

EDUCATION AUTHORITY
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 748
HOLLYBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Notice is hereby given that a Proposal under Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 has been submitted by the Education Authority to the effect that:

A statutory nursery unit will be established at Hollybank Primary School to provide 26 full-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter.

A copy of the Proposal and Case for Change may be inspected at the offices of the Education Authority, 17 Lough Road, Antrim, BT41 4DH, between the hours of 9.00 am and 4.30 pm and www.eani.org.uk/school-management/area-planning/development-proposals.

Any objections or support to this Proposal should be lodged with the Area Planning Policy Team, Department of Education, Rathgael House, Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down, BT19 7PR or emailed to dps@education-ni.gov.uk within two months of the date of publication of this notice. Any letters of objection or support may be published on the Department of Education's website, with appropriate redactions, if they are included in full in the submission on which the outcome of the proposal is decided.

The Department of Education and the Education Authority operate a regime of openness under the Freedom of Information Act. Letters of objection and information supplied to the Department of Education and the Education Authority may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, if requested. (A fee may be charged for supplying this information).

Richard Pengelly
Chief Executive

**Area Planning
Case for Change**

Hollybank Primary School

Development Proposal No 748

Establishment of a Nursery Unit

Case for Change: Supporting Information - Summary/Overview	
Area Planning District	Antrim and Newtownabbey
Development Proposal Number	748
Proposer	Education Authority
School(s) Name	Hollybank Primary School
School(s) Reference	301-6038
Sector	Primary
Management	Controlled
Development Proposal Publication Date	Week commencing 11 March 2025
Proposal	A statutory nursery unit will be established at Hollybank Primary School to provide 26 full-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter

Case for Change: Statutory Consultation

Note: It may be necessary for documentary evidence to be provided to show that the statutory procedures have been followed. It is essential that relevant parties retain this information.

The following is to be completed by the Proposer and signed off by them.

EDUCATION AUTHORITY COMMENTARY ON PRE-PUBLICATION STATUTORY CONSULTATION

Proposer

Provide detail of consultation with the Board of Governors, teachers and parents of the affected school(s) – dates of meetings/letters. Good practice suggests all staff (including non-teaching) should be consulted as well as pupils.

Summary and assessment of views received – how were these taken into account before publication of the DP

In accordance with Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 the Education Authority undertook pre-publication consultation from 7 November 2024 to 16 January 2025. Staff, governors and parents/guardians of Hollybank Primary School were notified of the launch of the pre-publication consultation via questionnaire, with the publication of the consultation document on the Education Authority's website on 7 November 2024. Affected schools and pre-schools (58) were notified of the pre-publication consultation on the proposal to establish a statutory nursery unit at Hollybank Primary School to accommodate 26 full-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter on 7 November 2024 (via letter).




A pre-publication consultation document and response form were available on the Education Authority's website for the period 7 November 2024 to 16 January 2025.

The Education Authority received a total of 24 responses. The information below provides a summary of overall responses and emerging themes of responses received.


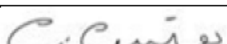
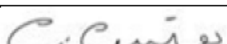
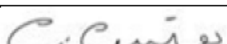
Respondent	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Total
Governors – Hollybank PS	2			2
Staff/Principal – Hollybank PS	4			4
Parents and Guardians – Hollybank PS	10			10
Hollybank Pre-School	3			3
Principals – Local Schools	2	1		3
Affected School		1		1
Controlled Schools' Support Council	1			1
Total Responses	22	2	0	24

Support the proposal – summary comments

- There is a real need for this provision as has been proven by the current unit using the school.
- There is a need for more nursery provision in the Monkstown area. Early years education is crucial for a child's development.
- Facilities in Hollybank Primary School are perfect for incorporating a nursery.
- The primary school's strong and experienced leadership team would continue the success of the existing pre-school and provide a sustainable nursery unit for this community.
- With the provision of a nursery unit a higher number of children 26 from the local community will be able to access pre-school placement for their children. This service is an essential introduction for 3-4 year olds beginning their learning journey.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With growth not only in new housing in the area and an increased need of special needs it is essential that families needing to access both nursery and special needs have access to both of these resources on one site. • Warmly welcome additional nursery provision in the Monkstown/ Jordanstown area as many children are unable to access nursery provision and have to choose playgroup or private childcare provision instead. <p>Do not support the proposal – summary comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another nursery setting in such a close proximity will have a huge impact on the intake of an established nursery setting in the community. <p>Section 75 comments</p> <p>Three responses commented on Section 75. These comments and all responses have been taken into account when assessing the equality impact of the proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current provision and the primary school are inclusive of all, and include people from different ethnic backgrounds, beliefs, and special needs. • Positivity and inclusion of all children of different backgrounds and promoting more understanding between different beliefs and backgrounds leading to acceptance of those of a different background. • Due to the growth of newcomers within the Monkstown, Jordanstown, Greenisland, Whiteabbey and Newtownabbey area, this will have a positive impact on the area providing new opportunities for communities and cultures to mix effectively in a safe and neutral environment. 								
<p>Confirmation by the Proposer</p>	<p>I confirm that the Board of Governors, Staff, Parents/Guardians of Hollybank Primary School were consulted via questionnaire from 7 November 2024 to 16 January 2025 and Equality Screening of the proposal has been carried out and the statutory requirements of the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (where appropriate) have been considered.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="486 1211 1347 1413"> <tr> <td>Name:</td> <td>Cynthia Currie</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Office Held:</td> <td>Acting Director of Education</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Signed:</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date:</td> <td>4 March 2025</td> </tr> </table>	Name:	Cynthia Currie	Office Held:	Acting Director of Education	Signed:		Date:	4 March 2025
Name:	Cynthia Currie								
Office Held:	Acting Director of Education								
Signed:									
Date:	4 March 2025								
<p>Associated Proposals</p>	<p>N/A</p>								

<p>Case for Change: Statutory Consultation</p>	
<p>EDUCATION AUTHORITY COMMENTARY ON PRE-PUBLICATION STATUTORY CONSULTATION</p>	
<p><i>The following is to be completed and signed off by the EA.</i></p>	
<p>The Education Authority (EA)</p>	<p>I confirm that the schools which the Education Authority consider might be impacted by this proposal were consulted on 7 November 2024 with a return date of 16 January 2025.</p>

	Name:	Cynthia Currie								
	Office Held:	Acting Director of Education								
	Signed:									
	Date:	4 March 2025								
<p>Provide detail of consultation with schools that may, in the EA's opinion, be affected by the proposal - list of schools, dates of letters issued to schools/meetings.</p> <p>Summary of views received (number of responses, recurring themes, petitions, community support or opposition).</p> <p>Responses/Assurances in respect of issues raised during consultation.</p> <p>Dates of EA meetings eg Strategic Planning and Policy Committee/ Board etc</p> <p><u>Details of issues raised by members of EA Board</u></p>	<p>In accordance with Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, a copy of the proposal was sent on 7 November 2024 to schools and pre-school settings which, in the opinion of the Education Authority, might be affected by the proposal. A total of 58 local schools and pre-school settings were forwarded correspondence. Comments were invited from the Boards of Governors and Trustees, to be returned to the Education Authority by 16 January 2025.</p> <p>One response was received from an affected school. One response was received from the Controlled Schools' Support Council.</p> <p>Support the proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notes that while there is currently no unmet need in the area that standardisation of pre-school session times will reduce the number of available places in the local area over time. This proposal represents a small increase to current provision. <p>Does not support the proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The nursery has recently applied for two full time classes and this request was refused. Therefore, difficult to support this proposal for another nursery class. <p>The development proposal was discussed by the Education Authority's Strategic Planning and Policy Committee at its meeting on 4 March 2025.</p>									
<p>EDUCATION AUTHORITY COMMENTS</p> <p>In the context of planning on an area basis - what is the EA's view of the proposal, taking into account any pre-publication consultation. Does the EA support the proposal?</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="225 1671 603 1888"> <tr> <td data-bbox="229 1677 344 1713">Name:</td> <td data-bbox="349 1677 598 1713">Cynthia Currie</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="229 1720 344 1778">Office Held:</td> <td data-bbox="349 1720 598 1778">Acting Director of Education</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="229 1785 344 1821">Signed:</td> <td data-bbox="349 1785 598 1821"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="229 1827 344 1863">Date:</td> <td data-bbox="349 1827 598 1863">4 March 2025</td> </tr> </table>	Name:	Cynthia Currie	Office Held:	Acting Director of Education	Signed:		Date:	4 March 2025	<p>The Education Authority, as the proposer, supports Development Proposal 748 to establish a statutory nursery unit at Hollybank Primary School to provide 26 full-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter.</p> <p>The proposal is a result of notification of the stepping down of Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup. On 19 December 2024, Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup received Ministerial approval under the "Standardisation Programme" to deliver full-time (22.5 hours per week) funded pre-school education from September 2025. This proposal reflects the full-time approval.</p> <p>The proposal of the nursery unit provision is in keeping with the Minister of Education's commitment to early years education - Pre-School Education Programme – Standardisation and the draft Programme for Government.</p> <p>The proposal for the establishment of a nursery unit at Hollybank Primary School to provide 26 full-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter was discussed by PEG at its meeting on 5 December 2024. PEG considered the proposal from the Education Authority for Hollybank Primary School with the comment:</p>	
Name:	Cynthia Currie									
Office Held:	Acting Director of Education									
Signed:										
Date:	4 March 2025									

	<p><i>“It is important the Education Authority (EA) and the PEG support the Department in fulfilling its statutory duty by striving to meet demonstrated demand in an area for pre-school education for those parents/carers who want it for their children. In this context, PEG supports the DP on the basis of demonstrated demand as evidenced by the number of 1st preference applications and that it is a replacement of the existing funded non-statutory pre-school provision within the school’s grounds.”</i></p> <p>In consideration of the above, and the Case for Change, the Education Authority is proposing to publish Development Proposal 748 the week beginning 11 March 2025.</p>
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**EDUCATION AUTHORITY
PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAMME 2024-25
PRE-PUBLICATION CONSULTATION - PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A NURSERY UNIT
FOR 26 FULL-TIME PUPILS AT HOLLYBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL
WITH EFFECT FROM 1ST SEPTEMBER 2025 OR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE THEREAFTER
Date of PEG Meeting:- 5TH December 2024
PEG Comments**

School	Hollybank Primary School
Address	Devenish Drive, Monkstown, Newtownabbey, BT37 0HF
PEG Comment – overview of rationale for comment.	<p>PEG considered the Pre-Publication Consultation from Hollybank Primary School for comment and is in support of this proposal:</p> <p>"It is important the Education Authority (EA) and the PEG support the Department in fulfilling its statutory duty by striving to meet demonstrated demand in an area for pre-school education for those parents/carers who want it for their children."</p> <p>In this context, PEG supports the DP on the basis of demonstrated demand as evidenced by the number of 1st preference applications and that it is a replacement of the existing funded non-statutory pre-school provision within the school's grounds.</p>
What is the potential impact if the proposal is/ is not approved? (alternatives for meeting demand/ potential for over provision)	Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup, Monkstown received 24 1 st preference applications for 21 places in the 2024-25 academic year and is situated within the grounds of Hollybank Primary School. Hollybank notified the EA Pre-School Education Programme (PSEP) in June 2023 of their intention to stand down with effect from June 2025. The Management Committee have since redacted this and will continue to operate until a decision on the proposal has been made.
What is the PEG assessment of need for pre-school provision for the area? Is this need currently met?	For the 2024-25 academic year a total of 1486 funded places are available in the local area (5-mile radius from the setting; and 2-mile radius in the cities of Belfast and Derry/Londonderry as defined by the Department of Education) with a total of 1362 1 st preference applications being received. However, for September 2025 this will change to 1395 as settings standardise from part time to full time provision as part of the Pre-School standardisation Programme. Hollybank Pre-school is included within these figures with 24 1 st preference applications. The existing figures suggest there is sufficient capacity to meet current demand for pre-school provision within the area and the change is replacement with the proposed nursery being established providing a small increase to the area.
How many 1 st preference applications were received by the setting? (usually 2 years figures but this depends on the timing of the development proposal)	2023-24 18 applications 2022-23 19 applications
Are there current or anticipated pressures in placing target age children into pre-school education in the local area?	There are no current or anticipated pressures in placing target age children into pre-school education in the local area.

Appendix B

<p>Have children been unplaced at the end of the process in previous years?</p>	<p>In the BT37 area: 2024-25 - 2 (did not engage in Stage 2) 2023-24 - 2 (1 did not engage in Stage 2) 2022-23 - 0 2021-22 – 2 (late applications in Stage 2)</p>
<p>Has demand been increasing over time, but the number of places has not? Is the level of need or provision changing significantly? e.g. provider leaving PSEP</p>	<p>Projected live births for the ward area of Monkstown: 2024-25 = 39 children 2025-26 = 35 children 2026-27 = 44 children</p> <p>Projected live births for settings within 5-mile radius located in Monkstown: 2024-25 = 1289 children 2025-26 = 1232 children 2026-27 = 1205 children</p> <p>PSEP providers; Mount St Nicholas Playgroup withdrawn for 2024-2025, subsequently closed. Rainbow Playgroup notice received of closure from June 2025</p> <p>Standardisation for September 2025; Mossley Nursery School approved to change from 26 full time and 52 part time places to 52 full time places. Sunnylands Nursery School recommended to change from 104 part time places to 52 full time places.</p>
<p>Can existing non-statutory providers expand to help meet demand? Is there potential for new providers to come on to the programme?</p>	<p>There is no unmet need in the area.</p>
<p>What is the potential impact on existing good quality provision (displacement)?</p>	<p>Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup, Monkstown is the only voluntary/private setting in the local area and have already expressed that they intend to stand down from the PSEP. The setting currently has 21 funded pre-school places for the 2024-25 academic year; the setting has a registration number of 21 places.</p>
<p>If there are other development proposals in the area, how might they impact? (e.g. if proposal A were to be approved, would B still be required?)</p>	<p>None that PEG is aware of.</p>
<p>Other comments</p>	<p>Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup, Monkstown is ranked 117, on the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure, areas are ranked out of 890 (with 1 being most deprived and 890 least deprived).</p>

1.0 PRE-SCHOOL PROVISION IN THE AREA - RATIONALE FOR PROPOSAL

Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup is one of the main providers of pre-school provision in the area for almost a decade. Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup is located in the building of Hollybank Primary School. This provision has been excellent and provided a pre-school provision for the children in the community. Over the past number of years the management committee of Hollybank Pre-School Centre has faced a number of challenges, all of which it has overcome with the exception of one, that of staffing. Through no fault of either the committee or the community, the Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup has been unable to recruit staff in accordance with the North Eastern Health and Social Services criteria.

Unfortunately, the Management Committee of the current pre-school provider, Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup, has advised that it will stand down on a date to be agreed pending the outcome of this proposal. Should this proposal not be approved this will result in a shortfall of pre-school provision in the local area.

In consideration of the above, the proposal for the establishment of a 26 full-time nursery unit at Hollybank Primary School with effect from 1 September 2025 will ensure all parents in the area that want to avail of pre-school education will have the opportunity to do so within a accessible travelling distance. In effect the proposal is a change in management of pre-school provision in the area.

In formally establishing a nursery unit, a Development Proposal is required. The proposal is:

A statutory nursery unit will be established at Hollybank Primary School to provide 26 full-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter.

The proposal would contribute to the Programme for Government Outcome 12 as it targets education in an economically and educationally deprived DEA.

The (NI) Executive's Child Poverty Strategy includes the following goal:

'Early Years (0-4) – Our goal is to ensure that every child should have the chance to develop their full potential in infancy regardless of social background. The importance of Early Years' experience in helping shape positive, social, psychological and educational development is well recognised in research. Maximising provision and support, therefore for children in their early years is an investment which will help lay a solid foundation for their future.'

In addition, the proposal will contribute to the draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most'. The draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 details nine 'immediate priorities' with one of these being 'Deliver more Affordable Childcare'.

This priority aligns with the Minister of Education's commitment to early learning and childcare in Northern Ireland as on 23 May 2024 the Minister announced a £25 million package of measures to support children, parents and providers of early learning and childcare in 2024/25. The commitment is for the offer to all children of 22.5 hours pre-school education per week.

On 19 December 2024, Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup received Ministerial approval under the "Standardisation Programme" to deliver full-time (22.5 hours per week) funded pre-school education from September 2025.

Approval of the nursery unit provision would be supportive of the Programme for Government and the Minister of Education's commitment to early years education.

2.0 EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

The aim of Area Planning is to ensure that all primary and post-primary pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum that meets their educational needs in a school that is educationally and financially viable and sustainable.

Area Planning contributes to school improvement through evaluating the best use of resources within the system to ensure that available provision can meet the needs of all pupils.

The addition of a full-time nursery unit at Hollybank Primary School will have a positive impact on those parents seeking pre-school education.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Before arriving at the final recommendation on pre-school provision at Hollybank Primary School, the Education Authority sought the views of those most directly involved at a local level. The Education Authority engaged in consultation with the Board of Governors, parents/guardians and staff of Hollybank Primary School, Trustees and Board of Governors of local schools, local pre-school providers and other interested parties in the local community from 7 November 2024 to 16 January 2025.

3.1 Vision

The aim of the Education Authority is to facilitate the development of a network of viable and sustainable schools that can deliver the Northern Ireland curriculum effectively and provide access to a range of education provision that is appropriate to the needs of children and young people, so that every pupil can realise their potential and contribute to a caring, inclusive and progressive society.

In striving to realise this aspiration, the Education Authority aims to ensure that every pupil has:

- access to a broad and balanced curriculum with opportunities to realise his or her potential;
- an education in which the learning outcomes are appropriate to their needs;
- access to quality teaching delivered in a caring and supportive environment; and
- education delivered in modern, well-resourced facilities, suitable for the demands of education in the twenty-first century.

3.2 Education Authority Position

On 29 June 2022, the Education Authority published the Strategic Area Plan 2022-27: Planning for Sustainable Provision with Operational Plan 2: 2024-26 for Primary, Special and Post Primary Schools (including Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools) published on 16 January 2025. Within the actions for the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area the Education Authority included the following:

Hollybank PS Devenish Drive Newtownabbey BT37 0HF	Background / Engagement	
	The Education Authority is proposing the establishment of a nursery unit at the Hollybank PS. The school currently has an approved admission number of 30 and approved enrolment number of 210. At September 2023, the school had an enrolment of 184 pupils. The school does not currently have nursery provision.	
	Statutory Duty / Ministerial Priority	Key Theme(s)
	Statutory Duty – Access to Places	Increase parity of access for all to appropriate pathways Inform strategic infrastructure planning and investment

At the meeting of the Education Authority’s Strategic Planning and Policy Committee on 4 March 2025, it was agreed to publish Development Proposal 748 that:

A statutory nursery unit will be established at Hollybank Primary School to provide 26 full-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter.

3.3 Pre-School Provision in the Hollybank Area

The current pre-school provider in the Hollybank area is Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup. Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup is located on the site of Hollybank Primary School and currently operates separately from the school with its own management committee and staff.

On 6 June 2024, the Management Committee of Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup notified the Education Authority of its intention to step down as pre-school provider in the area. The decision to step down as the provider of pre-school provision for the area was not taken lightly by the Management Committee, however, the Playgroup will continue to operate until a decision has been taken on the proposal to establish a nursery unit at Hollybank Primary School.

To provide for the pre-school needs of the area, the establishment of a nursery unit at Hollybank Primary School would ensure no loss of provision for the area. The change would be in pre-school provider thereby ensuring the continuum of pre-school provision in the area.

The information below shows that there is a community need for pre-school provision in the area with Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup receiving 24 first preference applications for September 2024. The Education Authority is proposing to continue pre-school provision in the area through the following Development Proposal:

A statutory nursery unit will be established at Hollybank Primary School to provide 26 full-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter.

3.4 Nature of the Education Authority’s Recommendation

The Education Authority has met with the Board of Governors and Principal of Hollybank Primary School to discuss all options and based on available information, the Education Authority is taking forward the development proposal for the establishment of a nursery unit at Hollybank Primary School.

The Education Authority is taking forward this provision through Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 which describes the process regarding making ‘a significant change in the character or size of a controlled school’. This process requires the publication of a development proposal.

Therefore, as part of the pre-publication consultation on the development proposal, the Education Authority sought any objections and/or other comments on the proposed establishment of a nursery unit at Hollybank Primary School from the Board of Governors, teaching staff, non-teaching staff and parents/guardians of children attending Hollybank Primary School, as well as from other schools/pre-school providers that may be affected by the proposal.

The pre-publication consultation process and a summary of comments is included in pages 3-8 of this Case for Change.

4.0 BACKGROUND

Hollybank Primary School is a controlled school situated in Monkstown Estate in Newtownabbey. The children come from the estate and surrounding area. The school has an approved admission number of 30 and approved enrolment number of 210 pupils.

Table 1 below shows the enrolment numbers of Hollybank Primary School.

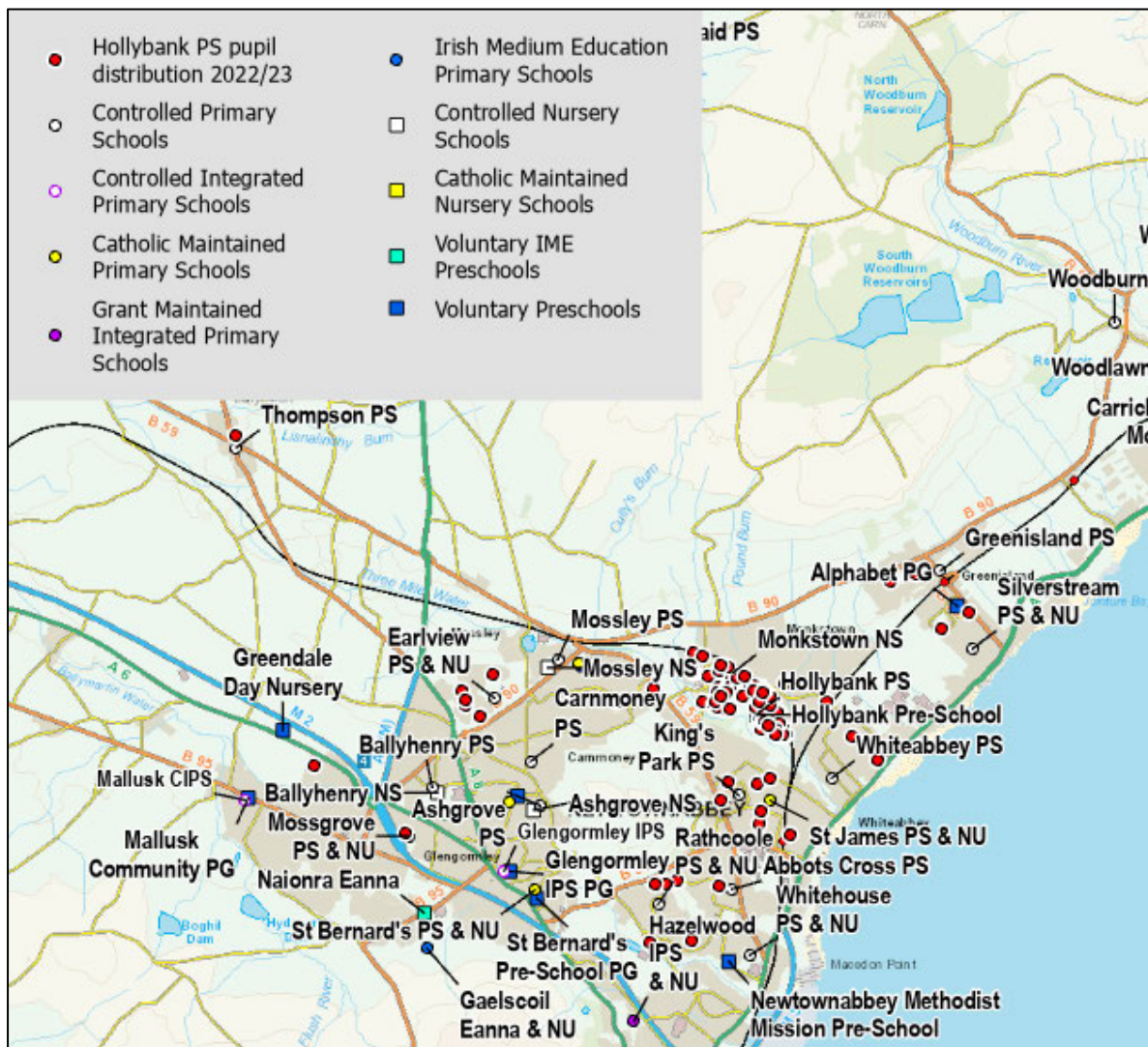
Table 1: Enrolment Statistics: Hollybank Primary School								
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Total
2017/18	26	24	16	25	17	21	19	148
2018/19	20	25	25	17	25	17	22	151
2019/20	20	20	23	25	16	26	21	151
2020/21	24	20	19	28	25	14	28	158
2021/22	25	23	22	21	31	26	15	163
2022/23	16	24	24	23	22	33	30	172
2023/24	30	18	25	25	24	26	36	184
2024/25 (Source: School)	29	26	19	28	28	24	31	185

Hollybank Primary School is a sustainable school. As indicated above, Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup currently provides pre-school provision for the immediate area with Table 2 below showing the pre-school numbers attending the playgroup and their Year 1 destinations. This clearly supports the retention of pre-school provision for the area as a feeder for Hollybank Primary School and a number of other local schools.

Table 2: Transferring Schools: Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup				
	2020	2021	2022	2023
Ashgrove Primary School	1			
Ballyclare Primary School		1		
Carnmoney Primary School	3	2	1	
Hollybank Primary School	10	11	9	16
King's Park Primary School	3		1	1
Mossley Primary School			2	
Seaview Primary School			1	
Silverstream Primary School	1			
St James Primary School	1			
Whiteabbey Primary School	1		1	1
Whitehouse Primary School		1		
	20	15	15	18

Table 2 above indicates that the majority of the pupils attending Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup transfer to Hollybank Primary School.

Map 1 – Hollybank Primary School Pupil Distribution and proximity to other primary schools and pre-school providers.



Hollybank Primary School attracts pupils from the Monkstown Estate and surrounding area.

Table 3 shows the current pre-school provision within two miles of Hollybank Primary School. Demand for full-time pre-school places is not being met.

School/Pre-School Name	Full Time (FT) or Part Time (PT)	Pre-School Funded Places 2024	Nursery Unit Places	Target Age First Preference Applications (2024/25)	Total Target Age Applications (2024/25)	Total Places Accepted (2024/25)	
						Target Age	Under age
Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup		19		22	25	19	0
Monkstown Nursery School	FT PT		26 52	44 22	55 43	26 43	0 6
St James's PS Nursery Unit	FT		52	48	59	52	0
St MacNissi's Pre-School Centre	PT	24		31	34	24	0
Total		43	130	167	216	164	6
Totals			173			170	

Pre-school provision is currently provided by the providers above. Figures shows that only three part-time places are available in the area. No primary schools within a five-mile radius of Hollybank Primary School operate reception classes.

Table 4 below shows that the births within the catchment area shows some fluctuation in births over the years.

Ward	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Ballyduff	31	26	28	31	25	35	29	24
Monkstown	45	53	30	30	41	39	39	35
Total	76	79	58	61	66	74	68	59
Pre-school Admission	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Year 1 Admission	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27

Hollybank Primary School is located in the Monkstown ward which ranks 151 in the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) where 1 indicates the most deprived and the ranking runs from 1 to 462.

Ward	Multiple Deprivation Measure Rank	Income Domain	Employment Domain	Health Deprivation and Disability	Education, Skills and Training	Access to Services	Living Environment	Crime and Disorder
Name	151	152	139	113	99	320	262	164

The following should be noted from Tables 3, 4 and 5:

- There is parental demand for full-time pre-school places.
- The number of births in the area is generally reflected in the number of Year 1 admission numbers in the local primary schools.
- Monkstown is located in the top 33% most deprived wards according to NIMDM statistics as assessed by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

The main focus of the Area Planning process is embedded in ‘Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools (Sustainable Schools Policy) first published in 2009 and applies to primary and post-primary schools. The policy outlines the criteria that school managing authorities should consider when making decisions affecting the best use of resources in order to deliver an excellent education to children and young people. The policy sets out 6 sustainability criteria, and associated indicators, which are identified as the key references for assessing existing and future education provision to ensure it adequately meets the needs of pupils.

5.1 Quality of Education

A focussed Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) inspection in April 2010 found the: *“quality of provision for English and literacy is good; The overall quality of the provision for mathematics is satisfactory. The quality of the teaching ranged from satisfactory, in a minority (13%) of the lessons, to outstanding, in a minority (13%) of the lessons observed. In almost two-thirds of the teaching of the lessons observed, the quality of the teaching was very good or better.”*

5.2 Stable Enrolment Trends

Hollybank Primary School has an approved admission number of 30 pupils and a current enrolment of 185 pupils. Table 1 above details the enrolment statistics for the school which is a sustainable school.

5.3 Financial Position

At 31 March 2024, Hollybank Primary School had a surplus of £685. The school operates within its in-year budget. The school’s three-year financial plan shows that the school is projected to have a closing surplus of £264,271 by March 2027.

Year	Surplus/Deficit
2021/22	-£41,969
2022/23	-£8,684
2023/24	£685
2024/25	£28,526
2025/26	£140,279
2026/27	£264,271

5.4 Strong Leadership and Management

The ETI carried out a Monitoring Inspection in February 2017. In relation to leadership in the school, the report noted:

“The new senior leadership team and co-ordinators evaluate priority areas through the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data and, identify low and underachievement. The relevant staff development in guided reading has resulted in a consistent approach to the planning and evaluation of reading sessions across the key stages.”

5.5 Accessibility

Hollybank Primary School in Monkstown Housing Estate in Newtownabbey. The school can be accessed by car and bus.

5.6 Strong Links with the Community

The primary school has well established links within the community. Hollybank Primary School and Hollybank Pre-School work closely with learning communities such as NEST (Newtownabbey Empowering Schools Together) and THRiVE (a collaboration of local parents, schools, community groups, statutory and voluntary organisations working together to help children and young people in Rathcoole and Monkstown). Monkstown Village Initiatives work closely with the school on a range of projects such as transition, Stress Beat programme, TLG (Transforming Lives for Good) coaching and a community/school family liaison partnership. The school has worked with the pre-school to establish a new Parent, Teacher and Friends Association who support fundraising and pupil events, and the committee is comprised of school and pre-school members.

Hollybank Pre-School and Hollybank Primary School work closely together and often share funding and events such as trips, outdoor learning, visits and together they run a P7/Pre-School reading buddy system. Currently Hollybank Pre-School benefits from Hollybank Primary School's facilities such as the assembly hall, library, adventure park and playground. Transition links between the two bodies are excellent, and teaching and learning development priorities are aligned. School staff members and Governors also serve on the current committee.

Hollybank Primary School is currently undergoing refurbishment works to provide a covered play area and a hygiene room.

6.0 AREA PLANNING IMPACT

The proposal aligns with the key themes of Area Planning. The Area Plan for Northern Ireland aims to ensure that all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum that meets their needs in sustainable schools within a diverse system of education. It sets out the key priorities and objectives in providing access to a network of sustainable schools for the Education Authority, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and other sectoral bodies in the light of Department of Education policy, in particular the need to raise standards and close the attainment gap through a network of sustainable schools. The focus of the plan is on the best educational interests of children and young people.

Since 2011, statutory planning authorities and school managing authorities have been engaged in implementing the objectives of the Sustainable Schools Policy through Area Planning. The first four objectives are:

- ensure that the excellent quality of education available to some young people is made available to all, in both urban and rural settings, in accessible, modern, fit-for-purpose accommodation;
- improve outcomes for all but, in particular, to provide additional support to those who require it, including those children with special educational needs, to realise their full potential;
- encourage schools to co-operate in sharing best practice to support children with special educational needs and those with other barriers to learning; and

- sustain strong, successful and viable schools, well-led by their governors representing local stakeholders, principals and their staff, to be the centre of the education system, supported by effective administrative and strategic direction.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The proposal is for the establishment of pre-school provision at Hollybank Primary School to provide 26 full-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Finance The recurrent costs associated with the nursery unit will be covered through LMS funding.

Staffing Additional teaching and non-teaching staff, approximately £80,000, would be required with a recruitment process undertaken by the Board of Governors. The cost of staff would be covered through LMS funding.

Transport Transport is not applicable to pre-school provision.

Accommodation No additional accommodation will be required for the nursery unit as Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup currently operates within Hollybank Primary School's building. Should the development proposal be approved, the nursery unit will operate within Hollybank Primary School's building.

8.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (IF THE PROPOSAL IS APPROVED)

The proposal is being brought forward under Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. The implementation date for the proposal is for 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter. The timetable, pending approval from the Strategic Planning and Policy Committee, for the consultation process is:

Development Proposal Timeline	
Proposal: A statutory nursery unit will be established at Hollybank Primary School to provide 26 full-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter.	Proposed Timeline
<p>Consultation with Governors, Staff, Parents/Guardians – Questionnaire 8 weeks (plus two additional weeks for the Christmas period)</p> <p>Consultation Responses to be forwarded to the Education Authority</p> <p>Responses will be considered and a Case for Change document compiled before submission to the Education Authority’s Strategic Planning and Policy Committee. A deputation may request to attend the Strategic Planning and Policy Committee or the Board meeting in accordance with the Education Authority’s Standing Orders.</p>	7 November 2024 – 16 January 2025
<p>Consultation with other affected schools - 8 weeks (plus two additional weeks for the Christmas period)</p> <p>Consultation Responses to be forwarded to the Education Authority</p> <p>Responses will be considered and a Case for Change document compiled before submission to the Education Authority’s Strategic Planning and Policy Committee</p>	7 November 2024 – 16 January 2025
<p>Strategic Planning and Policy Committee to seek Approval to Publish</p> <p>Case for Change to be taken to the 4 March 2025 Education Authority’s Strategic Planning and Policy Committee for consideration</p> <p>If approved to publish, a Development Proposal will be published in the local newspapers which begins the start of a two month statutory objection period</p>	4 March 2025
<p>Statutory Objection Period (2 months)</p> <p>Objections/comments to be forwarded to the Department of Education</p>	March 2025 – May 2025
Await Ministerial/Department of Education Decision	June 2025
<p>Implementation</p> <p>If approved, the Development Proposal will take effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter</p>	



Controlled Schools' Support Council
2nd floor, Main Building
Stranmillis University College
Belfast, BT9 5DY
T: 028 9531 3030
E info@csscni.org.uk

16 April 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Development Proposal 748 Hollybank Primary School

The Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC) notes the publication of Development Proposal 748 which proposes the establishment of a statutory nursery unit at Hollybank Primary School to provide 26 full-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter.

CSSC has consulted with Hollybank Primary School and local controlled schools and welcomes the opportunity to respond. It is noted that this proposal seeks to replace and retain existing provision provided by the former Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup located on the site of the primary school. CSSC notes the decision taken by the playgroup to discontinue provision and that Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup received 22 first preference applications for September 2024, demonstrating need for provision in this community.

CSSC understands that the proposal will result in a small increase to provision in the locality but must be considered in the context of the Pre-School Standardisation Programme, which will, over time, reduce the number of available places in the area as the programme seeks to deliver the Minister of Education's commitment to standardise pre-school education to 22.5 hours per week for all children aged 3-4 years old.

CSSC supports this proposal and is happy to discuss this response with the Department of Education.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Mark Baker
Chief Executive

Controlled Schools' Support Council www.csscni.org.uk
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SEN Reform & Inclusion Development Directorate (SRIDD) Input to Development Proposal (DP) Submission

DP 748 – Hollybank Primary School (PS) - Establish a new statutory Nursery Unit to provide 26 full-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Response due date: 15 April 2025

SRIDD Input: 8 April 2025

SEN Reform Delivery Team Input

It is noted in the Case for Change (CfC) that Hollybank Primary School (PS) is considered a sustainable school and has positive long-term enrolment projections. Attendance at a sustainable school underpins the fundamental principles of the special educational needs (SEN) Code of Practice¹, which focuses on a continuum of need and a continuum of provision, which may be made in a variety of forms. Children with SEN require the greatest possible access to a broad and balanced education, including the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

The CfC is silent on any impact the establishment of a new Nursery unit would have on pupils with SEN, but it is noted that the CfC states that the proposal is 'in effect ... a change in management of pre-school provision in the area'.

SRIDD would therefore not oppose this DP.

Approved and cleared by Janis Scallon

Grade: Grade 5, Director for SEN Reform & Inclusion Development



Signed:

Date: 8 April 2025

¹ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/special-educational-needs-code-practice>

**SECRET ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL
DP 748 - Hollybank PS 301-6038 - Establish a new Nursery Unit**

STAGE 1Documentation for consideration:

Request from: APPTSEC Development Proposal

- Area Map
- Case for Change
- List of neighbouring schools including school reference number

Proposer - Education Authority

Proposal - A statutory nursery unit will be established at Hollybank Primary School to provide 26 full-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter

Current Position - Hollybank Primary School is not currently involved in Shared Education but has shown an interest through the steps into sharing programme.

XXXXXXXXXX

List of neighbouring <phase> schools provided by Area Planning

Ref No	School Name	Programme	Membership
3010895	Rathcoole Primary School	-	-
3016005	Silverstream Primary School, Greenisland	Steps into Sharing	-
3010827	Whitehouse Primary School, Newtownabbey	Mainstreaming	St James's Primary School and Nursery Unit
3016249	Earlview Primary School, Newtownabbey	-	-
3036100	St James Primary School, Newtownabbey	Mainstreaming	Whitehouse Primary School and Nursery Unit
3116219	Monkstown Nursery School	Steps into Sharing	-
3116162	Mossley Nursery School, Newtownabbey	-	-
3116214	Ashgrove Nursery School, Newtownabbey	-	-
3BB0654	Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup, Monkstown	-	-

3BB0246	St MacNissi's Pre School Centre Playgroup	-	-
3AB0353	Alphabet Playgroup, Greenisland	-	-
3AB0092	Newtownabbey Methodist Mission Pre School Playgroup	-	-
3BB0247	St Mary's on the Hill Playgroup, Newtownabbey	-	-

Two of these schools are engaged in Mainstreaming Shared Education and two of these schools have shown an interest in Shared Education through the Steps into Sharing Programme.

SECRET CONSIDERATION

The Case for Change

There is no reference to Shared Education anywhere in the Case for Change.

SECRET ASSESSMENT

There is insufficient evidence in the Development Proposal to suggest a positive or negative impact to Shared Education partnerships in the area.

DP Assessment Prepared by: [REDACTED]

Date 16/04/2025

I agree with the above assessment and approve the assessment to be forwarded to Area Planning.

Name: James Hutchinson

Grade: G5

Signed: 

Date: 24/04/25

EWD INPUT TO APPSECT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

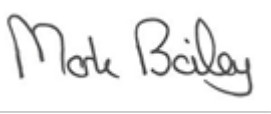
Composite Directorate response

TITLE & Proposal	DP 748– Hollybank Primary School, Newtownabbey – Establish a nursery unit with 26 full-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2025 or as soon as possible thereafter.
Ref Number:	DP 748 – School Reference Number 301-6038
Education Authority Recommendation:	<p>The Education Authority, as the proposer, supports Development Proposal 748 to establish a statutory nursery unit at Hollybank Primary School, Newtownabbey to provide 26 full-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter.</p> <p>The proposal is a result of notification of the stepping down of Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup. On 19th December 2024, Hollybank pre-school Playgroup received Ministerial approval under the “Standardisation Programme” to deliver full-time (22.5 hours per week) funded pre-school education from September 2025. This proposal reflects the full-time approval.</p> <p>The proposal for the establishment of a nursery unit at Hollybank Primary School, Newtownabbey to provide 26 full-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2025 or as soon as possible thereafter, was discussed by PEG at its meeting on 5 December 2024. PEG considered the proposal from the Education Authority for Hollybank Primary School, Newtownabbey with the comment:</p> <p>“It is important the Education Authority (EA) and the PEG support the Department in fulfilling its statutory duty by striving to meet demonstrated demand in an area for pre-school education for those parents/carers who want it for their children. In this context, PEG supports the DP on the basis of demonstrated demand as evidenced by the number of 1st preference applications and that it is a replacement of the existing funded non-statutory pre-school provision within the school’s grounds.”</p>

EWD INPUT

NIL RETURN – No issues/concerns have been identified, from a policy perspective, in respect of this development proposal for teaching and non-teaching staff as highlighted in the

Appendix D

Resource Implications (Section 8) of the Case for Change (CfC). The establishment of a new Nursery unit has no impact on the policies which fall within EWD area of responsibility.	
TNT Use Only	
Have any redundancies been effected at the school	No
Prepared By:	██████████ – 20 March 2025
Checked By:	██████████ – 26 March 2025
Grade 5 Clearance: (Mark Bailey)	 Mark Bailey – 27 March 2025

Finance Return to APPT

Please see Financial Monitoring Teams' comments on **DP 748**:

Proposal: To Establish a Full-time Nursery Unit at the School

301-6038 Hollybank Primary School

The school's provisional Surplus position as of 31 March 2024 is £686.

The school's Deficit in the previous year, up to 31 March 2023 was **-£8,684**.

The school received a total Common Funding Formula budget of **£776,100** in the 2024-25 financial year for **184²** FTE pupils, which generates a per capita of **£4,218**. The average for all primary schools is **£3,938**.

The total Free School Meals Entitlement for the school is **106²** pupils, which represents **57.61%** of the total FTE, which places the school in **Band 3** for funding purposes.

The school received £35,503 for Small Schools Support funding, which represents **68.50%** of the maximum funding for this factor, within the Nursery & Primary funding stream.

The school also received £11,248 in respect of Primary Principals' Release Time.

All schools receive a delegated budget for the financial year based on verified enrolments as at the October Census prior to the financial year.

Any new provision (including new Nursery units) opening during the year are a pressure for the Department's "New Schools & Units" fund.

A new 26 F/T Nursery Unit is likely to create a funding need of **around £53k** – based on past costs for such units opening during the financial year – for the period from Opening to the end of that financial year. Full year costs to the *Aggregated Schools Budget* * are likely to be c. £91k (for new provision, not previously funded).

² The school's funding allocation is based on the previous year's census data (e.g. the October 2023 census data was used to determine the 2024-25 CFF allocation). **The census data on the Schools+ database relates to an academic year, as opposed to the financial year.** In addition, differences between funded pupils and total pupils within the census count may occur for a number of reasons, including, but not limited to, zero rated pupils, some reception pupils, and over age pupils (paragraph 7 of Annex B to the Common Funding Scheme refers).

Appendix D

Details of the school's budget allocation from the Common Funding Formula, for the last 3 years, is as follows:

Factor	2024-25 £	2023-24 £	2022-23 £
Premises Area	16,672	16,672	16,672
Premises FTE	15,967	14,789	13,924
TSN – Social Deprivation	87,595	87,922	68,192
TSN – Additional Social Deprivation	16,663	16,311	12,296
Small Schools Support	35,503	38,612	38,638
Primary Principals Release Time	11,248	12,233	12,233
Foundation Stage	24,266	18,659	22,864
Specialist Provision Classes	6,000	6,000	6,000
Pupil AWPUP	542,453	431,056	406,412
Children Looked After	4,229	4,804	5,892
Newcomer Pupils	15,505	10,809	10,606
Total School Funding	776,100	657,867	613,729
Pupil FTE (no.)	184	172	163
Per Capita	£4,218	£3,825	£3,765

INPUT FROM EARLY YEARS TEAM

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 748 – IT IS PROPOSED THAT A STATUTORY NURSERY UNIT WILL BE ESTABLISHED AT HOLLYBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL TO PROVIDE 26 FULL-TIME NURSERY PLACES WITH EFFECT FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2025, OR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE THEREAFTER.

1. Introduction

At the request of the Board of Governors of Hollybank Primary School, the Education Authority (EA) has published Development Proposal Number 748, proposing that a statutory nursery unit will be established at the school to provide 26 full-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter.

There is currently a non-statutory pre-school provider, Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup (PG), located within the existing accommodation of Hollybank PS which in the 2024/25 academic year provided 21 funded pre-school education places. The Management Committee of Hollybank Pre-School PG has advised that it intends to stand down on a date to be agreed pending the outcome of this proposal (CfC pg 9).

2. Background

Hollybank Primary School is a controlled school situated in Monkstown, Newtownabbey, Co Antrim. It has a current approved enrolment and admissions number of 210 and 30 respectively. Hollybank Pre-School PG has been a participant in the Pre-School Education Programme (PSEP) since 2015/16 and is currently situated within a classroom in Hollybank PS. The CfC advises that no additional accommodation will be required for the proposed statutory nursery unit should the development proposal be approved, as the unit will continue to operate within Hollybank PS's building (CfC pg 17).

The CfC notes that Hollybank Pre-School and Hollybank PS work closely together and Hollybank Pre-School also benefits from Hollybank PS facilities such as the assembly hall, library and playground. It adds that transition links between the two bodies are excellent and teaching and learning development priorities are aligned (CfC pg 16).

The CfC states that Hollybank Pre-School PG have faced challenges with staffing, with the playgroup unable to recruit staff in accordance with the relevant Health and Social Services criteria (CfC pg 9). As a result, the setting notified the EA Pre-School Education Programme (PSEP) in June 2023 of their intention to stand down with effect from June 2025, however, the Management Committee have since retracted this and advised they will continue to operate until a decision on the proposal has been made (CfC p7).

The CfC claims that the establishment of a nursery unit at Hollybank PS would ensure no loss of provision for the area, adding that the proposed change “would be in pre-school provider” that is, suggesting that the proposal represents a transformation of management type of existing provision, thereby ensuring the continuum of pre-school provision in the area (CfC pg 11). The CfC further states that the children that attend the school come from the estate and surrounding area, adding that Hollybank PS is a sustainable school (CfC pg 12). Table 2 in the CfC (pg 12) appears to demonstrate that the majority of children that attend the existing non-statutory pre-school provision (Hollybank Pre-School PG) transfer to Hollybank PS, which they believe supports the retention of pre-school provision in the area as a feeder for the primary school and a number of other local schools (CfC pg 12/13).

The CfC also states that on 19th December 2024, Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup received Ministerial approval under the Pre-School Standardisation Programme (PSP) to deliver full-time (22.5 hours per week) funded pre-school education from September 2025 (CfC p9).

If the proposal to provide a nursery unit at Hollybank PS were not approved, and the existing non-statutory nursery school was to close with no alternative provision provided, the level of provision in the area would fall by 21 places.

The published proposal appears to request what amounts to a change in management/governance arrangements, and if approved, would result in the level of pre-school provision in the area remaining largely the same, with only a marginal increase in the number of funded pre-school places.

Relevant policy areas

The main policies relevant to this proposal are:

<p>The aim of the Pre-school Education Programme is to provide a funded pre-school education place for every target age child whose family want it.</p>	<p>The CfC focuses on the planned closure of Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup and the need to continue to provide sufficient pre-school provision in the area.</p> <p>The EA has advised that existing figures suggest there is sufficient capacity to meet current demand for pre-school provision within the area and there are no anticipated pressures in placing target age children into pre-school education in the local area. It adds that the change is replacement with the proposed nursery being established providing a small increase to the area.</p> <p>This is considered in more detail below.</p>
<p>Learning to Learn – A Framework for Early Years</p>	<p>Published on 7 October 2013, among its key actions is a moratorium on any new or additional full-time provision or conversion from part-time to full-time (defined as over 4.5 hours) in advance of a review of the current levels of full-time provision, existing research and the needs of children being served by it.</p>

<p>Education and Learning</p>	<p>The proposals as set out in DP 748, if approved, would result in a change in management/governance arrangements only with a very small increase to the current level of provision. However, the proposal is also seeking the establishment of full-time provision which could be considered to be contrary to the existing moratorium.</p> <p>However, it is important to note that the existing Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup has been approved in the first tranche of the Pre-School Standardisation Programme to transition to full-time provision from September 2025.</p> <p>This is considered in more detail below.</p>
<p>Displacement of good quality pre-school education provision already in existence</p>	<p>It is the Department’s practice, where possible, not to displace good quality pre-school education provision already in existence with pre-school education provision in an alternative setting. As this DP is for pre-school provision at a controlled primary school, it is considered in the context of DE’s relevant statutory duties. This DP is for the replacement of the existing funded non-statutory pre-school provision.</p> <p>The potential impact of this proposal on existing provision is considered in more detail below.</p>
<p>Ensuring the best use of public resources</p>	<p>In discharging its duties, the Department must seek to avoid unreasonable public expenditure and to make the best use of the resources available to it. In light of this, it aims to fill available pre-school education provision as far as possible with target age children, avoiding over provision and the resulting enrolment of children under pre-school target age (penultimate age children) in statutory settings. This is considered in more detail below.</p>
<p>Reception provision</p>	<p>A key action under the Learning to Learning framework is the removal of reception provision. Hollybank Controlled PS does not have reception provision. This is considered in more detail below.</p>
<p>Standardisation</p>	<p>In September 2022, the then-Minister for Education announced her intention to standardise the funded pre-school education session length to 4.5 hours per day (22.5 hours per week for 38 weeks of the academic year) to all target aged pupils as part of the proposed Executive’s Early Learning and Childcare Strategy. Implementation of a standardised session length will be on a phased basis and subject to Executive agreement and funding.</p> <p>Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup has been approved in the first tranche of the Pre-School Standardisation Programme to transition to full-time provision from September 2025. The impact of this on the proposal is considered in more detail below.</p>

3. Level of need for pre-school provision

In determining the need for pre-school education provision, the Department generally assumes a level of provision at 95% of target age children, predicated on the application

rate for pre-school education places, which is c.93%, however the level of provision within local areas may be higher or lower, based on historic patterns of demand and assessment of ongoing need.

Level of Provision – two-mile radius of Hollybank PS

Table 1

Year	Statutory places	Non-statutory places	Reception places	Total pre-school provision	P1 places	Level of pre-school provision (%age of P1 places)	Underage children in statutory places
2021/22	468	96	0	564	609	92.6%	39
2022/23	468	89	0	557	603	92.4%	54
2023/24	442*	98	0	540	577	93.6%	16
2024/25	442	91	0	533	592	90.0%	26
Projected 2025/26	416**	91	0	507	592	85.6%	-
Proposed 2025/26	442***	70	0	512	592	86.5%	-

Source: School Census and provisional EA data

*The statutory figure in 2023/24 reflects a reduction of 26 places in St James PS & NU due to their transition from 78 places to 52 places under Amalgamation for Standardisation.

** The projected statutory figure includes an approved reduction of 26 places in Mossley NS effective 2025/26 due to Amalgamation for Standardisation.

***The proposed statutory figure includes the proposed additional 26 places that Hollybank PS are proposing alongside a reduction of 26 places in Mossley NS effective 2025/26 due to Amalgamation for Standardisation.

The level of provision within the two-mile radius of Hollybank PS was 90% in the 2024/25 academic year which is below the planning figure of 95%. It has been slightly below the planning figure in each of the past four years, ranging between 90% and 93.6%.

It is important to note that Mossley NS has been approved to transition from 78 places to 52 full-time places from September 2025 under the PSP Amalgamation for Standardisation programme. This means that the number of places in the area would reduce by 26 between 2024-25 and 2025-26 academic years.

The proposal in regard to Hollybank PS, if approved, would result in an increase of five funded places (21 non statutory places replaced with 26 statutory places) within the two-mile radius with the proposed closure of Hollybank Pre-School, but due to the changes at Mossley NS, the overall level of statutory provision would remain the same but the overall number of funded places in 2025/26 would still be lower than in previous years.

It is noted that over the past four years there has been a large number of underage children accessing funded pre-school provision within the two-mile radius of Hollybank PS. This would normally indicate that there is a level overprovision of funded pre-school places in the area. The majority of these places have, however, been accessed in St James PS & NU and Mossley NS. Both of these settings have reduced their enrolment numbers through Amalgamation for Standardisation and it is expected that the numbers of underage children accessing funded pre-school provision will reduce significantly. There is already evidence of this with St James PS & NU not admitting any underage children in 2023/24 or 2024/25 following the reduction in the enrolment numbers.

The proposal, if approved, would result in a provision level of 86.5% within a two-mile radius of Hollybank PS which is still well below the planning figure. If the proposal was not approved and the existing non-statutory provider does not close, the level of provision would fall further to 85.6%, or 82.9% if the existing non-statutory provider were to close.

Level of Provision – five-mile radius of Hollybank PS

Table 2

Year	Statutory places	Non-statutory places	Reception places	Total pre-school provision	P1 places	Level of pre-school provision (%age of P1 places)	Underage children in statutory places
2021/22	1196	312	0	1508	1631	92.5%	120
2022/23	1196	291	0	1487	1537	96.7%	135
2023/24	1170	338	0	1508	1507	100.1%	81
2024/25	1170	300*	0	1470	1500	98.0%	130
Projected	1118	287	0	1405	1500	93.6%	
Proposed	1144**	266***	0	1410	1500	94%	-

Source: School Census and provisional EA data

*The non-statutory figure in 2024/25 reflects the closure of Mount St Nicholas PG.

**The proposed statutory figure includes the additional 26 places that Hollybank PS are proposing, an additional 26 places due to the successful outcome of DP 722 from Cliftonville Integrated PS and NU, alongside a reduction of 26 places in Mossley NS and a further reduction of 52 places in Sunnylands NS effective 2025/26 due to Amalgamation for Standardisation.

***The proposed non-statutory figure reflects the reduction of 21 places associated with the closure of Hollybank Pre-school and a further reduction of 13 places with the closure of Rainbow Playgroup.

It is important to note that five settings, namely Holywood NS, Tiggers Palace Day Nursery, St Patrick’s PS, Holywood PS and Sullivan Upper School have been discounted from the figures above because whilst they are situated within the 5 miles radius of Hollybank PS,

they are also situated across Belfast Lough and are not therefore reflective of the provision in the area.

The level of provision within a five-mile radius of Hollybank PS has ranged from 92.5% to 100.1% over the last four years. As highlighted in the two-mile radius, the number of statutory pre-school places available in 2023/24 dropped due to the reduction in provision at St James PS & NU under amalgamation for standardisation. The number of non-statutory pre-school places also dropped in 2024/25 with the closure of Mount St Nicholas PG.

Rainbow PG (13 places) also closed at the end of the 2024/25 academic year (13 places). There will also be a reduction in the number of pre-school places available in the 2025/26 academic year as a result of Mossley NS and Sunnylands NS reducing their enrolments by 26 and 52 respectively under the PSP amalgamation for standardisation. These reductions will, however, be partially offset by an increase in provision at Cliftonville Integrated PS & NU of 26 places from September 2025 as a result of the approval to DP722.

Similar to the two-mile radius, large numbers of underage children have also accessed funded pre-school education places in the five-mile radius of Hollybank PS in each of the last four years. However, the changes set out above for Mossley NS and Sunnylands NS due to take effect under the PSP it also is expected that the numbers of underage children accessing funded pre-school provision will reduce significantly within the five mile radius.

Regardless of whether the proposal is approved, the level of pre-school provision in the two-mile and five-mile radii will fall; the approval of the proposal would slightly reduce the reduction in places (by five), bringing the levels to 86.5% and 94% respectively which are both still below the planning figure. This equates to approximately 50 and 15 funded pre-school places respectively below the planning figure, based on the 2024/25 Primary One figures.

4. RECENT CHANGES IN PROVISION

There have been significant changes to pre-school education provision in this area in recent years:

- In 2023/24 St James PS & NU transitioned from 78 places to 52 places under the PSP
- In 2024/25 non-statutory setting Mount St Nicholas PG ceased operation. Mount St Nicholas PG had provided 9 funded places in 2023/24.
- Mossley NS has been approved under the PSP to transition from 76 funded places (52 part-time and 26 full-time) to 52 full-time places from September 2025

- Sunnylands NS has been approved to transition from 104 part-time places to 52 full-time places from September 2025.
- Rainbow PG, a non-statutory setting which provided 13 funded places ceased to operate at the end of the 2024/25 academic year.
- Additional pre-school provision (26 places) will open at Cliftonville IPS Nursery Unit from September 2025 following the successful outcome of DP 722.

Seven other settings, namely Hollybank Pre-School (associated with this DP), Alphabet PG, Greendale Day Nursery, Primrose Hill Day Nursery, Mossgrove PS & NU, Carr's Glen PS & NU and Currie PS & NU have been approved to transition to full-time provision effective September 2025, while keeping the number of places available at each setting unchanged. With the exception of Hollybank Pre-School, which has indicated that it plans to close following a decision on this proposal, there are no planned changes in enrolment numbers at any of these settings.

5. TEMPORARY FLEXIBILITY

There has been only one Temporary Flexibility request approved in the past four years within the five-mile radius of Hollybank PS which was for Gaelscoil Eanna in Glengormley in 2022/23.

6. RECEPTION PROVISION

No primary schools within a five-mile radius of Hollybank PS operate reception classes (CfC pg. 14)

7. IMPACT ON VOLUNTARY AND PRIVATE SECTOR PROVIDERS

The PSEP is a partnership between statutory and voluntary/private pre-school education providers and both sectors are equally valued for their contribution to the education of pre-school children. Both sectors adhere to the same curricular guidelines and are inspected to the same educational standards. In considering DPs for statutory provision, careful consideration is given to the impact of any new provision on existing good quality voluntary/private providers in PSEP. In addition to considering the potential for over provision and duplication, this also considers the potential for a proposal to destabilise provision in an area and considers the preferences of parents who have chosen pre-school provision of other management types in the area.

As the proposal is essentially a change in management type from non-statutory to statutory provision with only a marginal increase in the number of funded pre-school places (21 to 26), EYT have no concerns in regard to the potential for the proposal to displace existing funded pre-school provision in the area.

The EA in its comments within the CfC (pg 6) states *“It is important the Education Authority (EA) and the PEG support the Department in fulfilling its statutory duty by striving to meet demonstrated demand in an area for pre-school education for those parents/carers who want it for their children. In this context, PEG supports the DP on the basis of demonstrated demand as evidenced by the number of 1st preference applications and that it is a replacement of the existing funded non-statutory pre-school provision within the school’s grounds.”*

8. ENSURING THE BEST USE OF PUBLIC RESOURCES

In discharging its duties, the Department must seek to avoid unreasonable public expenditure and to make the best use of the resources available to it, in line with Article 44 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986. In light of this, it aims to maximise the available pre-school places for target age children, avoiding over provision and the resulting enrolment of children younger than 3 years and 2 months (underage children) in statutory settings.

It is evident from Tables 1 and 2 above that significant numbers of underage age children have been accessing funded pre-school education places within the two and five-mile radii of Hollybank PS in each of the last four years. This is usually a strong indicator that sufficient pre-school provision already exists to meet current demand and any subsequent increase in provision could lead to a further increase in the numbers of underage children accessing funded pre-school provision in the area. However, following the recent reduction in pre-school provision at St James PS & NU through the PSP there is already evidence of a significant reduction in the number of underage children accessing funded pre-school places in the area. With further proposed reductions in the number of funded pre-school places available due to come into effect at Mossley NS and Sunnylands NS in September 2025, it is expected that this recent pattern of reductions in the number of underage children accessing funded places in the area will continue.

In addition, as the proposal is in effect a change in management type from non-statutory to statutory provision with only a very small increase in the enrolment number it is not expected that this will lead to any increase in the numbers of underage children accessing funded places in the area. The proposal would also maintain recently-approved full-time provision in the area.

9. STANDARDISATION

The Minister for Education announced in May 2024 his intention to standardise all pre-school sessions over time to deliver 4.5 hours per day.

A setting within the two-mile radius of Hollybank PS, namely St James PS & NU (3036100), transitioned to the standardised full-time session length in September 2023 under the Amalgamation for Standardisation Pilot Scheme, reducing their enrolment from 78 places (52 part-time and 26 full-time) to 52 full-time places.

A total of nine settings within the five-mile radius of Hollybank PS have been approved to transition to full-time from September 2025. These are listed below:

3BB0654 Hollybank Preschool Playgroup

3AB0353 Alphabet Playgroup

3CA0588 Greendale Day Nursery

3CA0643 Primrose Hill Day Nursery

3013323 Mossgrove PS & NU

1010282 Carr's Glen PS & NU

1010063 Currie PS & NU

3116162 Mossley NS

3116150 Sunnylands NS

Both Mossley NS and Sunnylands NS are transitioning to full-time provision through Amalgamation for Standardisation and will also reduce their enrolments from 76 places to 52 full-time places and 104 places to 52 full-time places respectively from September 2025.

Is it important to note that Hollybank Pre-school Playgroup is one of the settings approved by the Minister to transition to the standardised full-time session length from September 2025. However, the Case for Change states that the Management Committee of the playgroup have notified the EA PSEP Team of their intention to close once a decision on this proposal has been made (CfC p7). The proposal as published is seeking to establish replacement full-time provision similar to that approved for Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup under the PSP. EYT have considered this in respect of the policy direction for the PSEP and are content that the proposal for full-time statutory pre-school places at Hollybank PS is consistent with the objectives of the pre-school standardisation programme and with the proposed closure of Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup is in effect a change in management type from non-statutory to statutory provision.

10. EYIPT INPUT

Hollybank Pre-School was a recipient of the Department's Pathway Fund in 2024-25, receiving £28,250. As Hollybank Pre-School's Pathway project ceased in June 2025, EYIPT have no policy input to provide in regard to this DP.

11. CONCLUSION

The overall level of pre-school provision in the wider area is below the Department's target planning figure, particularly within the two-mile radius of Hollybank PS. The proposal is seeking to provide statutory pre-school provision of a similar size to replace the existing non-statutory provision so, if approved, would not significantly increase provision in the area. It is important also to note the aforementioned reductions in both statutory and non-statutory provision within the area from September 2025 due to the recent closure of some settings and the reduction in enrolments at Mossley NS and Sunnylands NS through amalgamation for standardisation.

The CfC is clear that the existing non-statutory provider, Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup will close, which will reduce the current level of provision in the area by a further 21 places if the proposal is not approved. EYT considers therefore that this proposal is about a change in management type and maintaining the current level of pre-school education provision and will not result in any displacement at other existing providers in the area.

The EA input has been considered and they have indicated their support of the DP on the basis of demonstrated demand as evidenced by the number of first preference applications to Hollybank Pre-School (19 in 2022/23 and 18 in 2023/24) and that it is a replacement of the existing funded non-statutory pre-school provision currently within the school grounds (CfC pg 7). Hollybank Pre-School also received 22 first preference applications in 2024/25 and has been allocated a Pupil Admission Number (PAN) of 21 by the EA for the 2025/26 academic year.

As set out above, Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup received approval from the Minister in December 2024 to transition to full time hours effective from September 2025 under the PSP. The proposal as published is to establish new statutory provision at Hollybank PS providing 26 full-time places.

A moratorium on any new or additional full-time pre-school provision as set out in the Learning to Learn Framework (LtL) remains in place. EYT is content that the proposal for full-time provision at Hollybank PS does not constitute a request for new or additional full-time provision, but rather a change of management type for existing full time provision; it is therefore considered to be consistent with both the moratorium and the objectives of the pre-

school standardisation programme for the provision, if approved, to be approved on a full-time basis.

Having considered all the evidence available, EYT considers that the proposal of establishing a 26-place full-time statutory nursery unit at Hollybank PS to replace existing non-statutory provision **is reasonable** and would be unlikely to have a detrimental impact on other pre-school education provision in the area or have an adverse impact on the stability of the PSEP as a whole. Conversely, given that other pre-school provision in the area will reduce quite considerably from September a loss of provision at Hollybank PS could create difficulty in ensuring that demand for pre-school places in the area can continue to be met

The team notes that, at the time of writing, the pre-school admissions process for the academic year 2025/26 has completed.



Early Years (Pre-School) Team

July 2025

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 29 July 2025 10:27
To: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Subject: RE: DP 748 - Hollybank PS - Establish a new statutory Nursery Unit

Suggested comment:

Uncertainty over the future of Hollybank PG appears to have led to a lower rate of applications to the setting for the 2025-26 academic year than in each of the three previous years. However the case for change, together with the population data for the area and the approved reduction of pre-school provision at Mossley NS suggests that this is not likely to be indicative of a longer-term change in demand for provision at the setting; it is anticipated that the rate of applications is likely to recover if the future if pre-school provision at the site is secured.

Thanks,

Christine Leacock
Early Years, Pre-School Education Programme

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 July 2025 10:35
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Further information required - DP 748 - Hollybank PS - establishment of a Nursery Unit

Good morning [REDACTED]

I have checked with the EA who have confirmed the Minor works raised bear no relation to the Development Proposal or nursery. However, they have provided costs for these works - business case for Hollybank PS was approved in July 2023 for the refurbishment of pupil toilets (within the foundation/KS1 area) and provision of a covered play area. These works relate to Specialist Provision classes established within the school over the last 5-years. The value of the approved business case was £227,517.07.

The EA have emphasised this work does not relate to the Development Proposal or Nursery.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]
DP/IM | Department of Education

Tel: [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 02 May 2025 14:22
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: DP 748 - Hollybank PS - establishment of a Nursery Unit - URGENT

Hi [REDACTED]

Looking at the case for change there does not appear to be a capital cost:

- *Accommodation* No additional accommodation will be required for the nursery unit as Hollybank Pre-School Playgroup currently operates within Hollybank Primary School's building. Should the development proposal be approved, the nursery unit will operate within Hollybank Primary School's building.

Dependent upon what furniture and equipment is required for the nursery there could be a small capital cost. However, without know what agreements would be made by the current provider and the school it would be difficult to comment. Therefore DP/IM would be a nil return,

Thanks

[REDACTED]
DP/IM | Department of Education

Tel: [REDACTED]

Mobile: [REDACTED]

301-6038 HOLLYBANK PS – DP 748 - School Admissions Team (SAT) input**Background**

Hollybank Primary School is a controlled school situated in Newtownabbey.

Hollybank PS took part in the Department's Resetting School Approved Admission and Enrolment Numbers pilot, the aim of which was to explore the potential for a new process in support of effective Area Planning that could facilitate a reduction in a school's approved numbers (to an established lower norm) without the need for a statutory Development Proposal. Hollybank Primary School's approved admissions and enrolment numbers decreased from 60 and 440 to 30 and 210 with effect from 1 September 2020.

Over recent years the school has received the following applications for admission to Year 1:

Year	First Pref Applications	Total Applications (all preferences)	Total Admissions*
2020/21	28	28	28
2021/22	19	19	19
2022/23	14	14	14
2023/24	28	28	28
2024/25	28	28	28
2025/26	22	TBC	TBC

*Admission numbers exclude statemented pupils (all year groups) and also those admitted by appeal

Temporary Variations (TVs)

If a school receives more applications for admission than it has places available it can request a TV of its admissions and/or enrolment number from SAT. Hollybank PS has not required applied for any TVs in the last 5 years.



Eamonn Broderick

Sustainable Schools Policy and Planning

ETI Development Proposal Commentary Paper

Date of last ETI report: [Hollybank Primary School](#) in February 2017; [Hollybank Pre-school setting](#) in March 2017.

DP: 748

Web link:

Date³: 9 April 2025

1. Update on relevant/contextual information since the last published inspection report.

Hollybank Primary School meets the criteria as a sustainable school in relation to enrolment numbers. The enrolment has risen steadily, from 158 to 185, over the last five years.

Two SPiMS classes, Junior Hive and Senior Hive designated as SPLs, opened in November 2020 and November 2021 and the newly appointed staff have been upskilled and shared key aspects of their training with the mainstream staff.

The school has a projected surplus of over £260,000 according to the three-year financial plan.

The school has strong connections within and beyond the local community, notably with the THRIVE and NEST initiatives in Newtownabbey. The principal is an active member of the East Antrim Primary Principals' Group.

2. Knowledge of **any contextual information on the quality of education** in the wider local area.

Only one of the 'transferring schools' listed in the Case for Change has been inspected recently: Silverstream Primary. The inspection indicated that there are clear strengths in the provision and that the senior leaders, working alongside EA staff, have identified and implemented important improvements.

³ This commentary paper is based on the information and evidence available to ETI on this date. Please check the ETI website www.etini.gov.uk for any new inspection reports that may have published after this date.

3. Potential benefits/concerns associated with the claims of **educational** benefits for pupils made in the Case for Change.

Monkstown is an area of social disadvantage: 53.% of the children have free school meals entitlement.

There are currently 21 children enrolled in Hollybank pre-school setting and it is annually over-subscribed. The pre-school currently operates in a classroom in Hollybank Primary School with access to an adjacent outdoor play area. The management committee of the Holly ban Pre-school declared the intention to discontinue provision in June 2024, but kept the provision open for the current year. The Minister had already given Hollybank Pre-school approval, under the standardisation programme, to deliver full-time funded pre-school education beginning in September 2025.

The primary school's governors and the pre-school setting's management committee work closely together. As the current pre-school operates within the school, the accommodation and resources are already in place. The transition from voluntary to statutory provision should be straightforward. The children in will benefit from fulltime places in their pre-school year and will be able to access school meals.

4. Any concerns about the **implementation date or phasing of implementation** should this be applicable (i.e. curricular, EF, accommodation, LSCs, etc).

The implementation date may not allow sufficient time to appoint suitable staff and open the new nursery unit in September 2025.

5. The **SSP Criteria** indicators requiring ETI input (if known and/or for which information is available).

Sustainable Schools Criterion	Indicator	Meets criterion		
		Yes	No (reason(s))	Information not available
Quality Educational Experience	1.1 Attainment levels of pupils, Key Stage tests pending development of new indicators for Primary Schools, GCSE results for Post-Primary Schools.			Not available
	1.2 In primary, a single classroom contains no more than two year-groups in a	Yes		

	composite class; for example, years 1 and 2.			
	1.3 A <u>minimum</u> of four teachers at a primary school. This recognises both the needs of pupils and the demands on teachers.	Yes		
	1.4 The ability of the school to cater for children with <u>Special Educational Needs</u> .	Yes		
	1.5 The ability at post-primary level to be able to provide suitable access to the entitlement framework including, where appropriate, linkages with other schools, the FE sector or other providers.	N/A		
	1.6 The standards and the quality of learning and teaching at the school.		No recent information due to impact of industrial action of staff.	
	1.7 The range of curricular and extra-curricular activities available for children including career guidance, physical education, music, art, drama and science.	Yes		
	1.8 The quality of the <u>physical</u> environment for learning and teaching i.e. the condition, energy and water efficiency and suitability of the buildings.	Yes		
	1.9 The quality of, and arrangements for, pastoral care including the active promotion of the principles of social justice in all areas of the formal and informal curriculum.	Yes, based on evidence of recent visits to the SPiMS.		
Strong Leadership and Management by Boards of Governors and Principals	4.1 Governors' views on the school based on quantitative and qualitative evidence.	Yes		
	4.8 There is a school development plan in place and progress is being made to achieve the plan's aims and objectives.	Yes		
	4.9 Pupil behaviour, expulsions, suspensions and non-attendance as well as positive behaviours such as involvement in			Not known at this time.

	school management (e.g. buddying and mentoring schemes).			
Strong links with the Community	6.1 Degree and quality of parental involvement (schools will be asked to provide evidence on this).	Yes		
	6.3 Contribution of the school to the community (schools will be asked to provide evidence on this).	Yes		
	6.4 Presence of other features of provision, e.g. nursery or specialist unit.	Yes		

6. Summary of impact of the proposal

This proposal supports a transition from the closure of a voluntary pre-school setting to the establishment of a statutory nursery unit in the same accommodation. This development will ensure that families in the locality have access to full-time pre-school provision, with no financial impact regarding accommodation and resources.

There is unlikely to be an adverse impact on other pre-school providers in the area as the demand for places remains high.

Approved by ACI: Nicola Byrne