are: By having provision which is consistent in the education and interventions offered EA wants to provide pupils with equitable access to excellent provision with highly skilled and diverse workforce across all areas of Northern Ireland.

Through having schools located close to where children live EA wants to minimise travel distances and the health and safety risks that are associated with transport of pupils with more complex and severe learning and medical needs.

By having schools which are for all ages and stages of development EA wants to minimise the need for transition to other schools throughout a child's educational journey. An age 3-19 model of provision at all special schools reduces parental uncertainty at transition points across a child's educational journey. This model also enables academic and pastoral progression from early years through to post 16.

Provision which is flexible to meet the changing educational needs of children and young people will provide clarity and transparency for parents on the education and special educational needs support that is available to meet the changing needs of their children.

3.2 Guiding Principles

In realising this vision and in line with EA values there are a number of guiding principles which will influence our work with parents and our co-operation and collaboration with other statutory partners including the health and social care trusts as well as the community and voluntary sectors. EA will seek to be:

- **Child-centred** – children with special educational needs have different and individual needs. It is expected that different types of provision will be required by different children to meet their individually assessed need, as part of our continuum of high quality provision and associated support.

- **Inclusive** – EA wants to ensure that children with complex special educational needs can have opportunities for inclusion alongside mainstream peers as appropriate and enjoy community connections to enrich their experiences in a range of different ways.
- **Outcomes focused** – EA wants to evidence improved outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs as well as increased independence in preparation for life beyond school. There is therefore a need for clear local evidence in terms of what is working to meet need, based on how our children are responding to interventions provided by high quality staff.
- **Equitable** – as EA moves forward, the need to bring consistency to the nature and type of special school provision for children and young people is essential.
- **Transparent** – EA needs to bring increased clarity and transparency in terms of how parents and professionals access the full range of special educational support and provision available.

Part 4: Progressing Our Vision

In order to realise this vision EA has developed **criteria**, see figure 6 below, as well as **indicators** for each of these criteria which are set out separately in Annex A, to evaluate our special school estate in order to identify need and make suitable provision for future needs of children and young people with special educational needs.

Figure 6: Special School Criteria

A	Quality Educational Experience
The school provides a broad and balanced educational experience that recognises the diverse needs, including individual assessed needs of all pupils. Pupils have access to appropriate educational opportunities and pathways that lead to attainment of accredited outcomes where possible. The indicators here also recognise the importance of inclusion and the development of life-skills.	
B	Strong Leadership and Management by Boards of Governors and Principals
There is effective leadership and management within the school which positively affects morale and motivation, and contributes to consistent standards of attainment with clear direction and accountability. Through effective teaching pupils have access to learning opportunities which lead to attainment with accredited educational outcomes.	
C	Accessibility
Pupils requiring a special school place can attend their closest suitable special school. Special schools provide for a range of special educational needs including the most severe and profound needs.	
D	3-19 Provision
The special school makes provision for pupils from pre-school through to post 16, enabling academic and pastoral progression from early years through each of the key stages.	
E	Strong links with the Community
The school prioritises strong links and relationships with parents and the local community including links with further education, Area Learning Communities, and other mainstream schools through the Entitlement Framework, Shared Education etc. These strong relationships enable the school to become an integral part of the community which impacts on the value that the community places on education and allows pupils to have access to enriched educational experiences. This must also be viewed in the context of overall provision of places in the local area.	
F	Stable Placement Trends
Placement trends across key stages demonstrate consistency, stability in staffing allocations, and flexibility in capacity to meet current and projected demand.	

Part 5: Realising Our Vision

The ***Special Schools Area Planning Framework*** will be used to inform a review of the current actions for special schools within the Area Planning Annual Action Plan. The framework will also inform future area planning priorities.

A phased and managed process to any change will be an essential part of the Area Planning process to ensure parental confidence and appropriate professional development of staff as the special schools' estate is reshaped to meet pupil need. There is no suggestion that children currently placed in a special school will be transferred to specialist classes within mainstream schools. The proposals do however suggest increased opportunities across Northern Ireland for pupils with special educational needs to have their needs met within a broader continuum of provision in line with assessed need; the special school remains a core element of this spectrum of provision.

Part 6: Consultation

6.1 EA Consultation

“Effective consultation is a key part of the policy-making process. People’s views can help shape policy developments and set the agenda for better public services.”

(Code of Practice on Consultation, 2004)

The EA is committed to consulting with key stakeholders and the local community on the framework and engaging local people in the planning and delivery of area planning for special schools. This Consultation Strategy outlines the methodology that will be adopted.

Consultation also means effectively consulting with those who are representative of the local community and those who use the services provided by the EA. This includes hard-to-reach groups in line with the EA Equality Scheme. The EA will ensure that specific efforts will be made so that the consultation reaches groups in the format that best meets their needs, for example, the consultation documentation will be made available upon request, in other languages for those not fluent in English, and/or in braille or larger print.

The EA will observe the principles of the Consultation Charter (Consultation Institute), which are:

- 1 **Integrity** - Honest intention, willing to listen and be prepared to be influenced.
- 2 **Visibility** - Stakeholders should be aware of the consultation exercise.
- 3 **Accessibility** - Methods that meet the needs of the intended audience.
- 4 **Confidentiality** - Ensure all stakeholders are aware as to the level of information that will be made public.
- 5 **Disclosure** - Disclosure of information that can influence the exercise and disclosure on behalf of consultees, for example, if the consultee represents an organisation.
- 6 **Fair Interpretation** - Objective collation and assessment of information and viewpoints.
- 7 **Publication** - Publication of both the output and the outcomes of the exercise.

By observing these principles, the EA is demonstrating its commitment to best practice and to assisting stakeholders to participate fully in the process.

6.2 How to Respond – the draft Special Schools Area Planning Framework

The EA is seeking your views on the draft Special Schools Area Planning Framework as this draft framework will inform all future priorities, decisions and actions as they relate to special schools in Northern Ireland.

During the consultation period the EA will actively seek to engage with a wide range of stakeholders and in particular stakeholders with an interest in SEN including parents, children and young people, schools, other educationalist, statutory organisations, health and care authorities, councils, local politicians, trade unions and other government departments.

The EA would encourage you to respond using the online version of the Consultation Questionnaire on the draft Special Schools Area Planning Framework via the link on the website.

Should you be unable to respond online, the Consultation Questionnaire is available upon request using the email address - specialconsultation@eani.org.uk.

Copies in other formats, including Braille, large print, etc may be made available on request. Please contact us using the link below if you need copies in an alternative format or a language other than English, and EA officers will do their best to assist you: specialconsultation@eani.org.uk

Alternatively you can send written responses to: specialconsultation@eani.org.uk

Or by post to:

Education Directorate
Area Planning
Ballee Centre
2-6 Ballee Road West
BALLYMENA
BT42 2HS

Responses must be received by the EA by Friday 11 December 2020, extended to Thursday 11 February 2021 and further extended to Monday 12 April 2021 at 5.00pm (document updated on 8 December 2020 and 20 January 2021).

Should you have any queries about the consultation, or requests for alternative formats, please contact the e-mail or postal details above.

6.3 Next Steps

The EA will consider all responses received and will provide a 'Summary of Consultation' report regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced development of the final version of this draft Framework.

The draft Special Schools Area Planning Framework will be finalised following the consultation process and will be considered by the EA Board for approval and forwarded to DE for endorsement. The 'Summary of Consultation' report will be made available on the EA's website when approved.

The Special Schools Area Planning Framework will inform all future priorities, decisions and actions as they relate to special schools in Northern Ireland.

6.4 Equality Consideration

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 all public bodies are obliged to consider the implications of any decisions on nine different groupings before decisions are implemented. The two duties within this Equality legislation include promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between all communities. The equality of opportunity duty requires that the Education Authority shall, in carrying out all its functions, powers and duties, have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity.

- 1 Between persons of different religious belief.
- 2 Between persons of different political opinion.
- 3 Between persons of different racial groups.
- 4 Between persons of different age.
- 5 Between persons of different marital status.
- 6 Between persons of different sexual orientation.
- 7 Between men and women generally.
- 8 Between persons with a disability and persons without.
- 9 Between persons with dependants and persons without.

The Good Relations Duty requires that the Education Authority shall, without prejudice to their equality obligations, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations:

- 1 Between persons of different religious belief.
- 2 Between persons of different political opinion.
- 3 Between persons of different racial groups.

The Special Schools Area Planning Framework has been considered in the context of Section 75(1) and Section 75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and decision was taken not to conduct an equality impact assessment as there are no negative impacts on any of the equality of opportunities and/or good relations categories. The EA would welcome any comments or views with regard to the screening. The link to this screening is available on the website.

6.5 Freedom of Information

The Education Authority will publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. The closing date for responses to this consultation will be Friday 11 December 2020, extended to Thursday 11 February 2021 and further extended to Monday 12 April 2021 at 5.00pm (document updated on 8 December 2020 and 20 January 2021).

Unless individual respondents specifically indicate that they wish their response to be treated in confidence, the nature of their response may be included in any published summary of responses.

Respondents should also be aware that the Authority's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act may require that any responses not subject to specific exemptions under the Act, be disclosed to other parties on request.

Appendix 1 – Special Schools

School Name	Age Range Approved	School Type / Outreach Services	2019/20 Enrolment
Antrim and Newtownabbey			
Hill Croft School, Newtownabbey	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	SLD	208
Jordanstown School, Newtownabbey	Foundation – KS5 (4-19)	H&VI	76
Riverside School, Antrim	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	SLD	92
Rosstulla School, Newtownabbey	Foundation – KS5 (4-17)	MLD	167
Thornfield House School, Newtownabbey	Foundation – KS4 (4-16)	S&L	91
Ards and North Down			
Clifton School, Bangor	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	SLD	174
Killard House School, Donaghadee	Foundation – KS4 (4-16)	MLD	232
Longstone School, Dundonald	Foundation – KS4 (4-16)	MLD/ Behaviour Support	208
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon			
Ceara School, Lurgan	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	SLD	172
Donard School, Banbridge	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	SLD	112
Lisanally School, Armagh	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	SLD	92
Belfast			
Belfast Hospital School	Foundation-KS5 (4-18)	Medical	*
Cedar Lodge School, Belfast	Foundation – KS4 (4-16)	P&MD	249
Clarawood School, Belfast	KS2 (8-11)	SBEW	29
Fleming Fulton School, Belfast	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	P&MD	127
Glenveagh School, Belfast	KS2 – KS5 (8-19)	SLD	184
Greenwood House Assessment Centre, Belfast	Pre-school – Foundation (3-6)	MLD/Speech & Language Assessment	72
Harberton School, Belfast	Pre-school – KS2 (3-11)	MLD/Literacy and Behaviour Support	299
Mitchell House School, Belfast	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	PD	84
Oakwood School and Assessment Centre, Belfast	Pre-school – KS1 (3-8)	SLD	116
Park Education Resource Centre, Belfast	KS3 – KS5 (11-19)	MLD/Literacy Support	118
St Gerard's School and Support Services, Belfast	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	MLD/Literacy Support	282

School Name	Age Range Approved	School Type / Outreach Services	2019/20 Enrolment
Causeway Coast and Glens			
Rossmar School, Limavady	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	MLD & SLD	143
Sandelford School, Coleraine	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	SLD	215
Derry City and Strabane			
Ardnashee School and College, Derry/Londonderry	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	MLD & SLD/ Behaviour Support	330
Knockavoe School & Resource Centre, Strabane	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	MLD & SLD	128
Fermanagh and Omagh			
Arvalee School & Resource Centre, Omagh	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	MLD & SLD	146
Willowbridge School, Enniskillen	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	MLD & SLD	160
Lisburn and Castlereagh			
Beechlawn School, Hillsborough	KS3 – KS5 (11-19)	MLD	242
Brookfield School, Moira	Pre-school – KS2 (3-11)	MLD	147
Lakewood School, Bangor	KS3-4 (11-16)	SBEW	7
Parkview School, Lisburn	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	SLD	187
Tor Bank School, Dundonald	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	SLD	186
Mid and East Antrim			
Castle Tower School, Ballymena	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	MLD & SLD	317
Roddensvale School, Larne	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	SLD	147
Mid Ulster			
Kilronan School, Magherafelt	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	SLD	155
Sperrinview School, Dungannon	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	SLD	131
Newry, Mourne and Down			
Ardmore House Special School, Downpatrick	KS3 (11-14)	SBEW	7
Knockevin School, Downpatrick	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	SLD	139
Rathore School, Newry	Pre-school – KS5 (3-19)	SLD	203

* Pupils at Belfast Hospital School remain registered to their own school

Appendix 2 – ETI Accommodation Comments

Fleming Fulton School – 2018 (Outcome - Good)

Accommodation Issues:

- “The school buildings and limited outside play areas are inadequate for the needs of the pupils.”

Glenveagh School – 2014 (Outcome - Outstanding)

Accommodation Issues:

- “The accommodation does not meet fully the needs of the number of pupils enrolled in the school.”
- “The limitations of the school accommodation is a significant challenge and a source of stress for staff who are constantly struggling to ensure the building is suitably adapted to meet the needs of very vulnerable pupils.”
- “There are insufficient rooms available for pupils with challenging behaviour and sensory needs and the school is built on a very limited site with insufficient outdoor play space or grounds to enable pupils with behavioural issues to walk, calm down and relax.”

Mitchell House School – 2015 (Outcome - Outstanding)

Accommodation Issues:

- “The accommodation is restricting the curriculum provision and requires urgent attention to give the pupils the appropriate opportunities for play and to develop their independence.”
- “The accommodation has a negative impact on the development of the curriculum.”

Greenwood House Assessment Centre – 2018 (Outcome - Outstanding)

Accommodation Issues:

- “One of the mobile classrooms in use has extensive and recurring problems with dampness, causing the children to be moved out of their classroom for repairs.”

Park School & Outreach Service – 2017 (Outcome - Satisfactory)

Accommodation Issues:

- “The school car park is inadequate for the number of users currently on site.”

Knockevin School – 2019 (Outcome – Unable to assess due to industrial action)

Accommodation Issues:

- “There are insufficient classrooms, and outside space for play and physical activities.”

Knockavoe School – 2016 (Outcome – Unable to assess due to industrial action)

Accommodation Issues:

- “The current accommodation restricts the provision of sufficient and appropriate learning environments to support the extremely varied and incompatible needs of the pupils.”

Appendix 3 – The Legislative Context

The Education Order (Northern Ireland) 1996, is a key piece of legislation in regard to children and young people with learning difficulties and special educational needs. The 1996 Order placed responsibility for securing provision for learners with special educational needs with the EA and schools.

The provisions in the ***Education (Northern Ireland) 1996 Order*** also introduced significant **new rights for parents**, including extended rights of appeal against EA decisions. The 1996 Order also provided for:

- the formal introduction of a statutory **Code of Practice** on the identification and assessment of special educational needs, to which schools and EAs are required to have regard in dealing with all learners with special educational needs; and
- the setting of **statutory time limits** on EAs for completing special educational needs assessments and issuing proposed statements to parents.

Under **Article 3(5) of the Education Order 1996** a special school is defined as a 'controlled or voluntary school which is specially organised to make special educational provision for pupils with special educational needs and is recognised by the Department as a special school'.

The Code of Practice (1998) provides statutory guidance on how the legislation regarding the identification and assessment of special educational needs is to be delivered in schools and sets out the practical steps for implementing the legislative framework.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (SENDO) 2005 increases the rights of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities to be educated and have their special educational needs met in mainstream schools. Importantly, it also ensures that children with disabilities are not disadvantaged compared to their peers in school.

The Supplement to the Code of Practice (2005) updated The Code of Practice (1998) so that it reflected the changes introduced by SENDO in 2005 in identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 required improved co-operation amongst departments and agencies and places a duty on children's authorities, as defined by the Act, to co-operate where appropriate, in order to deliver services which will improve the well-being of children and young people.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 will have a phased implementation. This legislation broadens special educational needs to include disabilities. The SEND Act further strengthens the **rights of children and young people with SEND to be educated in mainstream schools** and is therefore a key strategic priority for the EA. The Act is set in the context of the raising standards agenda and includes ensuring the child is placed firmly at the centre of the processes

of early identification, assessment, provision and review; the special educational needs provision for all children is met by the school and, as appropriate, the EA; the capacity of all schools to address special educational needs; and a clear focus on learning and outcomes for pupils with special educational needs.

There are a number of associated actions with the SEND Act currently in progress. The period for consideration in relation to the commencement of statutory assessment has been reduced. A newly established independent ***Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service*** has been operational since September 2019. The EA has a duty to publish and consult on a SEND Plan outlining the provision, support and training available across the EA for children with SEND, in preparation for September 2020.

This legislation also places a requirement on schools and the EA to support children and **young people as active participants** in making decisions about managing their special educational needs within the education system. This strengthens the importance of listening to the voice of the child. However, further actions remain to be progressed including consultation on the associated Regulations and a new Code of Practice.

Appendix 4 – Review of Special School Provision Recommendations

- "1 DE funded special schools across the north of Ireland, should be developed with a common structure and remit to support learners with significant and/or complex needs.
- 2 Pre-school provision should be accessed at all DE funded special schools.
- 3 Each Board (now EA) reviews the locations of their special schools in their future area plans and collaborates with other boards as part of a regional planning framework to ensure that pupils travel the least distance necessary.
- 4 Special schools should provide for pupils aged 3-19 as common practice and that the current statutory annual review is conducted for all pupils to ensure that the placement at a special school remains appropriate.
- 5 Under the revised model of delivery, pupils should attend their closest suitable special school
- 6 A consistent information management framework is established across the ELBs to monitor enrolment trends and the needs of those pupils who attend special schools. Although not part of the detailed analysis of this review, it is deemed appropriate that enrolment trends in Learning Support Centres are also monitored as part of the continuum of special needs support.
- 7 Managing Authorities review enrolment trends of special schools to ensure that the size and location of these schools is reviewed from an area planning perspective to meet the education and developmental needs of pupils.
- 8 A separate review of Learning Support Centres provision is carried out to ensure equity of provision across each ELB (now EA) to supplement the findings of this report.
- 9 A separate review of outreach provision is carried out to ensure equity of provision across each ELB (now EA) to supplement the findings of this report.
- 10 Each ELB (now EA) reviews the provision in those special schools which historically have had a regional dimension, in line with DE policies and in compliance with legislation to ensure that provision is developed in a consistent manner, while ensuring that the needs of all pupils continue to be met and that the expertise of the staff at these special schools is not lost.
- 11 The participation and contribution of special schools within Area Learning Communities continues to be developed and enhanced.
- 12 Under the revised model of delivery the ELBs (now EA), should implement a phased and managed process in terms of placement of pupils within the revised arrangements ensuring that all training needs of staff are addressed as part of the planning process."

Annex A – Criteria and Indicators

The information that will be used to measure the indicators will be obtained from a variety of sources including the school, the Education Authority, the Department of Education and the Education and Training Inspectorate.

Criterion	Indicator
A Quality Educational Experience	1.1 The standards and the quality of learning and teaching at the school demonstrate the capacity for self-improvement.
	1.2 There is a breadth to the curriculum to meet the diverse needs, including individual assessed needs of all pupils.
	1.3 Attainment of accredited outcomes where possible through appropriate educational opportunities and pathways including linkages with other schools, the FE sector or other providers.
	1.4 The range of curricular and extra-curricular activities available for children including vocational/career guidance, life skills and personal development and creative opportunities demonstrates breadth and is reflective of the interests and strengths of pupils.
	1.5 The quality of the physical environment for learning and teaching i.e. the condition, energy and water efficiency and suitability of the buildings.
	1.6 The quality of, and arrangements for, pastoral care including the active promotion of the principles of social justice in all areas of the formal and informal curriculum.
	1.7 There is a positive ethos in relation to supporting and promoting the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs and be responsive to making reasonable adjustments to meet needs.
B Strong Leadership and Management by Board of Governor and Principal	2.1 Governors' views on the school based on quantitative and qualitative evidence.
	2.2 Composition of Board of Governors – skills and experience of Board members and number of vacancies.
	2.3 Management of staff attendance and absenteeism.
	2.4 Levels and nature of staff turnover and unfilled staff vacancies.
	2.5 Teacher morale
	2.6 Management of curricular and organisational demands on the principal and staff.
	2.7 Leadership and management roles are given adequate time and consideration
	2.8 There is a school development plan in place and progress is being made to achieve plan's aims and objectives.
	2.9 Professional development of staff reflected in the school development plan to reflect the changing special educational needs of pupils.

Criterion	Indicator
C Accessibility	3.1 Special school provision that caters for a range of special educational needs including the most severe and profound needs, so that all pupils requiring a special school placement can attend their nearest special school with a sound rationale for any exception including efficient use of resources.
D 3-19 Provision	4.1 Special school provision includes pre-school provision for children assessed as requiring it, in the year immediately preceding their statutory school age. 4.2 Special school provision includes progression through all key stages with opportunities for personal development, and strong links with external and internal partners in relation to transition planning in to pre-school and for post 19 pathways.
E Strong links with the community	5.1 Strong community links which contribute to the development of the whole child including vocational (careers development opportunities) and personal development. 5.2 Degree and quality of parental involvement (schools will be asked to provide evidence on this). 5.3 Contribution of the school to the community (schools will be asked to provide evidence). 5.4 Multi-functional use of buildings outside formal education, for example, for sport, voluntary and community use. 5.5 Active participant in the Area Learning Community
F Stable placement trends	6.1 Special educational needs placements across key stages which demonstrate consistency in placement trends and stability in staffing allocations.