A Call For Change:
Time For Action

Meeting the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs in Catholic maintained schools

Main Report

CCMS
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

Catholic Social Teaching offers a way of thinking, being and seeing the world. It provides a vision for a just society in which the dignity of all people is recognised and upholds the rights of those who are vulnerable.

Contents

1. Executive Summary

The Catholic maintained schools sector upholds the values espoused in Catholic Social Teaching which emanate from the gospel message of Christ. Catholic Social Teaching offers a way of thinking, being and seeing the world. It provides a vision for a just society in which the dignity of all people is recognised and upholds the rights of those who are vulnerable.

The key principles of Catholic Social Teaching can be summarised under the following headings:

- **The Life and Dignity of the Human Person**

- **A Call to Family, Community and Participation**

- **Rights and Responsibilities**

- **Options for the Poor and the Vulnerable**

- **Dignity of Work and the Rights of the Workers**

- **Solidarity**

- **Care for all of God's Creation**

In the Catholic school, Catholic Social Teaching is used to reflect on and guide how the learning and teaching community can respond to the challenge of providing excellence of educational experience and opportunity for all pupils. Subsequently, our schools conduct their duties from a position that:

"involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it." [1]
(Pope Francis, 2013)

In terms of Special Educational Needs (SEN), Catholic Social Teaching encourages us to:

- **Look at the issues**

- **Understand what is happening**

- **Discern the actions needed to respond.**

In early 2018, the CCMS consulted with the school leaders in the Catholic maintained sector seeking to identify the key issues and challenges facing schools at that point. The feedback from that consultation formed the basis of an agenda for a series of engagement events held later that year. Throughout those engagement events, the single most significant issue raised by those school leaders was their concern around the adequacy of the provision they were able to make for children and young people with SEN. As a result, CCMS set up a working group to ascertain the views of the sector on current SEN provision within the community of Catholic maintained schools.

---

[1] Francis, 2013. Evangelii Gaudium: Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World.

Key Findings

The evidence across all of the phases within the Catholic maintained sector included in the work of the SEN working group indicates an almost year on year increase in the number of children presenting with varying degrees of SEN and/or disability. While some are identified at an early stage in their educational journey and are supported by school staff and external support agencies, the current conditions in schools are very difficult and at times fall very short of addressing many of the modern day, challenging and complex needs of all of the pupils and staff.

The pupils, parents and staff who contributed to the review by the CCMS SEN working group raised many concerns, including the:

- perceived lack of joined up thinking and partnership working at Government, system and school level to address SEN;

- lack of sufficient funding to meet the needs of all children with SEN;

- lack of provision school staff and other professionals from external agencies can make for children and young people with SEN and/or disability;

- amount of teacher time required to deal with SEN related issues and the impact of this on whole class teaching;

- additional pressures placed on the SENCo and school principal;

- restrictions in the number of children that schools can refer for assessment to the Educational Psychology Service;

- limitations and the bureaucracy of the statementing process and the negative impact this has on access to resources and smooth transitions between educational phases;

- restrictive and outdated system structures that limit the ability to deploy a range of suitably qualified professionals appropriate to the needs of all children;

- limited availability of, and access to, high quality specialist training to ensure equality and consistency in the approach, techniques and strategies used by staff to address both the specific and more general needs of the children and young people with SEN;

- issues raised for those who attend small rural schools, regarding the availability of specialist services in rural areas; and,

- delay in the implementation of the Children and Young People's Strategy/Children's Services Co-operation Act (NI).

Whilst all schools are committed to the principle of inclusion and improving the provision and life chances for children with SEN and/or disability, it is evident that many staff are concerned by the limitations, practicalities and increased workload that comes with this. This is having a detrimental impact on the day-to-day working in some schools and on staff morale.

All parties surveyed agreed that early identification and intervention can make a vast difference to a child's educational outcomes and life chances - a position supported by research. They strongly promote the idea of working in partnership with pupils, parents, school professionals and external agencies/specialists.

Pre-school staff and some primary principals raised concerns about many missed opportunities to identify pupils with less obvious difficulties prior to starting pre-school and, at times, primary school. Some post-primary staff had similar concerns regarding early identification of SEN in relation to Literacy, Numeracy, and, social, emotional and behavioural needs.

Across the board, principals reported inappropriate and unacceptable delays in accessing assessment and diagnosis by an educational psychologist as well as intervention from external agencies. Responses highlighted that some children do not undergo formal assessment by an educational psychologist as soon as required; leaving schools trying to meet their needs without the necessary support and resource from external services.

Many schools have been proactive in seeking and sharing best practice from and with other schools. This has helped to build confidence in gathering and recording evidence and applying a range of appropriate strategies to match and address children's individual needs. However, schools view this engagement as having limitations where access to centralised quality professional development for teachers is inconsistent. This impacts on the capacity of school staff to meet the needs of all pupils with SEN.

The working group reported their concerns regarding equity of access to resources for all children and young people with SEN, including in house provision, specialist provision and services from external providers. Access to specialist provision, particularly for specialist units in rural settings, has been highlighted as an issue with some children having to travel long journeys to have their individual needs catered for.

The quality and physical condition of accommodation devoted to special educational needs in some schools is inappropriate and in need of urgent improvement.

Many of the issues raised and recommendations made in this paper have been identified in previous reports and evaluations by a range of stakeholders with little progress made to address these.

Recommendations

We recognise the need for strong, courageous and visionary leadership at all levels in the education system in order to deliver the proposed recommendations outlined below:

Early Intervention

1. Development of a pro-active consistent approach to early identification and intervention, where all professionals have a shared understanding, commitment and responsibility in delivering agreed systems and processes.

2. Equity of access for pupils with SEN to a range of preventative and compensatory programmes (to include in school/external agencies/community services).

3. Impactful services such as counselling to be made available to all schools.

4. Nurture provision to be made available in all of our schools.

5. Establishment of statutory screening of children at 3 years old, prior to transition to pre-school settings.

6. A review of funding to ensure that the relevant staff in all pre-school, primary and post-primary schools can access and make referrals to the Educational Psychology Service as and when required.

7. Consideration given as to whether it would be more efficient and beneficial to pupils to have an independent Educational Psychology Service.

8. Improved sharing of personal, social, emotional and cognitive information at each transition stage.

9. Investment in human and financial resources that is in-keeping with responsible stewardship of the public purse and supportive of the Common Good.

Partnership Working

1. Enhanced arrangements for partnership working at: (i) Government level; (ii) system level; and, (iii) local level, including a review of how partner agencies interact with each other and ensuring clarity around roles and responsibilities of all partners with provision for a key professional with oversight of intervention.

2. The establishment of local partnership initiatives, similar to the models in Glasgow and Finland, where pupils, parents, school staff, health visitors, nurses, social workers, educational psychologists and community organisations etc. come together regularly to discuss individual pupil's needs, current provision and what additional provision is required.

Investing in People

1. Clarity in defining how the Learning Support Co-ordinator role will complement the existing SENCo role.

2. Dedicated training, resources and time for Learning Support Co-ordinators/SENCos to support them in their roles.

3. A review of legislation and regulations to make arrangements for Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) (including Initial Teacher Education) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) a statutory requirement, to provide the time necessary for all relevant staff to avail of CPD and to make provision for the difficulties encountered by staff in small schools where middle leaders and teaching principals have multiple roles.

4. A reimagining and remodelling of the staffing structures to better address the mix of professional skills required to address the needs of pupils with SEN.

5. A review of existing funding arrangements to achieve the maximum delegation of resources to schools, giving them the autonomy to prioritise spending on CPD and TPL to meet the individual needs of the school and its pupils.

6. Development of a strategy to better enable and support sharing of expertise from the highly trained staff in special schools as the dissemination of such concentrated expertise and knowledge would provide opportunities for staff in mainstream and specialist unit settings to gain CPD in other areas of SEN.

Bureaucratic Burden

1. A review of the processes for the identification, assessment and record-keeping associated with SEN to ensure that these are streamlined and that the information on pupils is shared and used more efficiently between partnership agencies.

2. A review of the process leading to a statement of special educational needs to ensure a timely and appropriate response to the needs of children.

Specialist Provision

1. A review of existing provision to ensure an appropriate and equitable network of specialist provision, supported by clear criteria for establishing the local need for units.

2. Capital investment to support the broadening of access in fit for purpose school accommodation.

3. A commitment, expressed in policy and supported with appropriate resources, to the development of whole school approaches to nurture including the establishment of additional nurture units to ensure equitable access.

4. A more strategic approach to support the sharing of expertise from staff in special schools with professionals in other settings.

Funding Special Educational Needs and Allocation of Resources

1. Prioritisation of the funding model for education to reflect 'New Decade, New Approach' (2020), to improve further the broad educational outcomes and the life chances of every child.

2. Funding models to be directed at the needs of all pupils with SEN and delegated into school budgets so that locally informed decisions can be made, prioritised and resourced.

3. Additional funding to facilitate and support TPL/CPD/capacity building, dedicated time and more effective partnership working.

4. An 'invest to save' strategy with adjustments to the age-weighted funding for each child to better support the development of meaningful early identification and early intervention strategies which in turn may reduce the likelihood of children progressing to subsequent stages of the Code of Practice.

5. Additional investment to facilitate equity of access to resources for all pupils with SEN including in house provision, specialist provision and services from external providers.

6. A review of spending on the administration and bureaucracy behind the access to services.

Legislation

1. Continued prioritisation of high quality provision for SEN as set out in the 'New Decade, New Approach' deal (2020).

2. Legislation that directs and supports inclusive education systems, embedding a fundamental commitment to every child and young person's right to inclusive and equitable educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers.

3. Full implementation of the Children's Services Co-operation Act (NI).

Conclusion

The working group recognises that it is easier to make untested suggestions as to how things might be improved than to turn suggestions into reality. We must ensure that in shining a light on one part of the service, in this case the provision for children with special educational needs, that we do not overlook the need for an integrated, service wide review of all other aspects of education.

That said, the working group would offer a challenge to us all: if we are to be truly inclusive, catering for every child's needs, then we must adopt an approach that is less formulaic and more centred on meeting the needs of every child including those with special educational needs. We must challenge ourselves to develop a system of education built around the needs of children. We must have compassion for those in our society with most needs and ensure that we make provision for those children and families that are the most vulnerable.

In developing a new approach to the provision for children with SEN we must move away from a culture where everything must be fought for to one which assumes service as a right.

We would make one final observation. There is little in this paper that could be claimed to be new or innovative thinking; the point being, that these arguments have been made time and time again by researchers, by education authorities, through government reviews and by our own school professionals. It is now time to make further progress in realising positive outcomes for our CCMS schools. A strong leadership culture needs to be developed at all levels to ensure that our recommendations for improvement in SEN provision are implemented and sustained. This will also ensure that these improvements are owned by everyone and are embedded in our education system.

This is a call for change – a time for action.

2. Introduction

This paper sets out a call for change to the ways in which all relevant stakeholders work together to meet better the needs of pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

It is important to note that we seek to reflect the perspective of the leaders and teachers in the Catholic maintained sector; where Catholic education 'is rooted in the Gospel values', 'is person-centred' and 'promotes the dignity, self-esteem and full development of each person who is made in God's image and uniquely loved by God'.[2] At our core therefore, we place the philosophy and characteristics that underpin Catholic education in supporting all of our children, especially the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, to achieve their full potential.

The CCMS is not a lead or statutory agency for SEN policy or provision in Northern Ireland. However, like all in the Catholic maintained sector, the CCMS is committed to making a positive difference for our children and young people with SEN. The organisation is committed to responding to the challenges and when necessary advocating on behalf of the children in the Catholic maintained sector on the policy and operational framework for SEN. The CCMS is committed to continue working with our partners in education, in particular the Education Authority and the Department of Education, in the best interests of all children.

Consistently, Catholic maintained schools are identifying that they are being challenged to deliver the Department of Education's goals, derived from the Draft Strategy for Children and Young People and the Draft Programme for Government Framework (2016 - 2021), where the emphasis is on Outcome 14: 'We give our children and young people the best start in life'[3] by:

- Improving the well-being of children and young people;

- Raising standards for all;

- Closing the performance gap, increasing access and equality;

- Developing the education workforce;

- Improving the learning environment; and,

- Delivering high quality education services.

The paper identifies many varied, yet strongly interlinked factors that impact on provision for children with special educational needs. These include the many challenges to meeting their needs effectively, the effects of long-term financial constraint, the incrementally adverse impact on the education profession, and, the effects on wider community and society. Critically, we describe a sense of a service in crisis which impacts all children and young people, but disproportionately so on those with SEN.

---

[2] *Archdiocese of Armagh. (2010) Catholic Education – The Vision.*
[3] *Northern Ireland Executive. (2016) Draft Programme for Government Framework 2016–21.*

We note the realities that everyone involved in the education of our children and young people will continue to operate in during a time of significant change and challenge. However, with challenge also comes opportunity.
The paper argues that all relevant stakeholders should be open to change and ready to adapt so that we can respond more effectively to meeting the needs of our most vulnerable children and families. We should be flexible, constructive and supportive, always striving to provide the best possible levels of service.

Fundamentally, the CCMS calls for a major process of review and transformational change, in which all relevant stakeholders work closely to develop and co-design frameworks of future service provision that are high quality, effective, efficient and accessible, and most importantly, that are focused on the best outcomes for the children and young people who use them.

3. Defining Special Educational Need

The relevant legislation applies the following definitions to SEN:

'Special Educational Need' is defined as 'a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made'. 'Learning difficulty' means that the child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his or her age, and/or has a disability which hinders his or her use of everyday educational facilities (or, where the child is below school age, would hinder such use if the child were of school age). 'Special educational provision' means educational provision, which is different from, or additional to, the provision made generally for children of comparable age'.[4]

4 Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI). (1996) Education (Northern Ireland) Order Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

4. Defining the Goal of Inclusion

Ainscow (2008) cited in European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education – EADSNE (2013) describes inclusion as:

'a process aiming to respond to diversity; being concerned with the identification and removal of barriers; being about the presence, participation and achievement of all learners and involving a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or underachievement'.[5]

'The ultimate vision for an inclusive education system must be to ensure that all learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers'.[6]

In this paper we seek to highlight the barriers to providing the additional support that is required so that the unique needs of all children and young people with SEN can be met in inclusive settings. Like so much other research and policy elsewhere, we argue that certain conditions must exist in order to improve that situation. These include a joined-up partnership approach to services where:

'joint services supported by legislation and effective funding models, co-operative (not competitive) systems of school governance, staff training at the level of both initial and continuing professional development, parental and family involvement and, finally, a system that takes into account social needs and the need for long-term provision and support'.[7]

---

5 European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. (2013) Organisation of Provision to Support Inclusive Education.
6 European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. (2015) Agency Position on Inclusive Education Systems.
7 European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. (2013) Organisation of Provision to Support Inclusive Education – Literature Review.

5. Methodology

5.1 Working Group

In early 2018, the CCMS consulted with the school leaders in the Catholic maintained sector seeking to identify the key issues and challenges facing schools at that point. The feedback from that consultation formed the basis of an agenda for a series of engagement events held later that year. Throughout those engagement events, the single most significant issue raised by those school leaders was their concern around the adequacy of the provision they were able to make for children and young people with SEN.

The CCMS set up a working group to ascertain the views of the sector on current SEN provision within the community of Catholic maintained schools. The membership of the group (including principals, vice principals, SENCos and SEN teachers across all phases and types of provision) is attached at Appendix 1.

5.2 Stakeholder Surveys

Over the course of 2018/19 and 2019/20, the working group conducted surveys with key stakeholders within the Catholic maintained school community, including staff, pupils and parents, to identify both the key challenges of meeting the special educational needs of pupils across all phases and opportunities to support and enhance the current provision.

5.3 Engagement with Practitioners

Members of the working group visited 13 settings across all phases within the Catholic maintained sector in Northern Ireland to obtain further information on the challenges schools were experiencing with SEN provision and to identify the strengths of current SEN provision within those settings. Visits were made to a range of units in nine mainstream primary school settings including nursery and nurture units as well as learning support, autistic spectrum, speech and language and physical disability centres. A range of units were also visited in three post-primary school settings including learning support, autistic spectrum, physical disability and Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) centres. One CCMS special school was also visited.

The members also engaged with practitioners in school settings across all phases in Ireland and Scotland to identify best practice in SEN provision.

As part of a study visit to Glasgow, visits were made to an early years' centre, eight primary schools, five post-primary schools and one specialist setting that caters for pupils with complex SEN (3–12 years old). The primary schools visited in Glasgow included settings with a range of units such as autistic spectrum, nurture, enhanced nurture provision (ENP), settings which had whole school approaches to nurture as well as settings which provided additional support for learning (ASL). One primary school visited in Glasgow also had a whole school approach to a 'Language and Communication Friendly Environment' (LCFE). The post-primary schools visited included those with nurture groups and whole school approaches to nurture as well as those with provision for pupils with additional learning needs.

5.4 Literature and Policy Reviews

The working group also considered literature reviews on SEN provision in the North and South of Ireland, across Britain and in other jurisdictions in Europe such as Finland to obtain further information and to seek best or better practice in SEN provision.

The factors impacting on provision for SEN

- Financial Pressures
- Legislation
- Inclusion
- Types of provision
- Societal Change
- Greater Need & Complexity
- Partnership Working

Needs of the Child → Crisis → Change

6. Setting the Local Context

The principle of inclusion has led to many more children with SEN being educated in mainstream classrooms. A smaller number of children, those with more significant need, have their needs met within specialist settings, including units in mainstream schools or special schools that stand alone from mainstream schools.

The working group acknowledges that high quality provision for pupils with SEN exists in a range of educational settings across Northern Ireland as evidenced by survey/evaluation reports and inspection reports from individual settings completed by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI).

The ETI (2019) identified a 'range of common factors which have proven to ensure a high quality mainstream provision for pupils with SEN' when they carried out an evaluation of SEN provision in a total of 30 schools (twenty primary and ten post-primary schools). Some of the characteristics of effective SEN provision observed included:[8]

- Highly effective leadership at all levels in the school;

- Involvement of the whole senior leadership team;

- Inclusion of all pupils as part of the whole school ethos;

- Staff having high expectations for every pupil;

- Upskilled and dedicated staff (including the SENCo and learning support staff who can provide additional support for pupils with SEN and facilitate relevant CPD for staff).

- 'Dissemination of effective practice within the school';[9]

- 'Willingness and ability to customise strategies to meet individual needs';[10]

- 'Support for homework and study skills';[11]

- 'Tracking of progress by pupil and by intervention';[12]

- Effective pastoral support for pupils;

- Involvement of pupils in setting targets and the review of targets set (IEPs); and,

- Development of 'positive working relationships' with parents/carers, pre-school providers and feeder schools.[13]

Another evaluation of practices used to support pupils with emotional health and well-being difficulties in primary, post-primary and EOTAS settings was carried out by the ETI during 2017/2018. The ETI (2018) found that school staff were proactive and went 'the extra mile'[14] in working to meet the needs of these pupils. The inspectorate also added that a 'majority of senior leaders'[15] prioritised the emotional health and well-being of pupils in school development plans and action plans and provided appropriate professional development 'to build the capacity of their teachers and staff to support the well-being of the pupils'[16] despite limitations in 'financial resources'[17] and 'reported difficulties in accessing mental health support services'.[18]

---

8 *The Education and Training Inspectorate. (2019) Report of a Survey of Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools.*
9 *As above.*
10 *As above.*
11 *As above.*
12 *As above.*
13 *As above.*
14 *The Education and Training Inspectorate. (2018) An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Emotional Health and Well-being support for pupils in schools and EOTAS centres.*
15 *As above.*
16 *As above.*
17 *As above.*
18 *As above.*

In an evaluation report, on a pilot where the focus was on SEN capacity building in early years settings, the ETI (2015) stated that as a result of an increase in specialist training, participants had further developed their understanding of the range of complex needs of pupils with SEN[19] as well as their skills in 'dealing with early SEN identification and intervention'.[20]

Similarly, earlier survey/evaluation reports published by the ETI also indicate that there are examples of effective practice in SEN provision in other educational settings. The ETI (2012) concluded that the 'overall quality of provision for pupils with a VI in a mainstream primary and post-primary schools' was 'very good'.[21] In another report on the quality of provision for pupils with dyslexia, the ETI (2012) found that in most of the settings visited, provision was 'good or better'[22] and that provision was outstanding in a minority of the settings.[23]

The Education and Training Inspectorate (2012-13) also reported that staff in special schools had a range of effective strategies to meet the needs of pupils with 'persistent and challenging behaviour' which included:

- 'consistent use of a range of techniques and resources to address the escalation of behaviour;

- staff's knowledge of the pupils, their understanding of challenging behaviour and ability to engage with the pupils in a confident and caring manner;

- teamwork including parental input and training'.[24]

Whilst high quality provision for pupils with SEN is clearly evident across the system, the working group considers that much of this success comes about as a consequence of the commitment and dedication of individual members of staff in schools where there is an assumption that they contribute more than should be expected of them. That dedication and commitment is being further tested by an ever-growing range of external societal factors.

Society, and by association the school community, is dealing with an unprecedented period of societal change. This is evidenced in various studies and research into areas including unemployment, poverty, the changing nature of the family unit, and, the identification of growing numbers of children and adults with mental health illnesses linked to which are growing rates of self-harm and suicide. In addition, substance and alcohol misuse is much more prevalent in society today.

Thompson (2017) argues that mental illness in Northern Ireland is the biggest cause of ill health and disability here. Furthermore, she points out that there are higher levels of mental ill health in Northern Ireland than anywhere else in the UK. Thompson (2017) also states that high scores in the 2015-16 NI Health Survey suggest that 21% of women and 16% of men had mental health issues at that time.[25] She also discusses how respondents from 'the most deprived areas were twice as likely'[26] to have a high score (27%) than 'those in the least deprived areas (13%)'.[27] Critically, Thompson (2017) claims that 'it is estimated that around 45,000 children and young people in NI have a mental health problem at any one time and that more than 20% of young people are suffering 'significant mental health problems' by the time they reach 18'.[28]

Similarly, Black and McKay (2019) reported that Northern Ireland had the highest suicide rate across the UK in both 2017 and 2018.[29] They stated that 185 deaths were registered as suicide in 2000 and this figure rose to 307 in 2018. In total 4,783 deaths in Northern Ireland were registered as suicide during the period 2000 – 2018.[30] The hidden cost to the health of society is thrown into sharp relief when we consider that nearly 4,800 deaths by suicide in 18 years are contrasted with over 3,500 lives taken in over 30 years of the Troubles.[31]

Furthermore, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency – NISRA (2020) reports that out of 15,922 deaths registered in Northern Ireland in 2018, 189 deaths were from drug-related causes.[32] This figure has more than doubled in the last ten years as drug-related deaths in Northern Ireland in 2008 accounted for 89 deaths then.[33] The NISRA (2020) also points out that inhabitants in the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland are 'five times more likely to die from a drug-related death than those in the least deprived areas'.[34]

Additionally, the Police Service of Northern Ireland – PSNI (2020) reported that between 1 April 2019 and 31st March 2020, there were 31,817 domestic abuse incidents and 18,640 domestic abuse crimes recorded.[35] These figures were the highest recorded by the PSNI (2019) since 2004/5 when there were almost 10,000 fewer domestic abuse incidents (20,959) and almost half the number of domestic abuse crimes logged (9,647).[36]

The Department of Health (2019) reported that the number of children on the Child Protection Register in Northern Ireland had risen from 1,523 in 1995 to 2,211 in 2019.[37] This represents an increase of more than 30%. Similarly, the number of 'Looked After Children' in Northern Ireland in March 2019 also shows a significant increase over the last two decades. The Department of Health (2019) highlighted that there were 3,281 'Looked After Children' at the end of March 2019 and that this figure indicated an increase of 41% since 1999.[38] A total of '24,289 children in Northern Ireland were known to Social Services as a child in need'[39] in March 2019.

Statistics published by the Department for Communities (2020) show that approximately 19% of people in Northern Ireland live 'in relative income poverty (before housing costs)' and this statistic includes 'approximately 107,000 children'.[40] Furthermore, 16% of people 'live in absolute poverty before housing costs' and this figure 'can be further broken down to 21% of children, 12% of pensioners and 16% of the working age population.'[41]

Our school leaders and teachers consistently identify that they are facing a sustained period of dramatic change and significant instability which is impacting on their ability to meet the needs of children. They cite many real life examples of unprecedented societal change that is most often likely to have a negative impact; the alarming increase in the numbers of children and young people with SEN; the greater complexity of the need or difficulty; and, a lack of resource and investment that is increasing the strains on the already limited budgets (see Strategic Theme: Funding Special Educational Needs and Allocation of Resources and Appendix **7**: Table **1**). Our leaders are telling us that they are struggling to provide high quality educational experiences for their pupils, most especially those with SEN.

The Northern Ireland Audit Office – NIAO (2017) concluded that 'mainstream schools are finding it increasingly difficult to strike a balance that allows all children to learn at a different pace and often in a different way'.[42]

[19] *The Education and Training Inspectorate. (2015) An Evaluation of the Special Educational Needs Capacity Building Pilot A: Early Years Settings.*

[20] *As above.*

[21] *The Education and Training Inspectorate. (2012) Report of an Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with a Visual Impairment in Mainstream Schools in Northern Ireland.*

[22] *The Education and Training Inspectorate. (2012) A Survey of the Provision for Pupils with Dyslexia.*

[23] *As above.*

[24] *The Education and Training Inspectorate. (2013) An Evaluation of the Provision to Meet the Needs of Pupils with Persistent and Challenging Behaviour in Special Schools.*

[25] *Thompson, J. (2017) Mental Health and Illness in Northern Ireland (1): Overview.*

[26] *As above.*

[27] *As above.*

[28] *As above.*

[29] *Black, L. and McKay, K. (2019) Suicide Statistics and Strategy in Northern Ireland: Update.*

[30] *As above.*

[31] *Sutton, M. (2020) An Index of Deaths from the Conflict in Ireland.*

[32] *Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. (2020) Statistics Press Notice – Drug-Related and Drug-Misuse Deaths Registered in Northern Ireland (2008–2018).*

[33] *Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. (2020) Drug Related and Drug Mis-Use Deaths, 2008–2018.*

[34] *Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. (2020) Statistics Press Notice – Drug-Related and Drug-Misuse Deaths Registered in Northern Ireland (2008–2018).*

[35] *Police Service of Northern Ireland. (2020) Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland – Update to 31 March 2020.*

[36] *Police Service of Northern Ireland. (2019) Trends in Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2018/19 – Annual Bulletin published 08 November 2019.*

[37] *Department of Health. (2019) Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2018/19.*

[38] *As above.*

[39] *As above.*

[40] *Department for Communities. (2020) Poverty in Northern Ireland.*

[41] *As above.*

[42] *Northern Ireland Audit Office. (2017) Special Educational Needs.*

The working group notes that in the time since first beginning this review, the Management Side and the recognised Teachers' Trade Unions recently reached agreement on pay and a broad range of workload related areas. This is a welcome and timely development which brings a cessation to almost 10 years of industrial action short of strike in schools. The CCMS particularly welcomes the inclusion, as one of 9 mutually agreed priority areas for review, the subject of Special Educational Need. We know it goes without saying, but we take this opportunity to impress upon all concerned the importance of this particular review and we urge all parties to engage both openly and proactively with children at the heart of our thinking.

The world has seen much change over the few short months since the outbreak of Covid-19. The lockdown measures, with schools having to move to distance learning from mid-March until the end of the 2019/20 academic year, will have had far reaching consequences on both the nature and incidence of SEN. Much of the progress that will have been made with individual children will have at best been frustrated and in some cases partially lost. We consider that it would be both reasonable and prudent to expect that the demand for support and access to services will be greatly increased now that schools have reopened and are working to identify any loss of learning.

Related to the world response to Covid-19 is the obvious impact on decision making at government and system levels. There are many clear examples that prove when decisions need to be taken, they can be made; critically, without the multi-layered levels of bureaucracy to which public services have become accustomed. The working group calls upon all involved to follow suit and where practicable adopt the can-do approach to reshaping services for our most vulnerable.

These factors, coupled with an inability to envision and adequately resource important policy change, have come together to create the conditions that could best be described as a compelling case for change.

7. Strategic Themes

As referred to previously, the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education – EASNIE (2015) states that the ultimate goal for inclusive education structures is to ensure that all learners have access to a high-quality education 'in their local community, alongside their friends and peers'.[43] It reports that all countries in Europe are committed to ensuring that their education systems become increasingly more inclusive and that these same countries are at different stages on the journey towards inclusive education. Moreover, the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education – EADSNE (2013) argues that inclusive education systems are viewed as crucial components in societies which aim to be socially inclusive.[44]

Through a series of interconnected themes, that have been identified by the members of the working group and the consultees to their engagements, the following commentary seeks to highlight the key challenges school leaders are facing in making provision which meets the needs of children and young people with special educational needs in inclusive settings. These themes are:

- Early Intervention

- Partnership Working

- Investing in People

- Bureaucratic Burden

- Specialist Provision/Inclusion

- Funding Special Educational Needs and Allocation of Resources

- Legislation.

Within the themes that follow, we also set out the principles that must exist in order to improve the situation, the challenges faced in making provision for pupils with SEN as well as recommendations for the way forward in Northern Ireland. Further research and some examples of practice in other jurisdictions are outlined in Appendices **3–7** for each of the above themes.

---

[43] European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. (2015) Agency Position on Inclusive Education Systems, European Agency.

[44] European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. (2013) Organisation of Provision to Support Inclusive Education – Literature Review.

7.1 Early Intervention

The Principles of Early Intervention

Throughout its engagement with schools, the working group found that the issue of 'early intervention' was consistently raised by consultees. This term has been used to describe many activities which sometimes leads to confusion about what is meant by 'early intervention'. The working group has chosen to use '...intervening as soon as possible to tackle problems that have already emerged for children and young people'[45] as its definition of early intervention.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (2010) in England argue that if early intervention is understood in the context of pregnancy through to eighteen years, it means that children and young people who have additional needs should get the support required as soon as the problem is identified at any stage on their learner journey. This is important to prevent them from 'experiencing unnecessarily enduring or serious symptoms'[46] which may have a 'multiplier effect', leading to other additional needs.[47]

The benefits of early identification of children's special educational needs and early intervention are widely recognised as research indicates that both make a significant difference to their educational outcomes and their life chances. Research also suggests that early identification and early intervention 'may also result in lower spend in meeting that child's needs as he or she grows up'.[48] The Council of the European Union (2010) noted that:

> 'Systems which uphold high standards of quality for all and strengthen accountability, which foster personalised, inclusive approaches, which support early intervention, and which target disadvantaged learners in particular, can be powerful drivers in fostering social inclusion'.[49]

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (2010) also discusses the need for the promotion of 'protective factors' and the reduction of 'risk factors'.[50] This department highlighted a paper completed by the HM Treasury DfES for the 2007 Spending Review in England which concluded that protective factors such as 'good parenting and good social and emotional skills, for example, both contribute to high attainment'.[51] Risk factors associated with a child or young person's environment 'predispose some children to, or are associated with, particular physical, social or psychological problems. These risk factors can be eliminated or reduced in terms of their potential impact by prevention and early intervention'.[52]

Many services such as maternity and health visitor services as well as funded initiatives such as Sure Start, the Early Intervention Transformation Programme (EITP), Family Hubs and the West Belfast Partnership Board include both preventative and compensatory approaches which provide opportunities for both early identification and intervention. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (2010) outlines the critical role that health visitors should play in promoting both prevention and early intervention for children aged 0-5 years and the equally crucial role that the school nurse should play in the health and development of primary aged children and young people at post-primary level.

> 'The health visitor's role should focus on families until the child reaches primary school age, when a school nurse should take over lead responsibility for all aspects of the family and childcare needs. On entry to secondary school, a school nurse, specialist in engaging adolescents, should work with young people and their families until they leave school, go onto further education or enter employment'.[53]

Of course, school communities also have responsibilities to promote early identification and early intervention practices to ensure that children and young people (0-18 years) with SEN can reach their full potential. The working group is aware that there are a wide variety of both preventative and compensatory programmes that schools and local external agencies can offer, many of which are subject to funding. One such development, proven to be a very successful preventative early intervention mechanism across the UK, is a whole school approach to nurture in all phases across educational settings. This includes nurture corners in nurseries, nurture classes in primary schools and nurture lessons in post-primary schools.

Sloan et al. (2016) state that nurture provision in nurture units or classes 'is a targeted programme, aimed at pupils who have difficulties coping in mainstream classes, who fail to engage in the learning process, and who may otherwise be at risk of underachievement, leading to special educational needs or the need for education outside the school setting'.[54] Pupils usually attend the nurture classes for between two to four terms and inclusive practice is encouraged where pupils join their peers from mainstream classes where possible e.g. for break and lunch and at school assemblies etc.

Recent research suggests that successful early intervention is also dependent upon professionals such as those working in Education, Health and Social Services as well as parents communicating with each other effectively so that children and young people are identified early and appropriate intervention can be accessed without delay at all stages of their special educational needs journey. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (2010) also argue that in order for early intervention to work effectively there is a need for a consistent approach to early intervention where 'systems and processes'[55] are agreed by stakeholders at local level and clearly communicated to all professionals. Kirklees Education Authority (2014) notes that 'any delays in support could also impact on the learning difficulty, loss of self-esteem, frustration in learning and behavioural difficulties'.[56] This LEA also recognises that the opinions of both children and their parents provide a valuable insight into these early difficulties.

The Early Intervention Foundation (2018) estimated that the cost of late intervention to the public sector in Northern Ireland is £536 million per annum. This is equivalent to £1166 per child here. The report states that 'child protection and safeguarding, domestic violence, and youth economic inactivity'[57] are the main sources of expenditure and that the associated cost of late intervention in these areas puts increased pressure on spend on social services, social security and health. The report also concluded that increases in the number of domestic violence cases, incidents of substance abuse among young people and rising numbers of looked after children also contribute to increased pressures on spend.[58]

Due to the cost of late intervention in terms of children and young people's educational outcomes, life chances and impact on fiscal spending, more countries across Europe and the wider world are promoting preventative as well as compensatory approaches in order to meet the needs of pupils with SEN more effectively. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (2010) state that 'a balanced approach to prevention, early intervention and later intervention'[59] and 'a continuum of services'[60] is essential if the system is to work more effectively. Such an approach would also work to prevent educational exclusion and longer-term social exclusion before these difficulties arise.

Further information and research on practice in early intervention in other jurisdictions are outlined in Appendix 3: Tables 1 and 2.

[45] HM Treasury and DfES. (2007) Policy Review of Children and Young People: A discussion Paper – 2007.

[46] Department for Children, Schools and Families. (2010) Early Intervention: Securing Good Outcomes for All Children and Young People.

[47] As above.

[48] Northern Ireland Audit Office. (2017) Special Educational Needs.

[49] Council of the European Union. (2010) Council Conclusions on the Social Dimension of Education and Training. 3013th Education, Youth and Culture Meeting.

[50] Department for Children, Schools and Families. (2010) Early Intervention: Securing Good Outcomes for All Children and Young People.

[51] As above.

[52] As above.

[53] Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. (2010) Healthy Futures 2010 – 2015 The Contribution of Health Visitors and School Nurses in Northern Ireland.

[54] Sloan, S., Winter, K., Lynn, F., Gildea, A. & Connolly, P. (2016) The Impact and Cost Effectiveness of Nurture Groups in Primary Schools in Northern Ireland.

[55] Department for Children, Schools and Families. (2010) Early Intervention: Securing Good Outcomes for All Children and Young People.

[56] Kirklees LEA. (2014) Children & Young People with SEN: Guidance – School Based Support.

[57] Early Intervention Foundation. (2018) The Cost of Late Intervention in Northern Ireland.

[58] As above.

[59] Department for Children, Schools and Families. (2010) Early Intervention: Securing Good Outcomes for All Children and Young People.

[60] As above.

The Local Context: Early Intervention

Evidence from the school staff survey carried out by the CCMS working group suggests that failure to identify children as early as possible will ultimately have a detrimental effect on access to support for pupils with SEN. This issue appears to be exasperated by the fact that many pupils with SEN are not identified before they start pre-school. Almost 80% of respondents in the school survey felt that most pupils with SEN are not identified prior to their enrolment in pre-school settings. Consultees who took part in the staff survey commented that it tends to be only children with more complex difficulties who are identified prior to taking up their placements in pre-school settings. Similarly, many primary school principals believe that only some pupils with SEN are identified before starting primary school and that again those identified were usually the pupils with the most complex special educational needs. Over 80% of respondents in the school survey disagreed that most pupils with SEN are identified prior to their enrolment in primary school.

Evidence from the school survey also highlights similar concerns at post-primary level. A total of 40% of the consultees disagreed that most pupils with SEN are identified prior to their enrolment in post-primary schools. Respondents from the post-primary sector who took part in the staff survey also expressed significant concerns over the failure of early identification of pupils with SEN in Literacy and Numeracy.

Additionally, consultees who completed the school staff survey also expressed concerns regarding the lack of appropriate intervention in place for those pupils who have been identified as having SEN on transition to pre-school settings as well as primary and post-primary school settings. Almost 80% of respondents felt that appropriate interventions were not in place for most pupils with SEN on transition to pre-school settings. Likewise, over 70% of consultees in the school survey also felt that appropriate interventions were not in place for most pupils with SEN on transition to primary school whilst 40% of the consultees believed that appropriate interventions were not in place for most pupils with SEN on transition to post-primary schools (Appendix **2**:Table **1**). A significant majority of respondents across all phases (over 70%) did not feel that external services provided the level of 1:1 or small group support that pupils with special educational needs required.

It is also important to consider the responses from the parent and pupil surveys carried out in both primary and post-primary schools. One third of parents who completed the primary survey indicated that they were not satisfied that their child's special educational needs were identified early. Over one quarter of parents' responses in this survey also indicated dissatisfaction with the waiting times for their children's assessments by the educational psychologist. Additionally, almost 40% of parents in the primary group were not satisfied with the waiting times for receiving support from external agencies. Similarly, nearly 40% of parents indicated that their child was not able to access an appropriate level of support from external agencies. Almost 40% of parents in this group also had concerns regarding the waiting times for the completion of their child's statement. Interestingly, only 44% of respondents in the primary group agreed that the level of intervention/support provided to meet their children's special educational needs was adequate. Likewise, over 57% of pupils with special educational needs (with and without statements) who completed the primary survey reported that they do not feel that they get a sufficient level of support.

The feedback from the survey completed by parents of pupils with special educational needs in post-primary was comparable to the feedback from the primary parent group surveyed. Almost one third of parents who completed the post primary survey were not satisfied that their child's special educational needs had been identified early. Additionally, parents in this group indicated that only one sixth of their children were assessed by an educational psychologist during their pre-school years. Responses from the post primary parent survey also showed that whilst the majority of their children were assessed by an educational psychologist during their primary school years, one third of these children were not assessed until they were in P.6 or P.7. Furthermore, almost half of parents who took part in the post primary parent survey raised concerns about the waiting times for support from external agencies for their children. Again, one third of the parents in this group indicated that they had concerns regarding the level of support from the relevant external agencies that their children had access to. Notably, almost 30% of parents who had a child with a statement for his/her special educational needs reported that appropriate

intervention was not put in place for their child until he/she was in post-primary school. One third of pupils with special educational needs (with and without statements) who completed the post primary survey reported that they do not feel that they get adequate support.

Evidence from the staff, pupil and parent surveys suggests that little has changed in over a decade. In their 'Follow Up to the Inspection of Special Educational Needs in the Pre-School Sector', the ETI (2009) commented that 'children getting an appropriate diagnosis at an early age was too much of a lottery' and that 'effective strategies for early intervention, involving pre-school staff and the range of health and education agencies have yet to be realised in a consistent manner'.[61] More recently, the NIAO (2017) discussed how 'in the absence of the application of a standardised approach by schools, children throughout Northern Ireland with similar needs still may not be treated equitably and may not have access to the same provision within the same time frame'.[62] The Chief Inspector in the ETI (2016) also stated that 'there is a need to become more effective in early identification and supportive intervention for individuals with learning challenges'.[63] This is particularly relevant when we reflect on the pupils' voice discussed earlier, and the percentage of pupils with SEN who indicated in their responses to the survey that they do not get adequate support.

The impact of the lack of funding for early identification and both school-based intervention and intervention from external providers presents a significant barrier when it comes to providing pupils with SEN with the level of support that they require.

Over 80% of the consultees that took part in the school staff survey did not believe that the educational psychology time allocated to their schools is adequate to meet the needs of their pupils. Respondents who took part in the school survey also argued that this was evidenced by the waiting times both for assessment by an educational psychologist, and, in the waiting times for the commencement of the intervention programmes facilitated by external agencies. The Education and Training Inspectorate (2019) reported that 'schools are not always supported in a timely manner by EA support services, with long delays for educational psychologist assessments and again for support provision'.[64]

Survey responses from staff in schools also indicate a widely held belief that the approach to the identification of SEN appears to be one of 'wait and see' rather than a proactive commitment to a meaningful strategy of early identification/intervention. A typical worked example given was that children cannot access formal Literacy screening until they are 7½ years old, the argument being that this is too late to be described as early intervention and by the time they actually receive any form of formal additional support another year or more may have passed.

In the early year settings, there is a strong call for more support from health visitors so that the youngest children can be identified as early as possible. Consultees who took part in the school survey believe that consideration should be given to an additional screening in the form of a health and development review for children aged 3 years.

Whilst school leaders are aware of the screening of 0-2 year olds, many nursery principals report that their discussions with health professionals show that there is insufficient time to focus on families that may require additional visits due to their workload and fewer resources.

Respondents to the school staff survey also argue that there should be better communication and partnership working between the named health visitor and staff in pre-school settings to ensure that pupils are identified promptly.

Similarly, as a result of their engagements with practitioners, the working group discussed the need for better partnership working with the named school nurse and staff in schools. The key professionals involved in working with the child and family would then be in a much better position to identify pupils with SEN and agree the most appropriate forms of intervention.

[61] *The Education and Training Inspectorate. (2009) Follow Up to the Inspection of Special Educational Needs in the Pre-School Sector*

[62] *Northern Ireland Audit Office. (2017) Special Educational Needs*

[63] *The Education and Training Inspectorate. (2016) Chief Inspector's Report 2014-16.*

[64] *The Education and Training Inspectorate. (2019) Report of a Survey of Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools.*

It is clear from the research, surveys and engagement with practitioners that children and young people in Northern Ireland do not have equity of access to either preventative or compensatory programmes which impact positively on their educational outcomes and life chances in their communities or in their schools. One primary school principal, whose school implements a whole school approach to nurture including a fully operational nurture unit, shared his experience of the benefits of nurture with members of the working group. He was of the strong belief that nurture provision has had a significant impact in preventing pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs in his school from progressing to subsequent stages of the Code of Practice. This is evidenced by the fact that in his school of almost 700 pupils, a total of only nine pupils required a statement of special educational needs during 2018–19.

At the launch of the report 'The Impact and Cost-Effectiveness of Nurture Groups in Primary Schools in Northern Ireland', Professor Paul Connolly, Director of the Centre for Evidence and Social Innovation, and a member of the research team said:

> 'Our research provides clear evidence of the benefits of nurture groups for children who face challenges in their early years in education. We found that nurture groups led to significant improvements in social, emotional and behavioural outcomes among children who previously had difficulty learning within a mainstream class. The same effects were not evident among children in similar circumstances attending a school without a nurture group'.[65]

Recommendations: Early Intervention

Based on the findings and upholding the unique dignity and value of every child and young person, the CCMS working group recommends the following:

1. Development of a pro-active consistent approach to early identification and intervention, where all professionals have a shared understanding, commitment and responsibility in delivering agreed systems and processes.

2. Equity of access for pupils with SEN to a range of preventative and compensatory programmes (to include in school/external agencies/community services).

3. Impactful services such as counselling to be made available to all schools.

4. Nurture provision to be made available in all of our schools.

5. Establishment of statutory screening of children at 3 years old, prior to transition to pre-school settings.

6. A review of funding to ensure that the relevant staff in all pre-school, primary and post-primary schools can access and make referrals to the Educational Psychology Service as and when required.

7. Consideration given as to whether it would be more efficient and beneficial to pupils to have an independent Educational Psychology Service.

8. Improved sharing of personal, social, emotional and cognitive information at each transition stage.

9. Investment in human and financial resources that is in-keeping with responsible stewardship of the public purse and supportive of the Common Good.

7.2 Partnership Working

The Principles of Partnership Working

The EASNIE (2015) states that for the vision for an inclusive education system to be realised, legislation must be supported by a strong commitment to ensuring every pupil's right to equity of opportunity within this type of education system. It also argues that the policy governing an effective inclusive education system must indicate clearly that the implementation of the system is the shared responsibility of all decision-makers including leaders in education, health and finance.[66] Furthermore the EASNIE (2014) discusses the need for policy makers to ensure that contributions from all stakeholders including learners, their families, teachers and other professionals inform policy decisions.[67]

Having evaluated the wider European and international policy and practice context, the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (EADSNE) developed a set of indicators of sound policy and practice on inclusive education in 2009. One of these sets of indicators focuses on the critical importance of partnerships at government, system and local levels in meeting the needs of all pupils including those pupils with special educational needs.[68]

Kyriazopoulou and Weber (2009) maintain that effective partnership working is a crucial prerequisite and indeed a central critical component which must first exist if arrangements for delivering sustainable inclusion are to be successful. They also claim that there is a range of areas where practice can enhance the conditions for a more embedded approach to working in partnership towards meeting the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. These include:

- clear national legislation and policy which is balanced and consistent with other policy initiatives;

- arrangements that ensure the participation of pupils and parents in decision-making;

- arrangements that will enhance, embed and require greater inter-sectoral cooperation;

- arrangements that will support the development of a more confident move towards interdisciplinary support systems;

- the development and support of systems and cultures that encourage networking, collaboration and effective teamwork amongst school staff, across schools and across the professions; and,

- clearly understood and shared systems that define roles and accountability.[69]

It is worth reflecting also on research that comments on some of the most frequently used terms for multi-professional working and how the use of terminology defines the approach taken to make provision for pupils with SEN. Soan (2012) cited in EADSNE (2013) indicates that there is a move from away words 'such as 'multi-agency' and 'multi-disciplinary', where the emphasis was on different adults working together to support learners (but on a separate basis), to words such as 'inter-disciplinary' and 'inter-agency', where the different adults start to work across boundaries and professions'.[70] This is particularly relevant to our suggestion in this paper that teachers who have been trained in assessment and diagnostics to be given more professional consideration.

---

[65] *Sloan, S., Winter, K., Lynn, F., Gildea, A. & Connolly, P. (2016) The Impact and Cost Effectiveness of Nurture Groups in Primary Schools in Northern Ireland.*

[66] *European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. (2015) Agency Position on Inclusive Education Systems.*

[67] *European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. (2014) Organisation of Provision to Support Inclusive Education Policy Brief.*

[68] *Kyriazopoulou, M. and Weber, H. (editors) (2009). Development of a Set of Indicators – for Inclusive Education in Europe.*

[69] *As above.*

[70] *European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. (2013) Organisation of Provision to Support Inclusive Education – Literature Review.*

Importantly, the EADSNE (2013) argues that there needs to be 'joint planning between organisations and disciplines, together with joint policy making between departments of education, health and social services'.[71] Significantly though, research suggests that in order to provide adequate support for pupils with SEN, sometimes barriers that exist between personnel across the range of services need to be broken down and opportunities for the professionals to meet regularly in order to find solutions to problems need to be provided (Ofsted, 2005; Daniels et al., 2000 and Daniels, H., 2000) cited in EADSNE (2013).[72]

Furthermore, research from literature reviews suggest that in order for partners to work effectively together to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with pupils with SEN, the roles and responsibilities of the partners need to be agreed and recorded in the form of contracts or service level agreements. Frattura and Capper (2007) and Lacey (2001; 2000) cited in EADSNE (2013) argue that '…the writing of contracts or service agreements to provide clear indications of the different roles, times to meet and the expertise to share are needed'.[73] The EADSNE (2013) discusses how these 'contracts are important tools to create networks that meet on a regular basis and are able to achieve joint problem-solving'.[74]

Finally, it is important to note that the EADSNE (2013) also regards the involvement of both pupils and parents as vitally important if partnership working is to be successful. The European Agency comments that the views of both pupils and parents need to be considered when decisions are being made regarding identification and provision. Booth and Ainscow (2002) cited in Kyriazopoulou and Weber (2009) also indicate that the views of these parties need to be considered when developing policy and practice in the area of special educational needs.[75] Additionally, Kyriazopoulou and Weber (2009) comment that the rules and procedures regarding the resource allocation for pupils with special educational needs should be fully understood by parents.[76]

Further information and research on practice in partnership working in other jurisdictions are outlined in Appendix 4: Tables 1 and 2.

The Local Context: Partnership Working

Seventy percent of respondents to our school staff survey indicated that they did not agree (with a further 18% indicating that they were unsure) that all agencies work effectively together to address the special educational needs of pupils (Appendix 2: Table 2).

School practitioners argue that they are working in an environment where partnership working is not fully enshrined or supported in practice, and, where the roles and responsibilities of school staff, external agencies (CCMS, EA, Health, Community and Social Services etc.) and their staff are not well developed, agreed, vision led, properly understood or widely published. Most importantly, those roles are not complementary to each other in support of securing the best possible outcomes for every child with special educational needs.

Our school leaders also point to a lack of funding and an inflexible approach to the deployment of resources adversely impacting the development of partnership working. One example being the inability to provide cover for school professionals and professionals from external agencies to attend meetings regarding provision for pupils with SEN.

This, coupled with workload issues within schools and external agencies, presents a barrier to professional development, capacity building, sharing of information, and, development of a shared vision through regular attendance at multi-agency meetings. School practitioners argue that the practical outworking of not having committed joined-up partnerships means they must rely chiefly on attendance at Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST) meetings (which generally tend to be organised when crisis situations arise) and annual reviews (which are focused on the needs of one child at a time).

In addition, engagements with school practitioners indicate that there seems to be a widely shared belief that pupils and parents are not always or universally viewed as essential partners in decision making processes and outcomes.

The inadequacies of partnership working with parents is evidenced in the responses from parents who took part in the primary and post

primary surveys. Over 55% of parents in the primary group and over 40% of parents in the post primary group disagreed that they were able to track the progress of the statementing process for their children. Additionally, almost 30% of parents in the post primary group were unsure whether they had been able to do this.

Another example is the 44% of parents in the primary group who felt that their child's statement was not written in a language that they could understand. Evidence contained in the 2017 NIAO report on SEN points to this issue as well:

> 'Many parents related how lost they felt when first having to deal with the SEN system and some said they had no idea about what was involved in the statementing process. They felt an easily understood guide to the whole SEN system, to help them understand and negotiate the various stages, would be a valuable tool'.[77]

In the same report on SEN, the NIAO (2017) highlighted specific concerns raised by respondents to a consultation on the SEND Bill. Some respondents indicated that co-operation between the EA and health trusts is crucial if partners are to make appropriate provision for pupils with SEN. Respondents also discussed how 'joint planning and collaborative training' could mitigate the waste of valuable resources.[78]

Recommendations: Partnership Working

Based on the findings and upholding the unique dignity and value of every child and young person, the CCMS working group recommends the following:

1. Enhanced arrangements for partnership working at: (i) Government level; (ii) system level; and, (iii) local level, including a review of how partner agencies interact with each other and ensuring clarity around roles and responsibilities of all partners with provision for a key professional with oversight of intervention.

2. The establishment of local partnership initiatives, similar to the models in Glasgow and Finland, where pupils, parents, school staff, health visitors, nurses, social workers, educational psychologists and community organisations etc. come together regularly to discuss individual pupil's needs, current provision and what additional provision is required.

---

[71] *European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. (2013) Organisation of Provision to Support Inclusive Education – Literature Review.*
[72] *As above.*
[73] *As above.*
[74] *As above.*
[75] *Kyriazopoulou, M. and Weber, H. (editors) (2009). Development of a Set of Indicators – for Inclusive Education in Europe.*
[76] *As above.*
[77] *Northern Ireland Audit Office. (2017) Special Educational Needs.*
[78] *As above.*

7.3 Investing in People

The Principles of Investing in People

In Europe much work has already been done to develop of a set of meaningful indicators of good practice in the provision for inclusive education. This work is underpinned by the principle that genuine inclusion must be supported with a commitment to valuing the role that people will play.

Kyriazopoulou and Weber (2009) discuss the critical role that legislation should play, suggesting that any legislation on education must always address the quality of training for 'teachers, psychologists, non-educational personnel, etc. with special regard to dealing with diversity'.[79] This includes ensuring that in-service teacher training and initial teacher training programmes include professional development on meeting the needs of children and young people with SEN in inclusive settings.

Kyriazopoulou and Weber (2009) also suggest that all professionals engaged in supporting pupils with SEN, including teachers themselves, must presume a continuous requirement for professional development. They state that legislation on education also needs to address the availability of opportunities for these professionals. This requires a commitment to setting aside dedicated resources for the appropriate professional development of those working with pupils with special educational needs.[80] This is particularly important for the professional development of the full range of professionals (such as principals, SENCos, teachers, special needs assistants, educational psychologists, social workers, health visitors and school nurses etc.) who are working to support pupils with SEN in inclusive settings.

This is underpinned, and indeed strengthened, by the publication in 2016 of the Education and Training Inspectorate's report 'Learning Leaders: Lessons on Professional Learning and Other Education Jurisdictions'[81] which was part of their evaluation work linked to the Department of Education (DE) Strategy, 'Learning Leaders'. This report highlighted lessons on professional learning from other professions and other education jurisdictions, where the key characteristics drawn from case studies demonstrate that:

a. 'Professional learning is based on well-defined expectations that are clearly set out by a relevant well-established professional body or Royal College. The aforementioned models of professional development for teachers are also aligned to local universities of higher education and/or professional bodies'.[82]

b. 'Continued professional learning and development outside of the education profession is a regulatory requirement that demands a high level of professional response and a continuing annual commitment: it is a vital component of continuing change and improvement. It also provides opportunities to develop and/or embrace new experiences and innovations in order to take forward new techniques, theories and working practices.

c. Professional learning methodology is specific and measurable; the competences that have to be demonstrated are prescribed centrally. The range of learning opportunities and associated study resources is provided in such a way that engagement is measurable, with limits to ensure that the extent of engagement is both significant, yet manageable.

d. Professional learning requires reflection on practice, set within a manageable time- bound framework that links to appraisal and revalidation of recognition within a performance management system. There are professional credits which are assessed against a set of agreed professional standards, subject to peer review and challenge, audited on a sample basis annually across the profession by the appropriate body'.[83]

e. 'Motivation is derived from the professional drive to provide optimal learning experiences for individuals; the obligation to honour the demands from the employer and society; and the need to preserve job satisfaction and recognition as a professional practitioner.

f. A wide range of online learning and other strategies, along with the use of an e-portfolio are typical ways of collating and recording activities for appraisal and revalidation, and for additional accreditation.

g. Professional learning has both skills-based and knowledge-based competences which are directly related to the individual, with an expectation for continued improvement in their work. Evidence of continued learning is essential for career progression and is structured into a formal personal development plan with the responsibility resting with each individual to make choices related to their own stage of learning and development and in the context in which they work'.[84]

Further information and research on practice in investing in people in other jurisdictions are outlined in Appendix **5**: Tables **1** and **2**.

The Local Context: Investing in People

Whilst a number of the consultees who completed the school survey did acknowledge that the Education Authority had provided access to CPD in the area of SEN within the last year, 57% of respondents indicated that they do not agree that staff have access to suitable professional development to allow capacity building in this area. Some consultees suggested that further opportunities to access CPD tailor-made to suit the needs of the staff in individual schools would prove more beneficial.

From our engagements with practitioners across a range of settings, there is also a belief that many newly qualified teachers are not properly prepared for the modern challenges. They appear to have a limited understanding of the range of pupils' special educational needs, limited ability to identify and assess their needs as well as a limited knowledge of appropriate intervention strategies to use.

Additionally, as evidenced by our engagements with practitioners and responses from the school survey, staff in a number of schools report that they are struggling to take greater responsibility or find the time for their own teacher professional learning, including 'action research' due to constraints with time. This is more evidenced in smaller schools where teaching principals, SENCos and other middle leaders often have multiple roles. Respondents commented that without a committed resource dedicated to the release of relevant staff, schools are struggling to bear the cost, leading in some cases to reports that school staff are having to source their own CPD outside of school and sometimes at their own cost.

Responses from the school survey and findings from visits to a range of settings also indicate that several school principals and SENCos are also finding that the year on year financial constraints are adversely impacting on the amount of time SENCOs can have for their duties and diminishing opportunities for the dissemination of training and good practice. Indeed, a significant number of SENCos have full-time teaching commitments in our schools. Many practitioners also highlighted the huge amount of administration time required to access support for children. Given the increased numbers of children and young people now identified with SEN, many schools require the role to be full-time in order for it to be carried out effectively. However, due to budgetary constraints, many schools cannot afford to have a non-teaching SENCo and as a result these professionals often have to use their own time in evenings and at weekends in order to keep up with the administration alone. Many principals report that they have difficulty replacing a SENCo when a post becomes vacant, leaving it unfilled for a period of time or requiring the principal to take on this important role. One principal summarised the challenges with resourcing the role of SENCo:

> 'With the increasing number of children in our school with SEN and behavioural difficulties, not to mention the increasing paperwork for a SENCo, a full time SENCo is required. However, due to financial constraints we are only able to fund our SENCo to be out of class for three days per week and even this is under threat. The limited time for a SENCo means that there is limited intervention and therefore limited impact'.[85]

[79] Kyriazopoulou, M. and Weber, H. (editors). (2009) Development of a Set of Indicators – for Inclusive Education in Europe.
[80] As above.
[81] The Education and Training Inspectorate. (2016) 'Learning Leaders: Lessons on Professional Learning and Other Education Jurisdictions'.
[82] As above.
[83] As above.
[84] As above.
[85] Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS). (2019) Responses to the CCMS Survey on SEN in Catholic Maintained schools.

The NIAO (2017) also notes additional concerns raised in responses to DE's consultation on the draft regulations about training and resource requirements needed to ensure all schools have an appropriately qualified Learning Support Co-ordinator.[86] In addition, principals, SENCos and teachers surveyed, agree with the findings from the NIAO (2017) which commented on the need to ensure that 'SENCOs are part of the Senior Management Team and are properly trained and qualified, with ring-fenced time'[87] to carry out their duties. This office also highlighted concerns raised around the 'capacity of schools to properly manage Individual Education Plans'[88] and the need for further training for staff in this area.

Respondents who completed the school survey also raised concerns about the impact that the lack of manpower available in school settings and throughout the range of external services has on the capacity of schools to make appropriate provision for pupils with SEN.

Whilst practitioners in a small number of specialist units in mainstream settings indicated that there is some sharing of expertise from the highly trained staff in special schools, the majority of practitioners insist that additional opportunities need be provided for the sharing and dissemination of such concentrated expertise and knowledge.

Recommendations: Investing in People

Based on the findings and upholding the unique dignity and value of every child and young person, the CCMS working group recommends the following:

1. Clarity in defining how the Learning Support Co-ordinator role will complement the existing SENCo role.

2. Dedicated training, resources and time for Learning Support Co-ordinators/ SENCos to support them in their roles.

3. A review of legislation and regulations to make arrangements for Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) (including Initial Teacher Education) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) a statutory requirement, to provide the time necessary for all relevant staff to avail of CPD and to make provision for the difficulties encountered by staff in small schools where middle leaders and teaching principals have multiple roles.

4. A reimagining and remodelling of the staffing structures to better address the mix of professional skills required to address the needs of pupils with SEN.

5. A review of existing funding arrangements to achieve the maximum delegation of resources to schools, giving them the autonomy to prioritise spending on CPD and TPL to meet the individual needs of the school and its pupils.

6. Development of a strategy to better enable and support sharing of expertise from the highly trained staff in special schools as the dissemination of such concentrated expertise and knowledge would provide opportunities for staff in mainstream and specialist unit settings to gain CPD in other areas of SEN.

7.4 Bureaucratic Burden

The EADSNE (2013) discusses the difficulties that many jurisdictions across Europe face with accessing services for pupils with special educational needs due to excessive bureaucracy. It argues for a reduction in duplication and unnecessary bureaucracy, having accepted that it is a serious impediment to efficient and effective provision for children and young people with SEN.

Critically, as suggested elsewhere in this paper, unnecessary duplication and the frustrations arising from the associated bureaucratic burden could be addressed by moving towards better informed inter-agency and inter-disciplinary methods of working.[89] When discussing partnership working, Frost (2005 in Soan, 2012) cited in EADSNE (2013) refers to different levels of efficiency. Level 1 is where services co-operate with each other and work together on the same goals but remain independent. The ambition should be to move towards a more joined up approach where the professionals agree a system which streamlines services and avoids unnecessary duplication.

For this to be effective, consistent approaches to identification, assessment and record keeping need to be agreed by all partners and the agreed system needs to be shared and understood by all stakeholders, including parents. Such a system could enable partners to access and use each other's assessments, records and recommendations and include the utilisation of technology to store information securely and share relevant information among partners. Additionally, as suggested elsewhere, unnecessary duplication could be reduced further by recognising the professionalism and expertise of teachers e.g. acceptance by the Educational Psychology Service of schools' assessments of pupils where these have been completed by trained professionals.

Further information and research on practice in reducing the bureaucratic burden in other jurisdictions are outlined in Appendix **5**: Table **3**.

The Local Context: Bureaucratic Burden

In February 2019, the Education and Training Inspectorate published its 'Report on a Survey of Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools'. It highlighted significant problems related to or arising from bureaucratic burden:

> 'Almost all of the schools commented on the lengthy periods of time and considerable paperwork required before they are able to access additional support for pupils with SEN. Whilst the schools recognise that they have the responsibility in the first instance to provide for each pupil, a small number of pupils are extremely complex and challenging, and schools do not have the professional skills of psychologists, or therapists. As the needs of such complex pupils go unmet by additional input from services outside the school, the impact on other pupils can be considerable. In some areas, schools do not receive support from the Education Authority for pupils with behavioural difficulties without a report from the educational psychology service. There are considerable waiting times for appointments'.[90]

Over 90% of responses to our school staff survey highlighted the excessive amount of paperwork and unnecessary bureaucracy and duplication associated with meeting the needs of pupils with SEN. Some respondents, who took part in the school survey, also specifically highlighted the issue of duplication of information provided by school staff for the statementing process.

Furthermore, from our engagements with school leaders, it is clear that the majority of statements of special educational needs for pupils in their schools remain unchanged. Principals questioned the effective use of time spent by school staff on preparing for and facilitating annual review meetings. A number of school leaders also raised the issue of the cost effectiveness of this process if statements in general do not need to be changed. This issue is also referenced in a report on SEN by the NIAO (2017) which stated that 'a number of schools (that we) visited felt that the annual review process was bureaucratic, time consuming and ineffective'.[91]

[86] *Northern Ireland Audit Office. (2017) Special Educational Needs.*
[87] *As above.*
[88] *As above.*
[89] *European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. (2013) Organisation of Provision to Support Inclusive Education – Literature Review.*
[90] *The Education and Training Inspectorate (2019) Report of a Survey of Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools.*
[91] *Northern Ireland Audit Office. (2017) Special Educational Needs.*

From our engagements with principals and SENCos during visits made to a range of settings and from comments made by respondents in the school survey, we note that these professionals also report the increased and often excessive workload attached to the role of SENCo (many of whom have full-time teaching commitments). Furthermore, comments made by a number of principals and SENCos during visits to schools indicate that in some cases the principal has to assist the SENCo due to excessive workload. Added to that are very real concerns from staff in a number of schools who anticipate an increasing workload arising from the 2016 SEND Act.

Recommendations: Bureaucratic Burden

Based on the findings and upholding the unique dignity and value of every child and young person, the CCMS working group recommends the following:

1. A review of the processes for the identification, assessment and record-keeping associated with SEN to ensure that these are streamlined and that the information on pupils is shared and used more efficiently between partnership agencies.

2. A review of the process leading to a statement of special educational needs to ensure a timely and appropriate response to the needs of children.

7.5 Specialist Provision/Inclusion

Principles of Inclusion and Specialist Provision

The Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) recognised the mainstream classroom as the most appropriate setting in which to make provision for many children with SEN. Since then, the aspiration to and the meaning of inclusive education has evolved with significant impact on practice.[92]

Article 24 UNCRPD (2006) requires countries in Europe to ensure children with disabilities can access a free high-quality inclusive education system in their own communities during all phases of their learner journey. Additionally, Article 24 states that children and young people with disabilities are entitled to have the support that they require in order for them to reach their potential within mainstream education. Provision in the form of individualised programmes of support should impact positively on their educational outcomes and social development, 'consistent with the goal of full inclusion'.[93]

The working group has taken the concept of inclusion as being the fundamental principle that aims to overcome barriers to learning and 'a process aiming to respond to diversity; being concerned with the identification and removal of barriers; being about the presence, participation and achievement of all learners and involving a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or underachievement'[94] (Ainscow (2008) cited in EADSNE (2013).

The Department of Education in Northern Ireland (2006) cited in EADSNE (2013) acknowledges that the number of children with more 'profound and multiple learning disabilities'[95] is growing due to improvements in medicine. More children are also being identified with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and there are many more children being diagnosed on the autistic spectrum than before. The EADSNE (2013) has suggested that mainstream schools and the external providers of support will face issues whilst attempting to meet the needs of pupils with such complex needs and challenging behaviours. Additionally, the inclusion of pupils with more complex needs in mainstream settings has implications for not only the staff in schools but also 'for additional, external support and collaboration with wider services'.[96]

The World Health Organization in the WHO/World Bank report (2011) cited in EADSNE (2013) notes that many children with significant behavioural difficulties and those with other complex needs are still being educated in special classes/units within mainstream settings or in standalone special schools. One of the reasons for this being parental choice where parents believe that specialist settings are 'better equipped to meet their children's needs'[97] in terms of staff expertise and availability of other resources.

With the current drive towards inclusion, the EADSNE (2013) argues that consideration needs to be given to parental choice, the development of staff expertise especially for staff in specialist classes/units in mainstream, the deployment of specialist resources across special schools and specialist units in mainstream as well as the level of intervention for the children and young people accessing specialist provision. All of these factors should impact positively on the capacity of staff in mainstream settings to be able to meet the 'full range of diverse learner needs'.[98]

Ainscow (2007b) cited in EADSNE (2013) suggests that the special school is developing into a 'learning organisation' as it is 'continually expanding its capacity to create its future'.[99] He also suggests that principals in special schools have a significant role to play in ensuring that the 'needs, rights and opportunities of learners with disabilities are safeguarded' in mainstream settings'.[100]

Further information and research on practice in specialist provision/inclusion in other jurisdictions are outlined in Appendix **6**: Tables **1** and **2**.

---

[92] *European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. (2013) Organisation of Provision to Support Inclusive Education – Literature Review.*
[93] *As above.*
[94] *As above.*
[95] *As above.*
[96] *As above.*
[97] *As above.*
[98] *As above.*
[99] *As above.*
[100] *As above.*

The Local Context: Specialist Provision/Inclusion

The principle of inclusion has led to many more children with SEN being educated in mainstream classroom settings in Northern Ireland. A smaller number of children, those with more significant need, have their needs met within specialist settings that include specialist units in mainstream schools or special schools that stand alone from mainstream schools. That landscape of provision can be summarised as follows:

The annual school census (October 2018) refers to the following types of units in mainstream schools:

- LSCLS – Learning Support

- LSCAS – Autism Specific

- LSCPH – Partial Hearing

- LSCPD – Physical Disability

- LSCSL – Speech and Language.

Other types of specialist provision may include:

- Nurture Units – usually within a mainstream primary school setting.

- Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) centres and other Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) centres which facilitate short-term and longer-term placements for children and young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Another form of specialist provision is provided by stand-alone special schools. A special school is a controlled, maintained or voluntary school which is specially organised to provide education for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are placed in special schools by the Education Authority according to their assessed need. There is one such school, out of the 40 listed by the Education Authority, in the Catholic maintained sector, St Gerard's School and Special Services, Belfast.

The working group engaged with or visited 13 specialist providers across a range of settings in Northern Ireland as outlined in Appendix **9** where it was made clear that within the concept and commitment to presumed inclusion there would be a continuing need for specialist provision. Mainstream staff value the role of the special schools as centres of professional expertise. They view them as a rich source for staff professional development and also see the potential for increased access to specialist resources for pupils with SEN in specialist units within mainstream settings or other classes in mainstream. Importantly, they place value on the ability of special schools to work with 'different stakeholders in order to maintain a continuity of services for learners with disabilities while also developing their own roles in relation to mainstream settings'[101] and increase the capacity of mainstream schools to be able to cater for the wide range of diverse special needs.[102] However, staff in mainstream settings, including those working in specialist units, also stated that they believe there is still a need to further develop partnership working with staff in special schools. They indicated that limitations to this type of partnership working are due to the location of settings as well as funding to facilitate partnership working.

Furthermore, some principals believe that the pressures on the system have led to decisions being made to expedite placement rather than respond to the particular needs of the child. This has resulted in some children being placed in units without due consideration of their specific special educational needs or the needs of others in the unit/class. This is compounded when the criteria for placement in units are not applied consistently e.g. when pupils are placed with statements pending or when pupils are placed in a setting which does not meet their needs. The possible exceptions to this are the arrangements for Nurture, where placement is only made having carefully considered the needs of the child requiring the placement and the needs of the other children in that setting.

The geographical distribution and concentration of special schools and specialist units means that in some locations pupils are not able to access any specialisms at all within their locality, whilst in other areas access to a broader range of specialist providers is limited. The broad distribution of specialist provision as detailed in Appendix **8**: Maps **1–7** clearly shows a super concentration of provision around Belfast and the South East. This is in contrast to the limited similar provision that is made in the North and West.

Additionally, principals have identified that there are issues with the transition of pupils from settings in one phase to a similar quality of settings in the subsequent phase. This they link to there being more units in primary schools than there are units in post-primary settings, which is further exacerbated when no similar type of specialist provision exists in an area.

The distribution of specialist units and special schools serves to underscore a sense that the travelling distances for some pupils are so variable that in some cases it is beyond reasonable. Principals report that some children may have to travel anything up to 30 miles each way to access suitable provision.

School staff have also highlighted their general dissatisfaction with the physical condition of much of the accommodation that is devoted to SEN provision. Almost 70% of respondents to the school survey did not agree that there is adequate physical accommodation to meet the needs of all pupils with SEN in their schools. Engagements with staff also indicated that many specialist settings are under resourced in terms of the range of resources and suitable equipment required to make effective provision for children and young people with SEN.

Recommendations on Specialist Provision

Based on the findings and upholding the unique dignity and value of every child and young person, the CCMS working group recommends the following:

1. A review of existing provision to ensure an appropriate and equitable network of specialist provision, supported by clear criteria for establishing the local need for units.

2. Capital investment to support the broadening of access in fit for purpose school accommodation.

3. A commitment, expressed in policy and supported with appropriate resources, to the development of whole school approaches to nurture including the establishment of additional nurture units to ensure equitable access.

4. A more strategic approach to support the sharing of expertise from staff in special schools with professionals in other settings.

---

[101] *European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. (2013) Organisation of Provision to Support Inclusive Education – Literature Review.*
[102] *As above.*

7.6 Funding Special Educational Needs and Allocation of Resources

The Principles of Funding SEN

Much work has already been done by others to envision how 'financing and the processes linked to funding mechanisms'[103] as well as 'incentives in resourcing and support allocation'[104] might enhance and target funding to more effectively meet the needs of the increasing numbers of pupils with SEN as detailed in the headline statistics in Appendix **7**: Table **1**. Having evaluated a range of approaches across Europe, the EADSNE (2009) published a series of key principles with supporting indicators around funding for inclusive education. They argue that if funding arrangements are to be effective in delivering sustainable inclusion, then certain, key principles, indicators and prerequisites must first exist. These are summarised in Appendix **7**: Table **2**.

Further information and research on practice in terms of approaches to funding and resource allocation for pupils with SEN in other jurisdictions are outlined in Appendix **7**: Tables **3** and **4**.

The Local Context: Funding Special Educational Needs and Allocation of Resources

The number of pupils with SEN has increased by nearly 30,000 in the last decade and a half.[105] In 2019, the Department of Education reported that whilst there was a slight decrease by 250 in the overall number of pupils with SEN compared to the previous school year, there were still more than 18,000 pupils with a statement of SEN and almost 79,000 pupils in total with some form of SEN in 2018/19.[106] Almost 23% of the total school population in the same year had some form of SEN, meaning nearly one in every four pupils had SEN.[107] Additionally, the majority of schools surveyed indicated that they have been receiving more pupils than before with increased levels of SEN e.g. more pupils are presenting with co-morbidities and higher levels of needs in SEBD and Autism etc. This is in sharp

contrast to the Department of Education's Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (1998) which anticipated that only about two per cent of the school population should require a statement of SEN. There have been no corresponding changes to the either the quantum or the method of funding that would reflect this growing demand.

The Department of Finance (2017) cited in Northern Ireland Affairs Committee (2019) has also acknowledged that the increasing numbers of children with SEN has created resource, accommodation and other pressures in schools. They have estimated that 'demand for support creates £10 million of additional demand on the education budget each year'.[108] The House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee (2019) stated that the EA reported an increase of 4% in 'SEND related budget pressures between 2016–17 and 2017–18'[109] in an annual report. This committee also discussed how the £12.7 million overspend of the SEND budget was the largest chunk of EA's total £17.6 million overspend.[110] The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee (2019) highlighted how the situation has worsened and that the current budget cannot sustain the increase in identification of pupils with SEN in our schools.[111]

The NIAO (2017) reported that 'in 2015–16, SEN expenditure accounted for almost half of the EA block grant budget from the Department'.[112] Additionally, they indicated that EA reported that whilst SEN expenditure in mainstream schools included some costs associated with provision for pupils with SEN without statements, the main costs were linked to provision for pupils with statements.[113] The NIAO (2017) also highlighted that 70% of spend in mainstream schools was associated with the cost of SEN classroom assistants. In effect, the statementing process is limiting the funds available to support those pupils with SEN who do not have a statement, raising questions around equity of access to services and resources.

School practitioners tell us that current funding arrangements are not sufficient to meet the rising numbers of pupils with SEN and the increased level of need. An overwhelming majority of school staff who took part in the survey (97%) indicated there was inadequate financial support for effective SEN provision in their schools.

From our engagements with our school principals across a range of settings, it is clear that they have concerns about both the level of available 'in house' support and support from external agencies for all pupils with SEN including those pupils with SEN who do not have statements. Over 70% of respondents to our school staff survey indicated that they do not believe external agencies are able to offer the level of support that is required for pupils with SEN. Our principals also articulated that the lack of resources available 'in house' and from external agencies due to the deficit in funding in this area is having a detrimental effect on the ability of these pupils to reach their full potential.

Schools are not only dealing with very complex needs but also dealing with additional and significant social issues. Some staff in schools who completed the survey reported that many interventions have to be paid out of their school budget due to inadequate provision being available to meet the special needs of their pupils. Several schools have indicated they must buy in additional support from counselling services to support both parents and children. In the past schools tried to manage the situation within their budget. However, schools are no longer in a position to afford to buy in professional services. One school principal commented on the challenge of resourcing a nurture room which he described as extremely beneficial in terms of supporting the emotional needs of pupils:

> 'We have a growing number of pupils whose Special Educational Needs arise from SEBD. We set up a nurture room in November 2017 to support our most vulnerable children and paid for the resources out of our school budget. Now the nurture room has had to be withdrawn in only its infancy due to budgetary constraints. We would need a full-time teacher to enable us to offer pupils the additional and adequate support they require to meet their social, emotional and academic needs and the nurture they require to deal with their complex behavioural needs'.[114]

Witnesses, whose contributions were included in the report published by the House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee (2019) added that:

> 'Future budget allocations to the Department of Education should reflect the increasing number of children with Special Educational Needs and Disability in the Northern Ireland school system, so that these children can be identified and assessed at the earliest age possible and appropriate support can be put in place'.[115]

It is arguable too, that the failure to properly resource early intervention as referred to earlier in this paper could be disproportionately affecting those with SEN or those from particular communities where poverty is most concentrated.

In previous sections of this paper, we have discussed the need for a comprehensive review of the current system for SEN provision in Northern Ireland with recommendations which address the need:

• for an invest to save strategy to better support a consistent approach to early identification, assessment and provision for each child's special educational needs;

• for equity of access to preventative and compensatory programmes in schools and local communities (including nurture provision) for all pupils with SEN;

[103] Kyriazopoulou, M. and Weber, H. (editors). (2009) Development of a Set of Indicators – for Inclusive Education in Europe.

[104] As above.

[105] Doyle, S. (2018) Number of Pupils with Special Educational Needs Rises By 30,000.

[106] Department of Education (2019). Annual Enrolments at Schools and in Funded Preschool Education in Northern Ireland, 2018/19.

[107] As above.

[108] Department of Finance (2017) Briefing on Northern Ireland Budgetary Outlook 2018–20 cited in Northern Ireland Affairs Committee. (2019) Report of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee into Education Funding in Northern Ireland.

[109] Northern Ireland Affairs Committee. (2019) Report of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee into Education Funding in Northern Ireland.

[110] As above.

[111] As above.

[112] Northern Ireland Audit Office. (2017) Special Educational Needs.

[113] As above.

[114] Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS). (2019) Submission of Evidence to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee Inquiry into School Finance.

[115] Northern Ireland Affairs Committee. (2019) Report of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee into Education Funding in Northern Ireland.

- for equity of access to specialist provision in specialist settings (units within mainstream and special schools);

- for flexible deployment of resources at local level;

- to invest in remodelling of the workforce to ensure that staffing structures in schools and other partner services better address the mix of professional skills required to address the needs of pupils;

- to facilitate better partnership working at all levels;

- to reduce unnecessary duplication and excessive bureaucracy;

- to ensure staff in schools/external agencies benefit from TPL/CPD tailored to meet their own professional needs and both the specific and more general needs of all pupils with SEN in their care; and,

- for SENCos/Learning Support Co-ordinators to have adequate time to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

If all these issues are to be reviewed and addressed in such a way that school staff and external providers can adequately meet the needs of all pupils with SEN, it is essential that sufficient funding is earmarked. Thus, any review of SEN provision should seek to look at how effectively funding for SEN provision is spent currently, and, how it might be used differently. Additionally, given the range of existing evidence indicating a rise in the number of pupils with SEN and increasingly with more complex needs, any review of education spending must prioritise a level of funding that will meet their needs.

Recommendations: Funding Special Educational Needs and Allocation of Resources

Based on the findings and upholding the unique dignity and value of every child and young person, the CCMS working group recommends the following:

1. Prioritisation of the funding model for education to reflect 'New Decade, New Approach' (2020), to improve further the broad educational outcomes and the life chances of every child.

2. Funding models to be directed at the needs of all pupils with SEN and delegated into school budgets so that locally informed decisions can be made, prioritised and resourced.

3. Additional funding to facilitate and support TPL/CPD/capacity building, dedicated time and more effective partnership working.

4. An 'invest to save' strategy with adjustments to the age-weighted funding for each child to better support the development of meaningful early identification and early intervention strategies which in turn may reduce the likelihood of children progressing to subsequent stages of the Code of Practice.

5. Additional investment to facilitate equity of access to resources for all pupils with SEN including in house provision, specialist provision and services from external providers.

6. A review of spending on the administration and bureaucracy behind the access to services.

7.7 Legislation

The Principles of Effectively Legislating to Support SEN and Inclusion

We have previously referenced the importance of developing a vision for inclusive education which will ensure that children with SEN 'are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers'.[116] The EASNIE (2015) maintains that in order for this vision to be realised, legislation focusing on developing inclusive education systems must be supported by a strong commitment to ensuring every child and young person has equity of access to an inclusive education system and 'educational opportunities'.[117]

The EASNIE (2015) also emphasizes that any policy on inclusive education systems needs to set out a clear vision and strategy 'as an approach for improving the educational opportunities'[118] of all children and young people. Additionally, this agency argues that the policy should address the need for all partners to share responsibility for the implementation of any inclusive education system for it to work effectively.[119]

Furthermore, the EASNIE (2015) points to the need for equity, raising achievements for all partners including children and their families, accessibility and effectiveness and efficiency to be the guiding principles which support the implementation of 'structures and procedures within inclusive education systems'.[120]

The Local Context: Legislation

The context in which schools are working to make provision for pupils with special educational needs is underpinned by a range of legislation including the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996, the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

In addition, provision for SEN has been supported by the 1998 Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs which provided guidelines to schools, boards and health and social services. The introduction of the Education (NI) Order 1996 and the 1998 Code of Practice were warmly welcomed by schools and proved transformational in identifying, assessing and making provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Alongside this important legislation, there has been a gradual move towards inclusive education as a result of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC,1990), ratified by the government (UK) in 1991[121] and later the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006) ratified by the Government (UK) in 2009.[122] The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006) is an international human rights treaty which protects the rights of people with disabilities. As referred to earlier, Article 24 of this treaty outlines the right of persons with disabilities to an inclusive education system.[123]

The local policy context will be shaped by the duties imposed by the Children's Services Co-operation Act (NI) 2015. This Act requires the NI Executive to 'adopt a strategy to improve the well-being of children and young people'[124] which complies with the obligations set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) when determining children's well-being. 'The Act defines the well-being of children and young people against eight characteristics including:

- physical and mental health;

- living in safety and with stability;

- learning and achievement;

- economic and environmental well-being;

- the enjoyment of play and leisure;

- living in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted;

- the making by children and young people of a positive contribution to society; and,

- living in a society which respects their rights'.[125]

---

[116] *European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. (2015) Agency Position on Inclusive Education Systems.*
[117] *As above.*
[118] *As above.*
[119] *As above.*
[120] *As above.*
[121] *Every Child Protected Against Trafficking (ECPAT). (2020) United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.*
[122] *Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY). (2020) Too Little Too Late.*
[123] *As above.*
[124] *Department of Education (2020) Children and Young People.*
[125] *As above.*

Critically for our schools, it is the Department of Education that has lead responsibility for the development of the new (draft) Children and Young People's Strategy 2019 – 2029, a draft of which was published for consultation in December 2019.

This draft strategy clearly sets out a laudable government ambition 'to work together to improve the well-being of all children and young people in Northern Ireland - delivering positive long lasting outcomes'.[126] The strategy aims to achieve the best possible outcomes for all children and young people in line with each of the characteristics set out in the Children's Services Co-operation Act NI (2015).[127]

The Department of Education (2020) highlights how both the (draft) Programme for Government (PfG) and the Children's Services Co-operation Act are important parts of the legislative framework.[128] One of the strategic outcomes in the (PfG) is 'we give our children the best start in life'.[129] Effective implementation of the Children and Young People's Strategy should support delivery of this outcome.
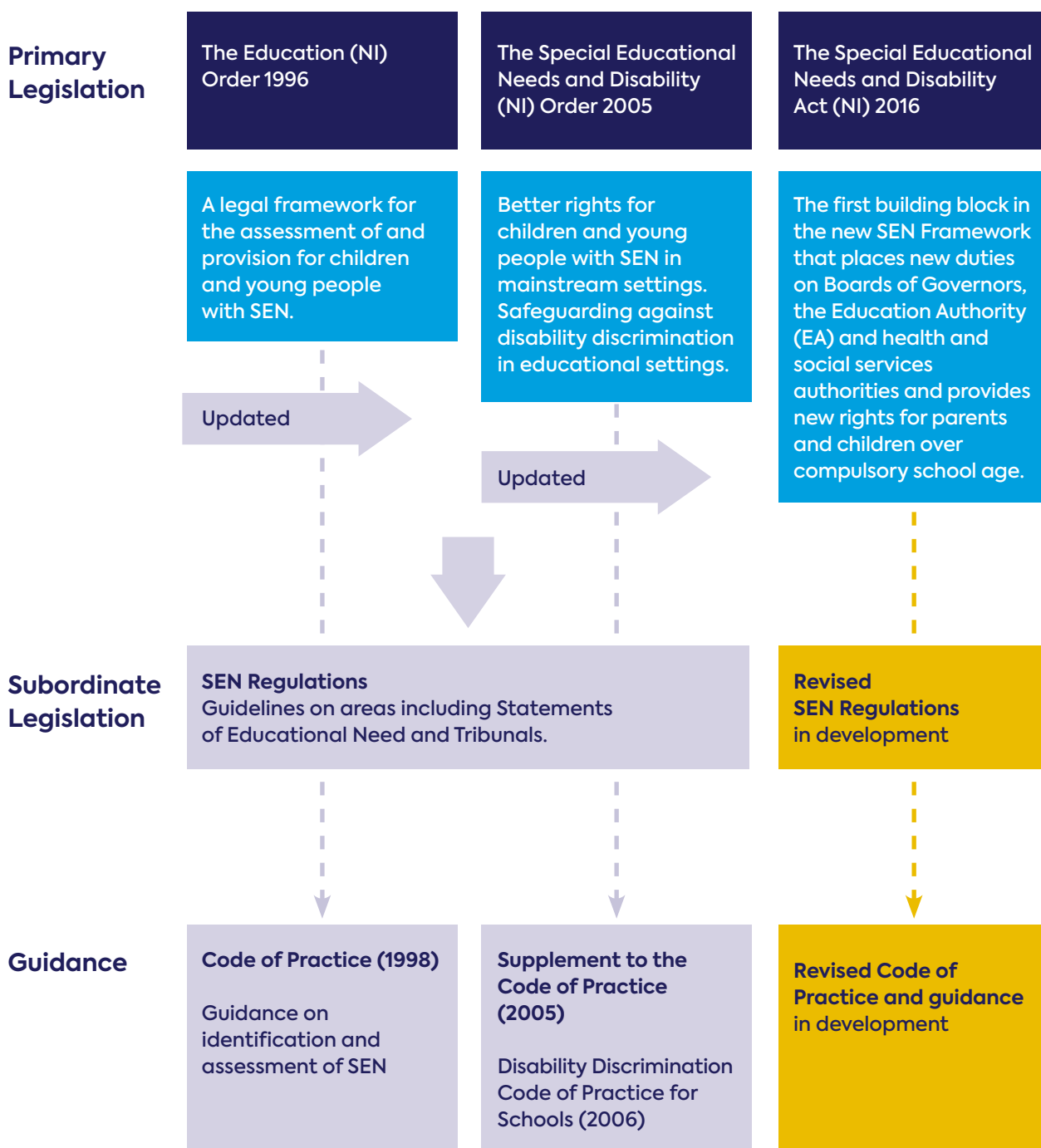
Current legislation and a variety of existing policies, programmes and services in Northern Ireland are designed to meet the needs of children and young people with SEN and improve their life chances and educational outcomes. Other regulations and guidance are under development.

Recommendations: Legislation

Based on the findings and upholding the unique dignity and value of every child and young person, the CCMS working group recommends the following:

1. Continued prioritisation of high quality provision for SEN as set out in the 'New Decade, New Approach' deal (2020).

2. Legislation that directs and supports inclusive education systems, embedding a fundamental commitment to every child and young person's right to inclusive and equitable educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers.

3. Full implementation of the Children's Services Co-operation Act (NI).

Overview of Legislation and Policy (SEN) in Northern Ireland [130]

Primary Legislation

The Education (NI) Order 1996

A legal framework for the assessment of and provision for children and young people with SEN.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005

Better rights for children and young people with SEN in mainstream settings. Safeguarding against disability discrimination in educational settings.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (NI) 2016

The first building block in the new SEN Framework that places new duties on Boards of Governors, the Education Authority (EA) and health and social services authorities and provides new rights for parents and children over compulsory school age.

Updated

Updated

Subordinate Legislation

SEN Regulations
Guidelines on areas including Statements of Educational Need and Tribunals.

Revised SEN Regulations in development

Guidance

Code of Practice (1998)

Guidance on identification and assessment of SEN

Supplement to the Code of Practice (2005)

Disability Discrimination Code of Practice for Schools (2006)

Revised Code of Practice and guidance in development

---

[126] *Department of Education (2020) Children and Young People.*
[127] *As above.*
[128] *As above.*
[129] *As above.*
[130] *Perry. C. (2015) SEN Legislation and Policy in Northern Ireland.*

8. Conclusion

The working group recognises that it is easier to make untested suggestions as to how things might be improved than to turn suggestions into reality. We must ensure that in shining a light on one part of the service, in this case the provision for children with special educational needs, that we do not overlook the need for an integrated, service wide review of all other aspects of education.

That said, the working group would offer a challenge to us all: if we are to be truly inclusive, catering for every child's needs, then we must adopt an approach that is less formulaic and more centred on meeting the needs of every child including those with special educational needs. We must challenge ourselves to develop a system of education built around the needs of children. We must have compassion for those in our society with most needs and ensure that we make provision for those children and families that are the most vulnerable.

In developing a new approach to the provision for children with SEN we must move away from a culture where everything must be fought for to one which assumes service as a right.

We would make one final observation. There is little in this paper that could be claimed to be new or innovative thinking; the point being, that these arguments have been made time and time again by researchers, by education authorities, through government reviews and by our own school professionals. It is now time to make further progress in realising positive outcomes for our CCMS schools. A strong leadership culture needs to be developed at all levels to ensure that our recommendations for improvement in SEN provision are implemented and sustained. This will also ensure that these improvements are owned by everyone and are embedded in our education system.

*This is a call
for change –
a time for action.*

Membership of the CCMS SEN Working Group

3 Nursery Schools

- Una Barr, Cathedral Nursery School, Belfast
- Clare McAllister, St. Michael's Nursery School, Belfast
- Geraldine Gorman, St. Peter's Nursery School, Belfast

8 Primary Schools

- Garry Matthewson, Holy Family Primary School, Derry
- Chris Mc Cambridge, St. Colman's Primary School, Lisburn
- Michelle Deery, Holy Child Primary School, Belfast
- Corinne Coyle, St. Mary's Primary School, Draperstown
- Mary Donnelly, St. Colman's Primary School, Kilkeel
- Kevin Devlin, St. Patrick's Primary School, Dungannon
- Susan Haughey, St. Dympna's Primary School, Dromore
- Roisin Treacy, St. Joseph's Primary School, Antrim

4 Post Primary Schools

- Debbie Mc Givern, All Saints College, Belfast
- Orla Donnelly, Blessed Trinity College, Belfast
- Ciara Deane, St. Joseph's Boys' School, Derry
- Rosemary Lavery, Lismore Comprehensive School, Craigavon

1 Special School

- Noleen Hawkins, St. Gerard's School and Support Services

CCMS

- Geraldine Duffy, CCMS
- Mary O'Neill, CCMS
- Carole Swann, CCMS

CCMS
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

www.onlineccms.com

Appendix 2: Survey Findings

Table 1: Summary of Responses to a Survey of Catholic maintained schools: School Staff Survey - Early Intervention
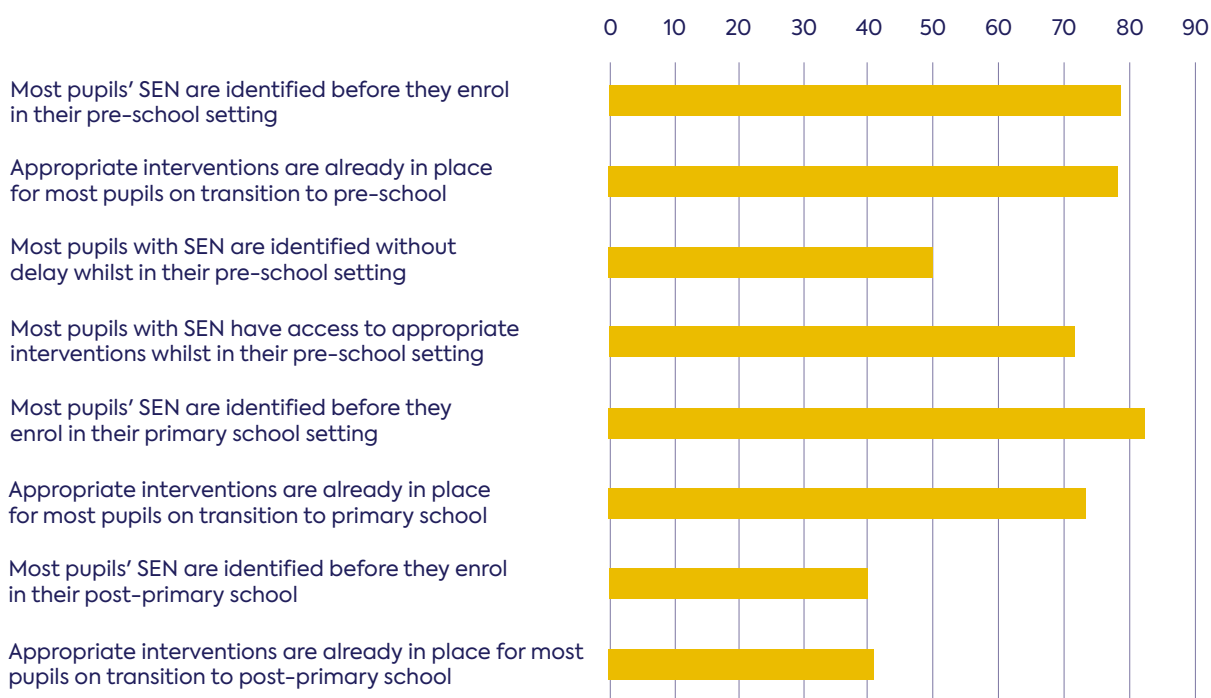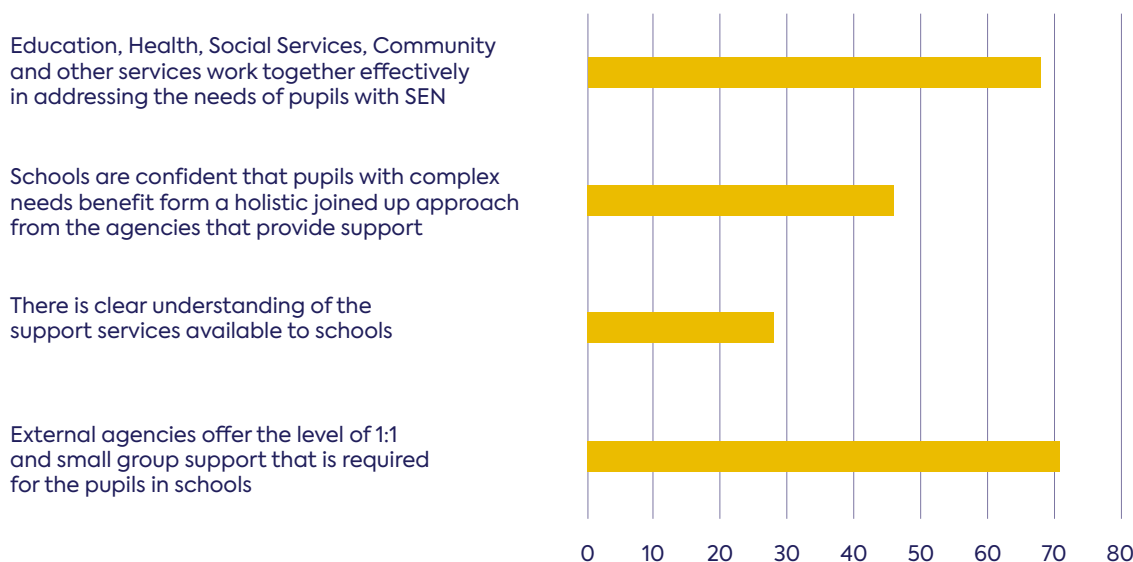
% of respondents who did not agree that:

	Value
Most pupils' SEN are identified before they enrol in their pre-school setting	~78
Appropriate interventions are already in place for most pupils on transition to pre-school	~78
Most pupils with SEN are identified without delay whilst in their pre-school setting	~51
Most pupils with SEN have access to appropriate interventions whilst in their pre-school setting	~72
Most pupils' SEN are identified before they enrol in their primary school setting	~83
Appropriate interventions are already in place for most pupils on transition to primary school	~74
Most pupils' SEN are identified before they enrol in their post-primary school	~42
Appropriate interventions are already in place for most pupils on transition to post-primary school	~43

(Axis: 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90)

Table 2: Summary of Responses to a Survey of Catholic maintained schools: School Staff Survey - Partnership Working

% who did not agree that:

	Value
Education, Health, Social Services, Community and other services work together effectively in addressing the needs of pupils with SEN	~68
Schools are confident that pupils with complex needs benefit form a holistic joined up approach from the agencies that provide support	~46
There is clear understanding of the support services available to schools	~28
External agencies offer the level of 1:1 and small group support that is required for the pupils in schools	~71

(Axis: 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80)

Appendix 3: Early Intervention – Other Jurisdictions

Table 1: Findings from Literature Reviews on Early Intervention in Finland	
	Government Level
	• Promotion of universal services for all children and families, regardless of their geographical or economic background.
	• Approaches to early intervention are backed up by legislation and policy 'that encourage quality and equity'.[131]
	System Level
	• Emphasis on ensuring that all staff working within the early years sector are trained to a high standard.[132]
	• Emphasis on strong partnerships with parents to ensure that all children have the best start in life.[133]
	• Emphasis on viable childcare options where one parent can stay at home until the youngest child in the family is three years old. A childcare allowance is available for unpaid leave.[134]
	Local Level
Finnish Model of Early Intervention	• Whole family's wellbeing is assessed at prenatal clinics and this service has close links to maternity clinics and hospitals. Multi-disciplinary teams assess developmental risks.[135]
	• Visits made to the home by the midwife/nurse after the baby's birth.[136]
	• Nine appointments at child health clinics before the age of 1 years old and visits after the age of 1 - every 6/12 months until school age.[137]
	• School nurse sees all children once a year.[138]
	• Comprehensive medical check-ups (mental health and physical health) provided in years one, five and eight of school.[139]
	• 'Social and health services'[140] work in close partnership with school staff.
	• Transition meetings involving parents, pre-school and primary school staff.[141]
	• Identification of a child's SEN usually involves the parent and teacher and provision is agreed with the child, parent, SEN teacher and school psychologist (where available).[142]
	• Schools have access to a SEN teacher who works with the class teacher on the identification of pupils' SEN and helps plan the support to be provided.[143]
	• The Student Welfare group (including school staff, an educational psychologist, the SEN teacher, school nurse and social worker) meets regularly e.g. monthly to monitor progress of pupils with SEN.[144]
	• Comprehensive schools have multi-agency care groups who meet regularly to discuss pupils' progress and plan intervention.[145]

[131] *Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD0. (2013) Education Policy Outlook: Finland.*
[132] *Perry, C. and Wilson, J. (2015) Special Education Needs in Finland.*
[133] *National Children's Bureau Northern Ireland (2013) Early Intervention Study Visit to Finland.*
[134] *As above.*
[135] *Perry, C. and Wilson, J. (2015) Special Education Needs in Finland.*
[136] *National Children's Bureau Northern Ireland (2013) Early Intervention Study Visit to Finland.*
[137] *As above.*
[138] *As above.*
[139] *As above.*
[140] *Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD0. (2013) Education Policy Outlook: Finland.*
[141] *Perry, C. and Wilson, J. (2015) Special Education Needs in Finland.*
[142] *As above.*
[143] *As above.*
[144] *As above.*
[145] *As above.*

Appendix 3: Early Intervention – Other Jurisdictions

Table 2: Findings from a Study Visit to Glasgow City Council and Literature Reviews: Approaches to Early Intervention

Glasgow City Council: Approaches to Early Intervention	
	Before Pre-School
	• NHS Staff are required (in legislation) to inform the Local Education Authority in all cases where a child (under 3 years old) has been identified with a disability.[146]
	• Health and development reviews in first year plus 13/15 months and 27/30 months.[147]
	Pre-School
	• The Health Visitor is the Named Person for all children in pre-school settings, ensuring a collaborative approach to meeting their needs.[148]
	• Early Years staff have a responsibility to inform the Health Visitor if they have a concern about the child's wellbeing.[149]
	• Early Years staff work with the Named Person to assess and make provision for a child's additional needs in conjunction with parents and external agencies.[150]
	• If appropriate and agreed, a member of the Early Years staff can become the lead professional for a child with additional needs.[151]
	• The educational psychologist has dual responsibilities in schools, playing a key role in the early assessment of pupils with special needs as well as supporting school staff with intervention strategies/capacity building.
	• Clear communication between the midwife/health visitor and school nurse as the child transitions to pre-school and then from pre-school to primary school.
	• Nurture corners/whole school approaches to nurture.
	Primary and Post-Primary School
	• The Named Person (e.g. the head teacher, deputy head teacher or principal teacher of pupil support at post-primary level) leads on this responsibility.[152]
	• Responsibility for early identification/intervention starts in the classroom with the class teacher (supported by other staff). The GIRFEC approach is used.[153]
	• The Named Person will liaise with other professionals where additional support from external agencies is required. The belief is that it is vital that children/young people are supported at the earliest possible stage.[154]
	• Emphasis on being responsive to the concerns of the child and the parents/carers who are fully involved in the assessment process.[155]
	• The role of the school nurse includes identifying where support is needed and working with multi-disciplinary teams (involving families, health and education professionals) to ensure that intervention is put in place for those children and families who need it (GIRFEC approach).
	• Nurture units in many primary schools and whole school approaches to nurture in primary and post-primary schools. Nurture bases in post-primary settings.

---

[146] *Glasgow City Council (2016) Every Child is Included and Supported: Getting it Right in Glasgow, the Nurturing City Policy Guidelines.*
[147] *Royal College of Nursing (2010) Health Visiting.*
[148] *Glasgow City Council (2016) Every Child is Included and Supported: Getting it Right in Glasgow, the Nurturing City Policy Guidelines.*
[149] *As above.*
[150] *As above.*
[151] *As above.*
[152] *Glasgow City Council (2016) Every Child is Included and Supported: Getting it Right in Glasgow, the Nurturing City Policy Guidelines.*
[153] *As above.*
[154] *As above.*
[155] *As above.*

Appendix 4: Partnership Working – Other Jurisdictions

Table 1: Findings from a Study Visit to Glasgow City Council and Literature Reviews: Partnership Working **Getting It Right For Every Child: The GIRFEC Approach**	
Partnership Working Glasgow City Council	**Government Level** • Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) - Child centred vision. • Education, Finance and Health collaborate closely on all aspects of the GIRFEC approach. • Legislation and guidance are developed to be balanced and consistent with all other policy areas (joined up thinking). **System Level: Glasgow City Council Oversees All Aspects of Education in the Glasgow Area** • Persistent drive of the Executive Director in improving educational outcomes for all children. • Buy in from SLT in Glasgow City Council – Top Down/Bottom Up approach with regard to GIRFEC. • Finance. • Remodelling of the Workforce. Roles and responsibilities of staff and partners are outlined in policy and clearly understood e.g. educational psychologists/health visitors/EAL professionals etc. • Deployment of the Workforce. • Continuous Professional Development (CPD). • Maintenance of school buildings etc. **Local/School Level: GIRFEC Approach** • Holistic approach where all professionals use their expertise in assessing/intervening to support the child/young person. All professionals work together to ensure intervention is effective. Joined up thinking at local level. • School staff work with parents and external partners to assess and meet pupils' needs. • Additional support is based on a collaborative assessment of needs/planned intervention. Partner services engage with education services to provide support for pupils.[156] • A named person takes lead responsibility in co-ordinating assessment/intervention. • School staff can seek advice about pupils that they have concerns about from other professionals at Staged Intervention and Inclusion Meetings (SIIM)[157] which usually take place once a month. Professionals in attendance might include head teachers, an educational psychologist, ASL Co-ordinators, and a LIG Team (A LIG is a Local Improvement Group, i.e. a grouping of schools all sitting in the one Learning Community in the city).[158] • LC - JST Meetings - 'Learning Community - Joint Support Team Meetings'[159] usually take place once a month – 'a forum for both multi-agency advice and decision-making regarding support for a child or young person's needs'.[160] • CIGs – City Inclusion Meetings – are held to consider 'alternative pathways'[161] for pupils who require specialist provision. Strong emphasis on pupil/parental involvement – consideration of the wishes of pupils and parents.[162]

---

[156] *Glasgow City Council (2016) Every Child is Included and Supported: Getting it Right in Glasgow, the Nurturing City Policy Guidelines.*
[157] *Glasgow City Council (2015) Every Child is Included and Supported: Getting it Right in Glasgow, the Nurturing City Additional Support for Learning Network News.*
[158] *As above.*
[159] *Glasgow City Council (2016) Every Child is Included and Supported: Getting it Right in Glasgow, the Nurturing City Policy Guidelines.*
[160] *As above.*
[161] *Glasgow City Council (2015) Every Child is Included and Supported: Getting it Right in Glasgow, the Nurturing City Additional Support for Learning Network News.*
[162] *As above.*

Appendix 4: Partnership Working – Other Jurisdictions

Table 2: Findings from Literature Reviews on the Education System in Finland: Partnership Working	
Partnership Working: Finland	**Government Level** • The Finnish government has reformed the structure of the municipalities to ensure that pupils have access to 'high quality and equitable education services'.[163]
	System Level • The education system in Finland is decentralised. Local authorities (municipalities) make decisions on how funding for special educational needs is distributed and how the curriculum is planned and implemented.[164] • Network of clinics where children's social, mental and physical development is assessed (available for children before pre-school age). Multi-disciplinary teams work together to 'identify development risks'.[165]
	Local/School Level • Transition meetings (the child, parent, pre-school and primary school staff).[166] • Parent and teacher observations used to decide if children/young people with SEN require support.[167] • Each school has access to a 'special education teacher'.[168] The SEN teacher and class teacher collaborate to provide support. The SEN teacher and class teacher may co-teach or the SEN teacher may provide support for individual pupils with SEN or small groups of pupils with SEN.[169] • Monthly or weekly 'Student Welfare Group'[170] meetings to share information on pupils and monitor progress made on their IEPs (the principal, class teacher, SEN teacher, student advisor, school nurse, school psychologist and social worker may attend).[171] • Team approach to accessing relevant services for pupils with special educational needs after consultation with stakeholders e.g. the parent, the SEN teacher and the school psychologist.[172] • Multi-agency care groups in comprehensive schools (e.g. the principal, SEN teacher, school nurse, school psychologist, social worker, class teacher and parents) meet to discuss progress made by pupils.[173]

[163] *Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). (2013) Education Policy Outlook: Finland.*

[164] *Perry, C. and Wilson, J. (2015) Special Education Needs in Finland.*

[165] *As above.*

[166] *As above.*

[167] *As above.*

[168] *Takala, M., Pirttimaa, R., Tormanen, M. (2009) Inclusive Special Education: The Role of Special Education Teachers in Finland cited in Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). (2013) Education Policy Outlook: Finland.*

[169] *Perry, C. and Wilson, J. (2015) Special Education Needs in Finland.*

[170] *As above.*

[171] *As above.*

[172] *As above.*

[173] *As above.*

Appendix 5: Investing in People/Bureaucracy – Other Jurisdictions

Table 1: Findings from a Study Visit to Glasgow City Council and Literature Reviews: Investing in People	
Getting It Right For Every Child: The GIRFEC Approach	
Investing in People: Glasgow City Council	• Clear direction on continuous professional learning based on Local Authority policy engaging all partners in an 'ethos of inclusion'[174] across Glasgow city. • Commitment to continuous professional development for staff- positive impact on pupil outcomes and attainment.[175] • Clear roles and responsibilities for teachers, middle leaders, head teachers, educational psychologists and education authority staff with an emphasis on the part all play in identification, assessment and staged intervention.[176] • Expectation that teachers and ASL assistants 'evaluate their own professional development'[177] and access relevant CPD to ensure that they have the necessary skills to support pupils with SEN. • Staff in specialist settings are expected to contribute to 'multi-agency training'[178] and training for colleagues across Glasgow. • Teachers must do 35 hours of accredited CPD in each academic year (can include reading time). • ASL assistants do not have to have qualifications to be appointed to the role but are expected to avail of relevant CPD. • Strong focus on the health and well-being of staff and capacity building - dedicated planning, preparation and assessment time for teachers (2.5 hours per week).

Table 2: Findings from Literature Reviews on the Education System in Finland: Investing in People	
Investing in People: Finland	• The Osaava Programme (2010-16) is a programme for continuing professional development which aims to ensure that all staff in schools have access to systematic CPD. The emphasis is on the continuous development of the skill set of staff, based on identified needs in schools.[179]

Table 3: Findings from a Study Visit to Glasgow City Council: Bureaucracy:	
Getting It Right For Every Child: The GIRFEC Approach	
Bureaucracy in Glasgow City Council	• Appears to still be a significant amount of administration in relation to SEN. • All teachers get 2.5 hours each week dedicated to planning and preparation time. • Educational psychologists are prepared to accept school assessments (avoiding duplication). • Educational psychologists have dedicated time for sharing their expertise in schools (50% assessment/50% advisory work). • Partners meet regularly at Staged Intervention and Inclusion Meetings (SIIMs) and Learning Community – Joint Support Team (LC- JST) meetings to share information on pupils with special educational needs and agree/review provision for these pupils.

---

[174] *Glasgow City Council. (2016) Every Child is Included and Supported: Getting it Right in Glasgow, the Nurturing City Policy Guidelines.*
[175] *As above.*
[176] *As above.*
[177] *As above.*
[178] *As above.*
[179] *Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). (2013) Education Policy Outlook: Finland.*

Appendix 6: Specialist Provision/Inclusion — Other Jurisdictions

Table 1: Findings from a Study Visit to Glasgow City Council: Specialist Provision/Inclusion	

Approaches to Support Inclusion in Glasgow City Council	• Vision — towards a nurturing city developed in 2012.
	• Emphasis is on presumed inclusion and inclusive practices in mainstream settings.
	• Emphasis on an inclusive ethos and climate in the learning environment.
	• Standalone special schools and specialist units within mainstream (as in NI).
	• Widespread promotion of nurture as a whole school approach with an expectation that staff and partners fully understand its core principles.
	• Growth of nurture corners, nurture units/whole school approaches to nurture with successful outcomes.
	  – 20 nurture corners in Early Years.
	  – 68 nurture groups in Primary settings.
	  – 14 nurture bases in Post-Primary settings (March 2019).[180]

Table 2: Findings from Engagements with Principals in Schools in Ireland plus Literature Reviews: Supporting Inclusion in Ireland/Specialist Provision	

Approaches to Support Inclusion in Ireland	• The Government is committed to meeting the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs in inclusive environments.
	• Allocation of SEN teachers and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) for mainstream settings who provide in class/withdrawal support for pupils with SEN.[181]
	• Allocation of SEN teachers and SNAs for special classes in mainstream settings and special schools.[182]
	• Emphasis on:
	  – deploying resources as soon as possible in line with the needs of pupils rather than having to wait for a diagnosis.[183]
	  – moving away from unnecessary labelling of children.[184]
	  – schools having more autonomy on how resources are used to meet the needs of pupils with SEN.[185]
	  – reducing the bureaucratic burden on schools with regard to the completion and submission of assessments.[186]

---

[180] *Glasgow Psychology Service. (2019) Special Educational Needs Provision and Nurture Provision in Glasgow.*
[181] *Department of Education and Skills. (2019) Record investment in Education and Skills with hundreds of new teachers and more than 1,000 additional special needs assistants.*
[182] *As Above.*
[183] *Department of Education and Skills. (2017) New Resource Teaching Allocation Model Delivery for Primary Students with Special Educational Needs.*
[184] *As above.*
[185] *As above.*
[186] *As above.*

Appendix 6: Specialist Provision/Inclusion – Other Jurisdictions

Table 3: Findings from Literature Reviews: Approaches to Specialist Provision in Finland	
Approaches to Specialist Provision in Finland	• Finland has a relatively high percentage of pupils receiving support for their special needs (approximately 30%).[187] This is thought to be due to an emphasis on early identification/intervention. • The Government is committed to inclusion. Municipalities/schools must try to include pupils with SEN in mainstream settings. This is necessary before consideration will be given to educating pupils with SEN in special classes or a special school.[188] • Students in mainstream settings can access part-time temporary specialist provision e.g. students have access to specialist provision for up to two hours each week for up to a total of ten weeks from a SEN teacher.[189] • Finland has 'six state-owned special basic schools, primarily intended for young people with hearing or visual impairments or with a physical or other impairment'.[190] • Finland has 'seven separate state owned vocational special schools intended for students with the most severe disabilities or chronic illnesses'.[191] • Special schools act as centres of excellence providing expertise to other schools.

---

[187] *Graham, L.J, Jahnukainen, M. (2011). Wherefore art thou, inclusion? Analysing the development of inclusive education in New South Wales, Alberta and Finland cited in Perry, C, Wilson, J, 2015 Special Educational Needs in Finland.*
[188] *Perry, C, Wilson, J. (2015) Special Educational Needs in Finland.*
[189] *As above.*
[190] *As above.*
[191] *As above.*

Appendix 7: Funding Special Educational Needs and Allocation of Resources – Other Jurisdictions

Table 1: Findings from Literature Reviews: The Trends in Numbers of Pupils with SEN in Northern Ireland

Headline Statistics

- 'The number of children with special educational needs in schools has risen by almost 30,000 in a decade and a half'.[192]

- 'Almost one in every four pupils now has SEN, with a handful of schools educating 200 or more children'.[193]

- There were almost 50,300 pupils with a special educational need, of whom nearly 11,000 had statements, in 2003/04. By 2018/19, this had risen to almost 79,000 pupils which equates to 22.8% of the total school population. Of these 79,000 pupils, more than 18,000 of them had an educational statement (Stage 5 of Code of Practice).[194]

- Almost 6,000 pupils were enrolled in 39 special schools in 2018/19. Furthermore, more than 1,900 pupils had placements in learning support centres in 94 schools.[195]

- 'Pupils with special educational needs are increasingly being educated in mainstream schools. In 2003/04, 39.6% of statemented pupils and 9.8% of pupils with any needs attended special schools. In 2018/19 the corresponding figures have dropped to 30.3% and 7.8% respectively'.[196]

---

[192] *Doyle, S. (2018) Number of Pupils with Special Educational Needs Rises By 30,000.*
[193] *As above.*
[194] *Department of Education (2019) Annual Enrolments at Schools and in Funded Pre-School Education in Northern Ireland, 2018/19.*
[195] *As above.*
[196] *As above.*

Appendix 7: Funding Special Educational Needs and Allocation of Resources – Other Jurisdictions

Table 2: Findings from Literature Reviews: Summary of a Set of Indicators for a Finance Policy which Supports Inclusive Education (Europe)[197]	
Finance policy supports inclusive education.	• Governments to provide sufficient funding so all pupils can have access to an inclusive education in their local area. • Funding should be child centred – based on pupils' needs, interests and strengths. • Allocation of basic funding for schools to enable them to meet the needs of all pupils. • Criteria to be established for different levels of additional funding for pupils with SEN.
Finance policy is based on special educational needs.	• The educational system is designed around the needs of the pupil, rather than pupils having to fit into an education system. • The policy is based on being able to make provision for pupils with SEN when required rather than having to wait on unnecessary categorisation or labelling of pupils' special needs. • Funding is available for early identification of pupils with SEN and early intervention programmes. Early identification/intervention needs to be available to pupils/young people as soon as they present with difficulties (at any stage of their educational journey). • Appropriate funding is allocated for identification and provision throughout the pupil's/young person's educational journey including transition from one phase to another. • The views of pupils and parents are considered during the identification and intervention processes. • Funding is available for technology which can help meet pupils' special educational needs and develop their independence. • Equitable distribution of resources for pupils with SEN (considering e.g. age, disability, ethnicity, religion, gender, socioeconomic status and locality). • The requirements for inter-sectoral partnership working are agreed and set out clearly.
Finance policy enables resources to be deployed effectively, efficiently and flexibly in response to needs.	• There are clear rules around how funding can be managed effectively to ensure that quality provision is available for all pupils. • Rules and procedures for the allocation of resources are clear for all partners (including parents). • Whilst relevant resources are centralised (avoiding unnecessary duplication), there is also flexibility with regard to deployment of resources at local/school level. • Funding available for early intervention/preventative programmes is accessible when required.
Finance policy fully supports necessary inter-sectoral partnership working.	• Efficient and effective partnership working at government, system and local level. • An effective support service with appropriately trained professionals is available to meet the needs of all pupils with SEN in inclusive settings. • Adequate funding is available to cover the cost of essential networking for all partners.

---

[197] *European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. (2009) Development of a Set of Indicators – for Inclusive Education in Europe.*

Appendix 7: Funding Special Educational Needs and Allocation of Resources – Other Jurisdictions

Table 3: Findings from a Study Visit to Glasgow City Council and Literature Reviews: Funding Provision for SEN in Glasgow, Scotland.	
Financing SEN	**Flexible Deployment of Resources**
• Emphasis on the best use of finances/resources so that children can be educated in their local area. • School staff are a central cost. • Workforce deployment (number of teaching staff/ ASL assistants determined by GCC in consultation with head teachers/Governors). • Each school has a budget allocation from GCC to cover running costs. • Pupil equity funding is allocated to schools based on entitlement to free school meals on a year to year basis. This funding is aimed at 'closing the poverty related attainment gap'.[198]	• Flexible deployment of pupil equity funding in settings to secure appropriate additional assistance for pupils on free school meals and others with needs. • Partnership working – through Staged Intervention and Inclusion Meetings (SIIM) and Learning Community - Joint Support Team (LC – JST) meetings. Decisions are made about the deployment of resources to ensure the needs of pupils with ASN are met.

Table 4: Findings from Engagements with Practitioners and Literature Reviews: Arrangements for Funding SEN Provision in the Republic of Ireland	
Financing SEN	**Flexible Deployment of Resources**
• SEN teachers and SNAs allocated in mainstream schools, special classes in mainstream settings and special schools are centrally funded. • In 2020, one-fifth of the education budget to be invested in SEN (€1.9 billion).[199] • Another 1,064 special needs assistants to be recruited in 2020 bringing the total number of SNAs to 17,000.[200] • 120 more SEN teachers to be recruited for mainstream settings and 265 new teachers to be recruited for special classes in mainstream settings in 2020.[201] • An additional 23 teachers to be recruited for special schools in 2020.[202] • An additional 1,300 new places in special classes in 2020. [203]	• School leaders have a degree of autonomy with regard to how SEN teachers and SNAs are deployed to meet the needs of pupils with SEN e.g. in mainstream settings.

---

[198] *Scottish Government (2018) Pupil Equity Funding.*
[199] *Department of Education and Skills (2019) Record Investment in Education and Skills with Hundreds of New Teachers and More Than 1,000 Additional Special Needs Assistants.*
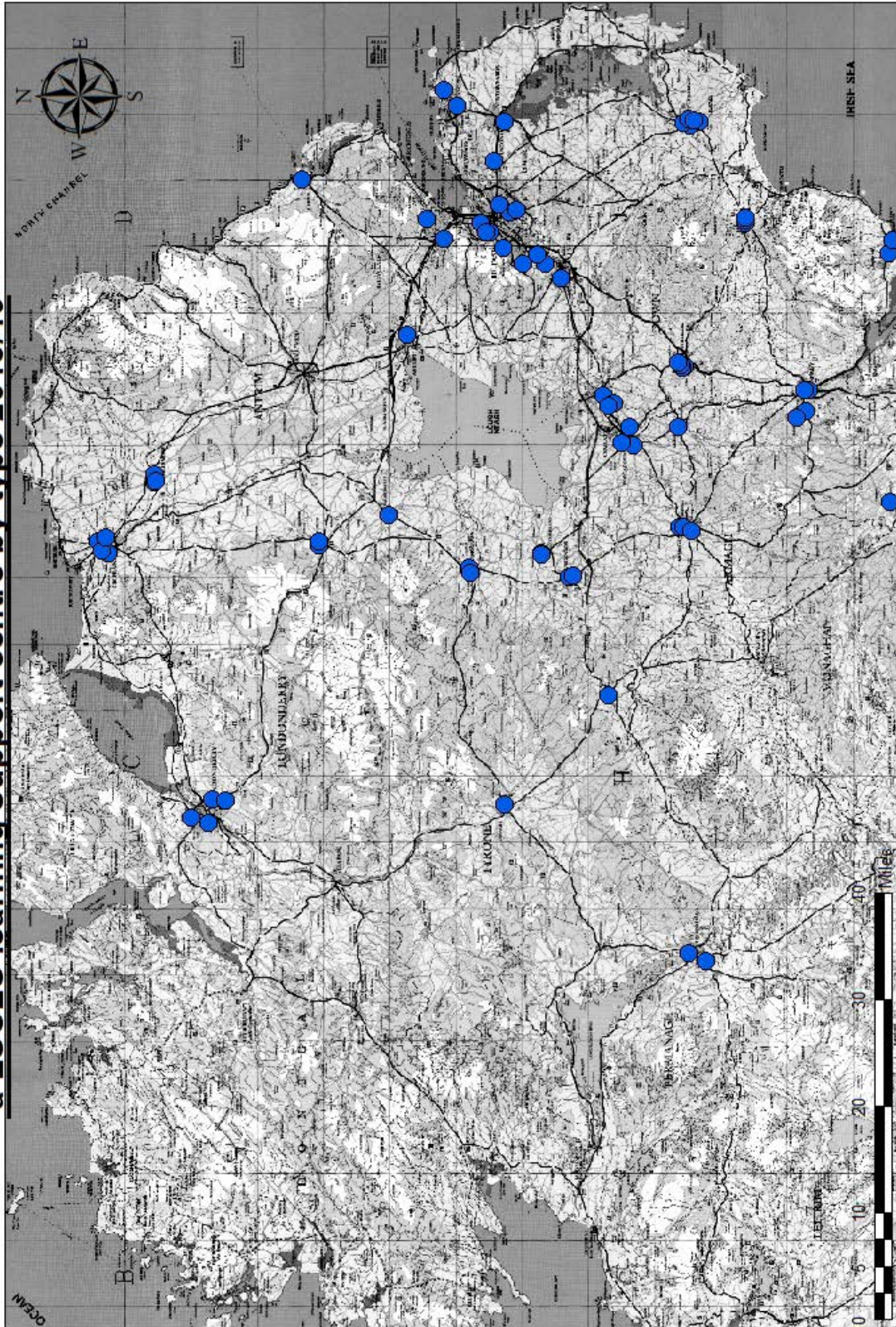[200] *As above.*
[201] *As above.*
[202] *As above.*
[203] *As above.*

Appendix 8: The Distribution of Specialist Provision (NI)

Map 1: Distribution of LSCLS units in Northern Ireland 2018/19

Location of schools with pupils recorded as attending a LSCLS learning support centre by type 2018/19
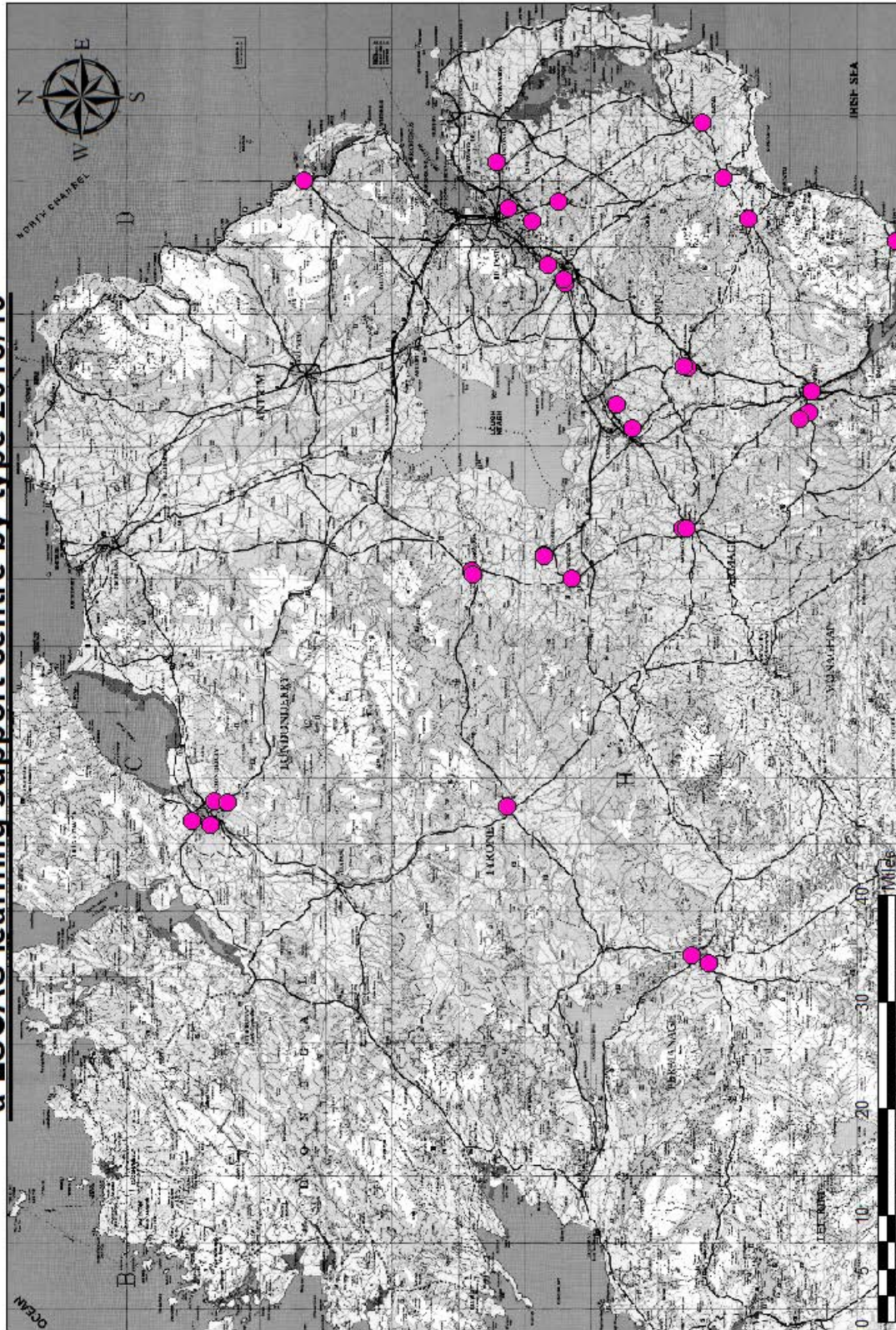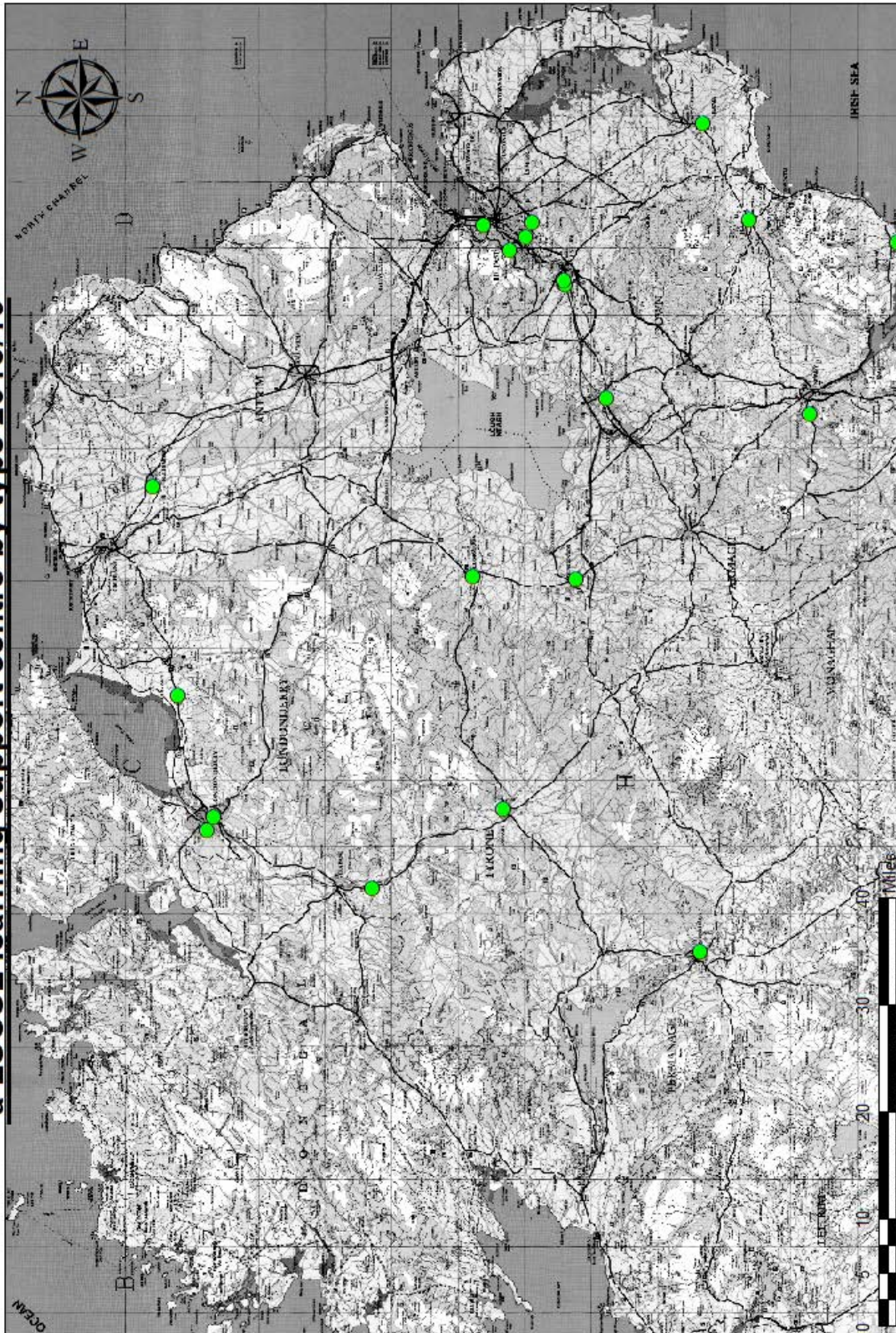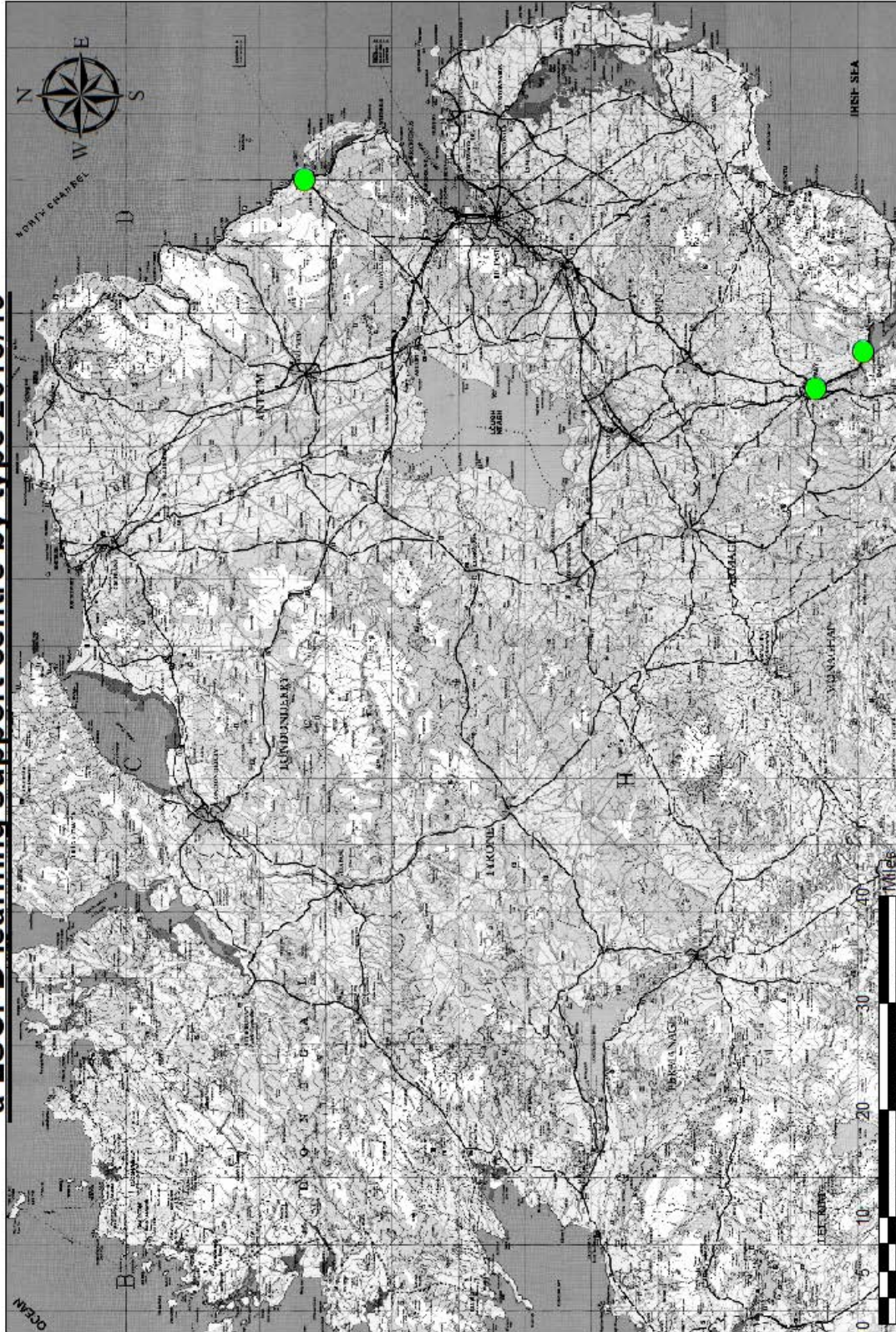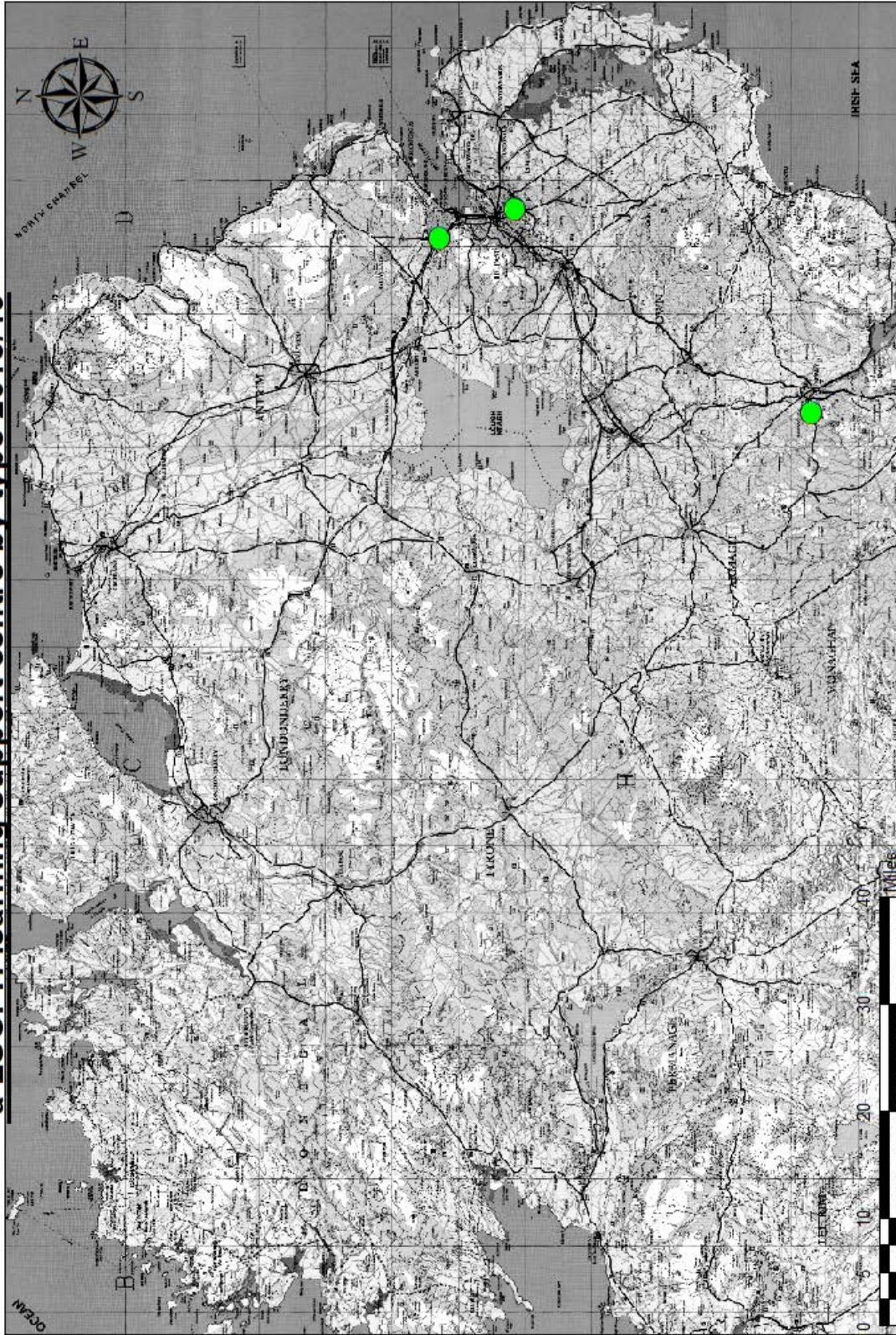
This material is based upon Crown Copyright and is reproduced with the permission of Land & Property Services under delegated authority from the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown copyright and database rights.

Land & Property Services © Crown Copyright Licence No. MOU577.402 2020

Appendix 8: The Distribution of Specialist Provision (NI)

Map 2: Distribution of LSCAS units in Northern Ireland 2018/19

Location of schools with pupils recorded as attending a LSCAS learning support centre by type 2018/19
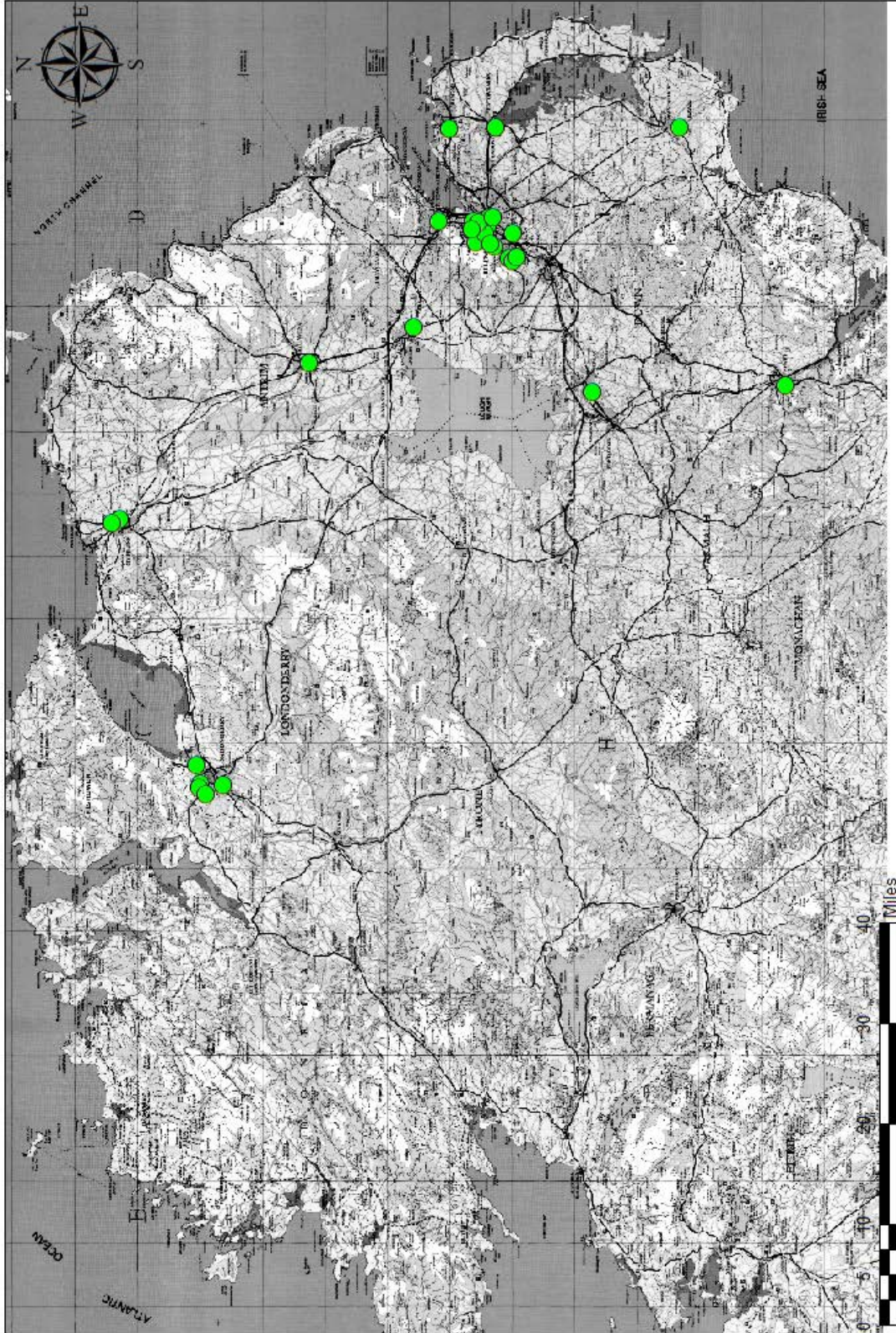
This material is based upon Crown Copyright and is reproduced with the permission of Land & Property Services under delegated authority from the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown copyright and database rights.

Land & Property Services © Crown Copyright Licence No. MOU577.402 2020

Appendix 8: The Distribution of Specialist Provision (NI)

Map 3: Distribution of LSCSL units in Northern Ireland 2018/19

Location of schools with pupils recorded as attending a LSCSL learning support centre by type 2018/19

This material is based upon Crown Copyright and is reproduced with the permission of Land & Property Services under delegated authority from the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown copyright and database rights.

Land & Property Services © Crown Copyright Licence No. MOU577.402 2020

Appendix 8: The Distribution of Specialist Provision (NI)

Map 4: Distribution of LSCPD units in Northern Ireland 2018/19

Location of schools with pupils recorded as attending a LSCPD learning support centre by type 2018/19

Appendix 8: The Distribution of Specialist Provision (NI)

Map 5: Distribution of LSCPH units in Northern Ireland 2018/19

Location of schools with pupils recorded as attending a LSCPH learning support centre by type 2018/19

Appendix 8: The Distribution of Specialist Provision (NI)

Map 6: Distribution of Nurture units in Northern Ireland 2018/19

Location of nurture units 2018/19

This material is based upon Crown Copyright and is reproduced with the permission of Land & Property Services under delegated authority from the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown copyright and database rights.

Land & Property Services © Crown Copyright Licence No. MOU577.402 2020

Appendix 8: The Distribution of Specialist Provision (NI)

Map 7: Distribution of Special Schools in Northern Ireland 2020
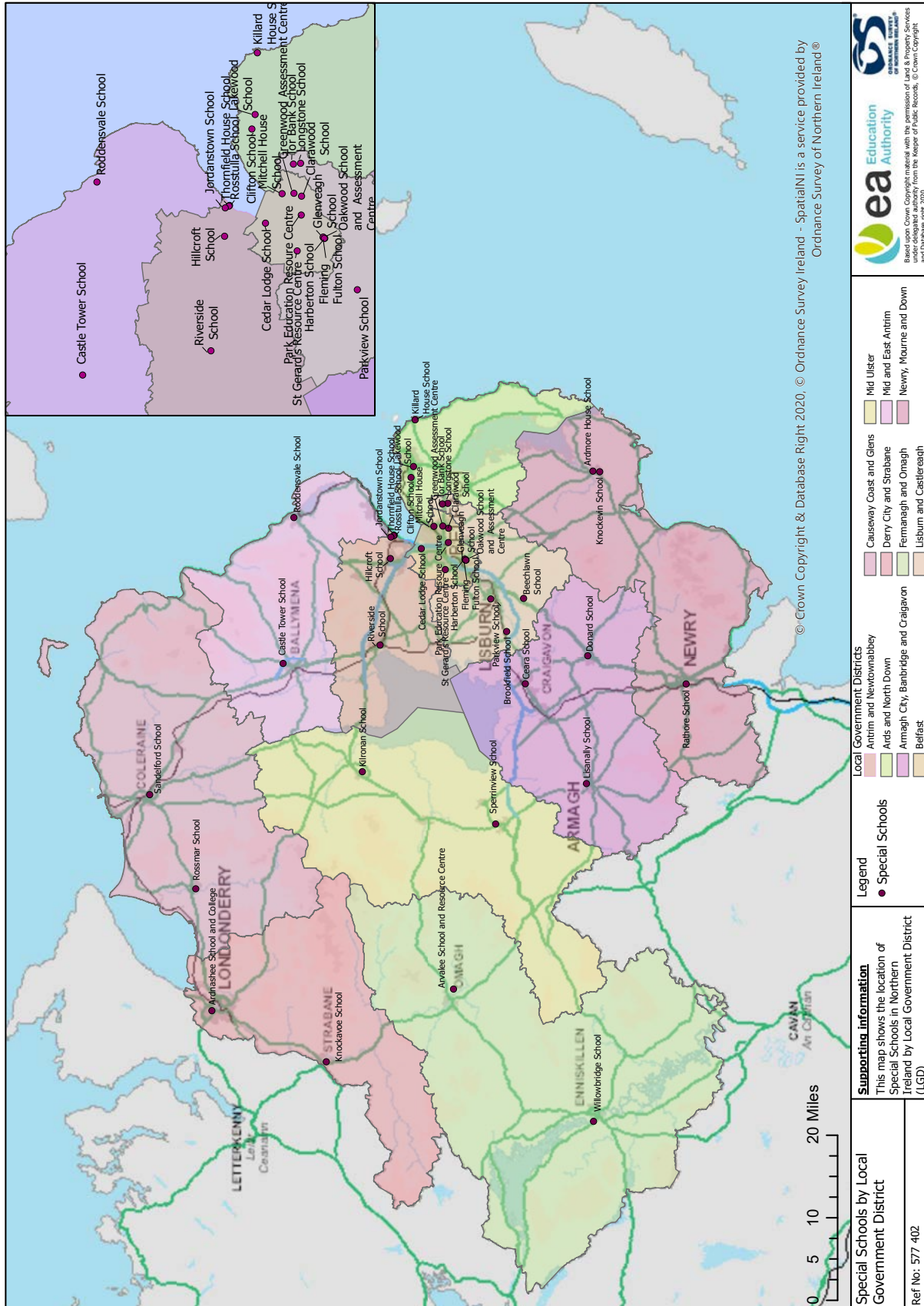
Appendix 9: List of Educational Settings Consulted/Visited (NI)

St. Conor's Primary School and Nursery Unit, Omagh

Christ The King Primary School and Nursery, Omagh

Galliagh Nursery School, Derry

St. Mary's Primary School, Glenview

St. Malachy's Primary School, Castlewellan

St. Colman's Primary School, Lisburn

St. Claire's Abbey Primary School, Newry

St. Patrick's Primary School, Dungannon

Holy Family Primary and Nursery School, Derry

Lismore Comprehensive School, Craigavon

St. Malachy's High School, Castlewellan

St. Mark's High School, Warrenpoint

St. Vincent's Centre, Belfast

St. Gerard's Special School and Support Services, Belfast

Appendix 10: List of Educational Settings Visited in Glasgow, Scotland

Shaw Mhor Early Years Centre, Glasgow
Castleton Primary School, Glasgow
Croftcroighn School (3–12 years), Glasgow
Drummore Primary School, Glasgow
Eastmuir Primary School, Glasgow
High Park Language and Communication Resource, Glasgow
Oakgrove Primary School, Glasgow
St Mary's Primary School, Glasgow
St Philomena's Primary School (Enhanced Nurture Provision (ENP), Glasgow
Thorntree Primary, Glasgow
Abercorn Secondary School, Glasgow
Drumchapel High School, Glasgow
Hollybrook Academy, Glasgow
Parkhill School, Glasgow
St Paul's High School, Glasgow

Appendix 11: Glossary

ASL	Additional Support for Learning
ASN	Additional Support Needs
CCMS	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
COP	Code of Practice
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DE	Department of Education
DENI	Department of Education Northern Ireland
EA	Education Authority
EADSNE	European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education
EASNIE	European Agency for Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Education
EIF	Early Intervention Foundation
EITP	Early Intervention Transformation Programme
ENP	Enhanced Nurture Provision
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
GIRFEC	Getting It Right For Every Child
IEP	Individual Education Plan
LCFE	Language and Communication Friendly Environment
LEA	Local Education Authority
LC – JST	Learning Community – Joint Support Team
LSCAS	Learning Support Centre Autistic Spectrum
LSCLS	Learning Support Centre Learning Support
LACPD	Learning Support Centre Physical Disabilities
LSCPH	Learning Support Centre Partial Hearing
LSCSL	Learning Support Centre Speech and Language
MAST	Multi-agency Support Team
SEBD	Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SIIMs	Staged Intervention and Inclusion Meetings
SNAs	Special Needs Assistants
TPL	Teacher Professional Learning
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
VI	Visual Impairment
WHO	World Health Organisation

Appendix 12: Bibliography

References

Ainscow, M., 2007. *'Towards A More Inclusive Education System', In R. Cigman (Ed.), Included or Excluded. The Challenge of The Mainstream for Some SEN Children.* [online] Available at: <https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/towards-a-more-inclusive-education-system-where-next-for-special-schools(ac5a23be-b2a0-44b6-a306-6cbd8c6a99d4)/export.html> [Accessed 2 December 2019].

Ainscow, M., 2008. *Developing Inclusive Education Systems: What Are the Levers for Change? Speech Given at The Conference Inclusive Education: The Way of The Future. International Conference on Education 48Th Session. Final Report. Annex Xb.* [online] Available at: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org?fileadmin/user_upload/Policy_Dialogue/48th_ICE/ICE_FINAL_REPORT_eng.pdf> [Accessed 10 October 2019].

Archdiocese of Armagh, 2010. *Catholic Education – The Vision.* [online] Available at: <https://decandsusan.files.wordpress.com/2010/10/cardinals-letter-20101.pdf> [Accessed 17 November 2019].

Black, L. and McKay, K., 2019. *Suicide Statistics and Strategy in Northern Ireland: Update – Research Matters.* [online] Research Matters. Available at: <https://www.assemblyresearchmatters.org/2019/11/28/suicide-statistics-and-strategy-in-northern-ireland-update/> [Accessed 3 January 2020].

Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, 2019. *Submission of Evidence to The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee Inquiry into School Finance.*

Council of the European Union, 2010. *Council Conclusions on The Social Dimension of Education and Training. 3013Th Education, Youth and Culture Meeting.* [online] Consilium.europa.eu. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/114374.pdf> [Accessed 2 November 2019].

Daniels, H., 2000. *Special Education Reformed.* London: Falmer Press.

Daniels, H., 2006. *The dangers of Corruption in Special Needs Education. British Journal of Special Education*, 33(1), pp.4–9.

Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2010. *Early Intervention: Securing Good Outcomes for All Children and Young People – Digital Education Resource Archive (DERA).* [online] Dera.ioe.ac.uk. Available at: <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/11385/> [Accessed 3 December 2019].

Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2010. *Early Intervention: Securing Good Outcomes for All Children and Young People.* [online] Dera.ioe.ac.uk. Available at: <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/11385/1/DCSF-00349-2010.pdf> [Accessed 12 October 2019].

Department for Communities, 2020. *Poverty in Northern Ireland.* [online] Available at: <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/poverty> [Accessed 24 June 2020].

Department of Education and Skills, 2017. *New Resource Teaching Allocation Model – Delivery for Primary Students with Special Educational Needs.* [online] Education.ie. Available at: <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Special-Education/Delivery-for-Primary-Students-with-Special-Educational-Needs.pdf> [Accessed 4 December 2019].

Department of Education and Skills, 2019. *09 October,2019 – Record Investment in Education and Skills with Hundreds of New Teachers and More Than 1,000 Additional Special Needs Assistants.* [online] Department of Education and Skills. Available at: <https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2019-press-releases/PR19-10-09-1.html> [Accessed 2 November 2019].

Department of Education Northern Ireland, 1996. *Code of Practice on The Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.* [online] Dera.ioe.ac.uk. Available at: <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/9763/1/the_code_of_practice.pdf> [Accessed 19 October 2019].

Department of Education Northern Ireland, 2006. *The Future Role of the Special School.* Bangor: Department of Education Northern Ireland.

Department of Education Northern Ireland, 2019. *Annual Enrolments at Schools and In Funded Preschool Education in Northern Ireland, 2018/19.* [online] Education-ni.gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Revised%2029%20April%202019%20-%20Annual%20enrolments%20at%20schools%20and%20in%20pre-school%20e....pdf> [Accessed 4 November 2019].

Department of Education, 2020. *Children and Young People | Department of Education.* [online] Education. Available at: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/children-and-young-people> [Accessed 1 January 2020].

Department of Finance, 2017. *Briefing on Northern Ireland Budgetary Outlook* 2018–20. Department of Finance.

Department of Health, 2019. *Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2018/19.* [online] Health-ni.gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/child-social-care-18-19.pdf> [Accessed 30 June 2020].

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety., 2010. *Healthy Futures 2010 – 2015 The Contribution of Health Visitors and School Nurses in Northern Ireland.* [online] Health-ni.gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/healthy-futures-2010-15.pdf> [Accessed 10 November 2019].

Doyle, S., 2018. *Number of Pupils with Special Educational Needs Rises By 30,000.* [online] The Irish News. Available at: <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2018/12/24/news/number-of-pupils-with-special-educational-needs-rises-by-30-000-1514733/> [Accessed 3 December 2019].

Early Intervention Foundation, 2018. *The Cost of Late Intervention in Northern Ireland.* [online] Early Intervention Foundation. Available at: <https://www.eif.org.uk/report/the-cost-of-late-intervention-in-northern-ireland> [Accessed 25 November 2019].

ECPAT UK, 2020. *United Nations Convention on The Rights of The Child.* [online] ECPAT UK. Available at: <https://www.ecpat.org.uk/united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child> [Accessed 1 January 2020].

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2009. *Development of A Set of Indicators – For Inclusive Education in Europe.* [online] European-agency.org. Available at: <https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/development-of-a-set-of-indicators-for-inclusive-education-in-europe_Indicators-EN-with-cover.pdf> [Accessed 10 October 2019].

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2013. *Organisation of Provision to Support Inclusive Education – Literature Review.* [online] European-agency.org. Available at: <https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/organisation-of-provision-to-support-inclusive-education-2013-literature-review_Organisation-of-Provision-Literature-Review.pdf> [Accessed 20 October 2019].

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2015. Annex to *The Agency Position on Inclusive Education Systems.* [online] European-agency.org. Available at: <https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/about-us/Annex_to_the_Agency_Position_on_Inclusive_Education_Systems.pdf> [Accessed 29 November 2019].

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2015. *Agency Position on Inclusive Education Systems.* [online] Available at: <https://www.european-agency.org/about-us/who-we-are/agency-position-inclusive-education-systems> [Accessed 23 October 2019].

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2014. *Organisation of Provision to Support Inclusive Education Policy Brief.* [online] European-agency.org. Available at: <https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/OoP_Policy_Brief_EN.pdf> [Accessed 2 December 2019].

Francis, 2013. *Evangelii Gaudium: Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World (24 November 2013) | Francis.* [online] Vatican.va. Available at: <http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html> [Accessed 24 August 2020].

Frattura, E. and Capper, C., 2007. *Leading For Social Justice: Transforming Schools for All Learners.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press Frederickson.

Glasgow City Council, 2015. *Every Child Is Included and Supported: Getting It Right in Glasgow, The Nurturing City Additional Support for Learning Network News.* [online] Glasgow.gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=32787&p=0> [Accessed 13 October 2019].

Glasgow City Council, 2016. *Every Child Is Included and Supported: Getting It Right in Glasgow, The Nurturing City Policy Guidelines.* [online] Glasgow.gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=32783&p=0> [Accessed 25 October 2019].

Glasgow Psychology Service, 2019. *Special Educational Needs Provision and Nurture Provision Glasgow.*

Graham, L. and Jahnukainen, M., 2011. Wherefore art thou, inclusion? Analysing the development of inclusive education in New South Wales, Alberta and Finland. *Journal of Education Policy*, 26(2), pp.263-288.

HM Treasury DfES, 2007. *Aiming High For Children: Supporting Families.* [online] Dera.ioe.ac.uk. Available at:<https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/7755/1/PU188.pdf> [Accessed 2 February 2019].

HM Treasury DfES, 2007. *Policy Review of Children and Young People: A Discussion Paper – January 2007.* [online] Dera.ioe.ac.uk. Available at: <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/6553/1/cyp_policyreview090107.pdf> [Accessed 14 November 2019].

Kirklees LEA, 2014. *Children & Young People With SEN: Guidance – School Based Support.* [online] Kirklees.gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/special-education/pdf/sen-guidance-school-based-support.pdf> [Accessed 26 October 2019].

Kyriazopoulou, M. and Weber, H., 2009. *Development of A Set of Indicators – For Inclusive Education in Europe.* [online] European-agency.org. Available at: <https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/Indicators-EN.pdf> [Accessed 15 October 2019].

Lacey, P., 2001. *Support Partnerships: Collaboration in Action.* London: David Fulton.

National Children's Bureau Northern Ireland, 2013. *Early Intervention Study Visit to Finland 23–25 September 2013.* [online] Ncb.org.uk. Available at: <https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachment/15%20ncbnifinlandreport.pdf> [Accessed 22 October 2019].

Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, 2019. *Education Funding in Northern Ireland.* [online] Publications.parliament.uk. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmniaf/1497/1497.pdf> [Accessed 13 November 2019].

Northern Ireland Audit Office, 2017. *Special Educational Needs.* [online] Niauditoffice.gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/sites/niao/files/media-files/Special%20Educational%20Needs.pdf> [Accessed 6 November 2019].

Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY), 2020. *Too Little, Too Late.* [online] Niccy.org. Available at: <https://www.niccy.org/media/3515/niccy-too-little-too-late-report-march-2020-web-final.pdf> [Accessed 1 April 2020].

Northern Ireland Executive, 2016. *Draft Programme for Government Framework 2016-21.* [online] Available at: <https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/consultations/draft-programme-government-framework> [Accessed 17 November 2019].

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 2020. *Drug Related and Drug Mis-Use Deaths, 2008-2018.* [online] nisra.gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/Drug-related%20deaths%20in%20NI%2C%202008-2018.xlsx> [Accessed 14 July 2020].

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 2020. *Statistics Press Release - Drug Related and Drug Misuse Deaths Registered In Northern Ireland (2008-2018).* [online] www.nisra.gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/Press%20release%20for%20Drug%20related%20deaths%20in%20NI%20%282001-2018%29_0.pdf> [Accessed 16 July 2020].

Ofsted, 2005. Inclusion: *The Impact of LEA Support and Outreach Services.* [online] Available at: <http://core.ac.uk/display/4155157> [Accessed 8 October 2019].

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2013. *Education Policy Outlook: Finland.* [online] Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/education/highlightsFinland.htm> [Accessed 6 December 2019].

Perry, C. and Wilson, J., 2015. *Special Educational Needs in Finland.* Stormont, Belfast: Northern Ireland Assembly, pp.2-6.

Perry, C., 2015. *SEN Legislation and Policy in Northern Ireland.* [online] Niassembly.gov.uk. Available at: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2015/education/5715.pdf> [Accessed 1 December 2019].

Police Service of Northern Ireland, 2019. *Trends in Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 To 2018/19.* [online] Psni.police.uk. Available at: <https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/domestic-abuse-statistics/2018-19/domestic-abuse-incidents-and-crimes-in-northern-ireland-2004-05-to-2018-19.pdf> [Accessed 30 June 2020].

Police Service of Northern Ireland, 2020. *Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland – Update To 31 March 2020.* [online] Psni.police.uk. Available at: <https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/domestic-abuse-statistics/2019-20/q4/domestic-abuse-bulletin-mar-20.pdf> [Accessed 30 June 2020].

Royal College of Nursing, 2020. *Health Visiting | Children and Young People | Royal College of Nursing.* [online] The Royal College of Nursing. Available at: <https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/children-and-young-people/health-visiting> [Accessed 1 January 2020].

Scottish Government, 2018. *Pupil Equity Funding.* [online] Scottish Government News. Available at: <https://news.gov.scot/news/pupil-equity-funding-1> [Accessed 2 December 2019].

Sloan, S., Winter, K., Lynn, F., Gildea, A. and Connolly, P., 2016. *The Impact and Cost Effectiveness of Nurture Groups in Primary Schools in Northern Ireland.* [online] Education-ni.gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Nurture%20QUB%20Full%20Evaluation%20Report%20.pdf> [Accessed 8 October 2019].

Sutton, M., 2020. CAIN: *Sutton Index of Deaths – Menu Page.* [online] Cain.ulster.ac.uk. Available at: <https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/sutton/tables/Year.html> [Accessed 10 July 2020].

Takala, M., Pirttimaa, R. and Törmänen, M., 2009. Research Section: Inclusive Special Education: The Role of Special Education Teachers in Finland. *British Journal of Special Education*, 36(3), pp.162–173.

The Education and Training Inspectorate, 2009. *Follow Up to The Inspection of Special Educational Needs in The Pre-School Sector.* [online] Education and Training Inspectorate, p.2. Available at: <https://core.ac.uk/reader/4159890> [Accessed 16 October 2019].

The Education and Training Inspectorate, 2012. *A Survey of the Provision for Pupils with Dyslexia.* [online] Education Training Inspectorate. Available at: <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/survey-provision-pupils-dyslexia> [Accessed 10 May 2019].

The Education and Training Inspectorate, 2012. *Report of an Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with a Visual Impairment in Mainstream Schools in Northern Ireland.* [online] www.education-ni.gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/%5Bcurrent-domain%3Amachine-name%5D/report-of-an-evaluation-of-provision-for-pupils-with-a-visual-impairment-in-mainstream-schools-in-northern-ireland.pdf> [Accessed 11 April 2019].

The Education and Training Inspectorate, 2013. *An Evaluation of the Provision to Meet the Needs of Pupils with Persistent and Challenging Behaviour in Special Schools.* [online] www.etini.gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/evaluation-provision-meet-needs-pupils-persistent-and-challenging-behaviour-special> [Accessed 13 June 2019].

The Education and Training Inspectorate, 2015. *An Evaluation of the Special Educational Needs Capacity Building Pilot A: Early Years Setting.* [online] Education Training Inspectorate. Available at: <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/evaluation-special-educational-needs-capacity-building-pilot-early-years-setting> [Accessed 12 May 2019].

The Education and Training Inspectorate, 2016. *Learning Leaders: Lessons on Professional Learning from Other Professionals and Other Education Jurisdictions.* [online] The Education and Training Inspectorate. Available at: <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/learning-leaders-lessons-on-professional-learning-from-other-professions-and-other-education-jurisdictions.pdf> [Accessed 12 October 2019].

The Education and Training Inspectorate, 2016. *The Chief Inspector's Report – 2014-2016.* [online] Available at: <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/chief-inspectors-report-2014-2016> [Accessed 20 October 2019].

The Education and Training Inspectorate, 2018. *An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Emotional Health and Well-Being Support for Pupils in Schools and EOTAS Centres.* [online] Education Training Inspectorate. Available at: <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/evaluation-effectiveness-emotional-health-and-well-being-support-pupils-schools-and> [Accessed 23 May 2019].

The Education and Training Inspectorate, 2019. *Report of A Survey of Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools.* [online] Education-ni.gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/survey-special-educational-needs-in-mainstream-schools.pdf> [Accessed 14 November 2019].

Thompson, J., 2017. *Mental Health and Illness in Northern Ireland (1): Overview – Related Strategy and Reports - Research Matters.* [online] Research Matters. Available at: <https://www.assemblyresearchmatters.org/2017/03/08/mental-health-illness-northern-ireland-1-overview-related-strategy-reports/> [Accessed 16 May 2019].

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), 2006. *UN Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).* [online] Available at: <http://nda.ie/.../UN-Convention-on-the-Rights-of-Persons-with-Disabilities.htm> [Accessed 3 December 2019].

World Health Organization/World Bank, 2011. *World Report on Disability.* Geneva.

To be truly inclusive, we must challenge ourselves to develop a system of education which is built around the needs of all children including those with special educational needs. We must have compassion for those in our society with the most needs and ensure that we make provision for those children and families that are the most vulnerable.