

## COPY OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

### Cover Note

<b>DP No.</b>	DP 747	
<b>School</b>	Hazelwood Integrated College, Belfast	
<b>Proposal</b>	<i>“Hazelwood Integrated College will increase its approved admission number from 160 to 175 with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter.”</i>	
<b>Minister’s Decision</b>	Approved with modification	
<b>Date of Decision</b>	18/12/2025	
<b>Minister’s Comments</b>	I have considered the submission and on the basis that there are limited financial implications and there continues to be unmet demand for this particular school, I approve this development proposal.	
<b>Additional notes</b>	n/a	
<b>Information redacted</b>	Some information and personal data may have been removed in line with the principles of the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Act.	
	<b>Key</b>	<b>Details</b>
	■	redaction
	*	refers to less than five cases where data is considered sensitive
	#	means figure has been suppressed to prevent disclosure of sensitive information under rules of disclosure

**From:** Clare Foley  
 Area Planning Policy Team (East Region)  
 (Cleared by Scott Harbinson 10/12/2025)  
 (Cleared by Heather Cousins 12/12/2025)

**Date:** 12 December 2025

**To:** Paul Given MLA  
 Minister for Education

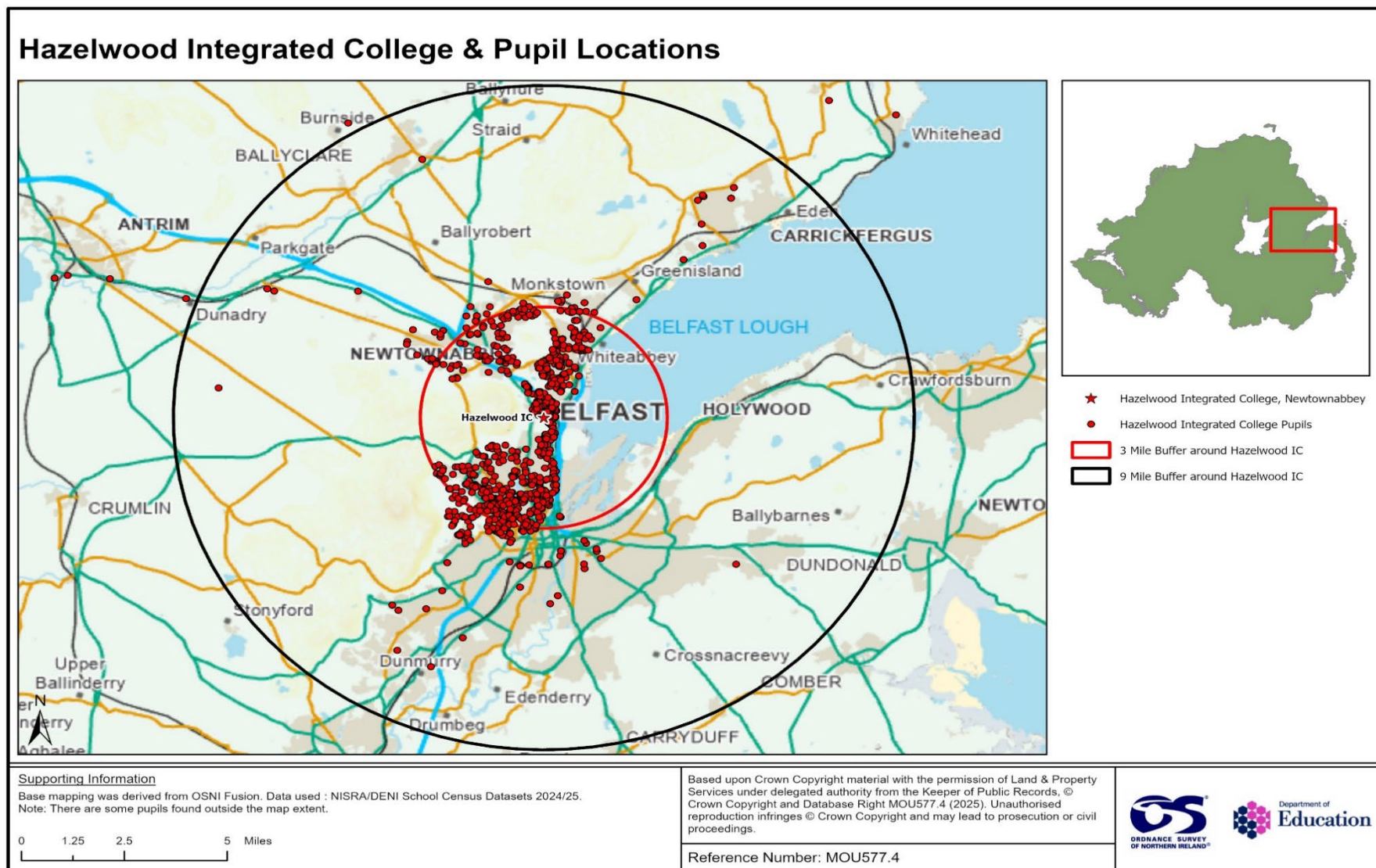
*Copy distribution below*

## **DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL (DP) 747 HAZELWOOD INTEGRATED COLLEGE**

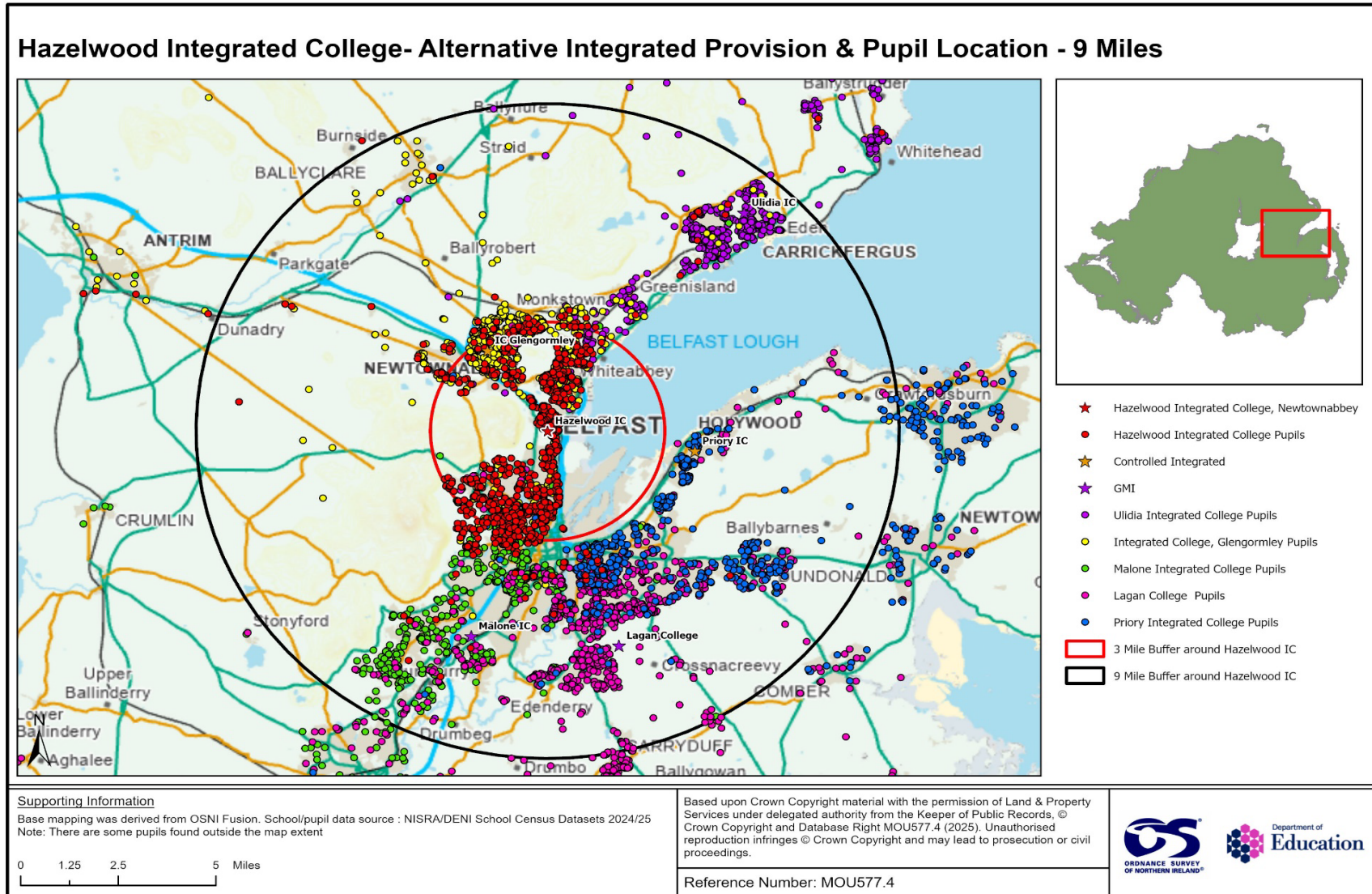
<b>Issue:</b>	<p>Development Proposal No 747 proposes that –</p> <p><b>Hazelwood Integrated College will increase its approved admissions number from 160 to 175 with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter.</b></p>
<b>Timescale:</b>	Routine
<b>Financial/Resource Implications:</b>	<p><u>School Budget</u></p> <p>As the proposal does not seek an increase in enrolment any change to the school budget would be limited.</p> <p><u>Accommodation</u></p> <p>The school’s major work project continues to progress based on an approved enrolment of 1010, including 210 sixth form pupils plus additional SEN accommodation.</p> <p>This proposal will have no impact on the number of centrally timetabled classrooms or ancillary accommodation other than a minor reduction in the sixth form provision.</p> <p>The technical design has been completed, and costs are currently being finalised.</p> <p><u>Staffing</u></p> <p>There is no additional staffing required for this development proposal. The school has been operating with an admissions number of 175 for the past three years.</p>

<b>FOI Implications:</b>	The contents of this submission are likely to be fully disclosable.
<b>Statutory Duty Implications:</b>	<p>Article 64 of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989.</p> <p>Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.</p> <p>Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.</p> <p>Article 44 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986</p> <p>Shared Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.</p>
<b>Presentational Issues:</b>	<p>This decision may prompt media interest. Should any queries arise, the Press Office will draw on this proposal and agree lines to take with officials.</p> <p>(Agreed with Press Office)</p>
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<p>It is recommended that you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="596 1016 1433 1263">i. Approve DP 747, with a modification to the implementation date (as the proposed date has now lapsed), that – Hazelwood Integrated College will increase its approved admissions number from 160 to 175, with effect from 1 September 2026, or as soon as possible thereafter.</li> <li data-bbox="596 1352 1390 1509">ii. Agree that this submission (with the appropriate redactions) will be published on the Department’s website once the Board of Governors of the school and the Education Authority have been informed.</li> </ul>

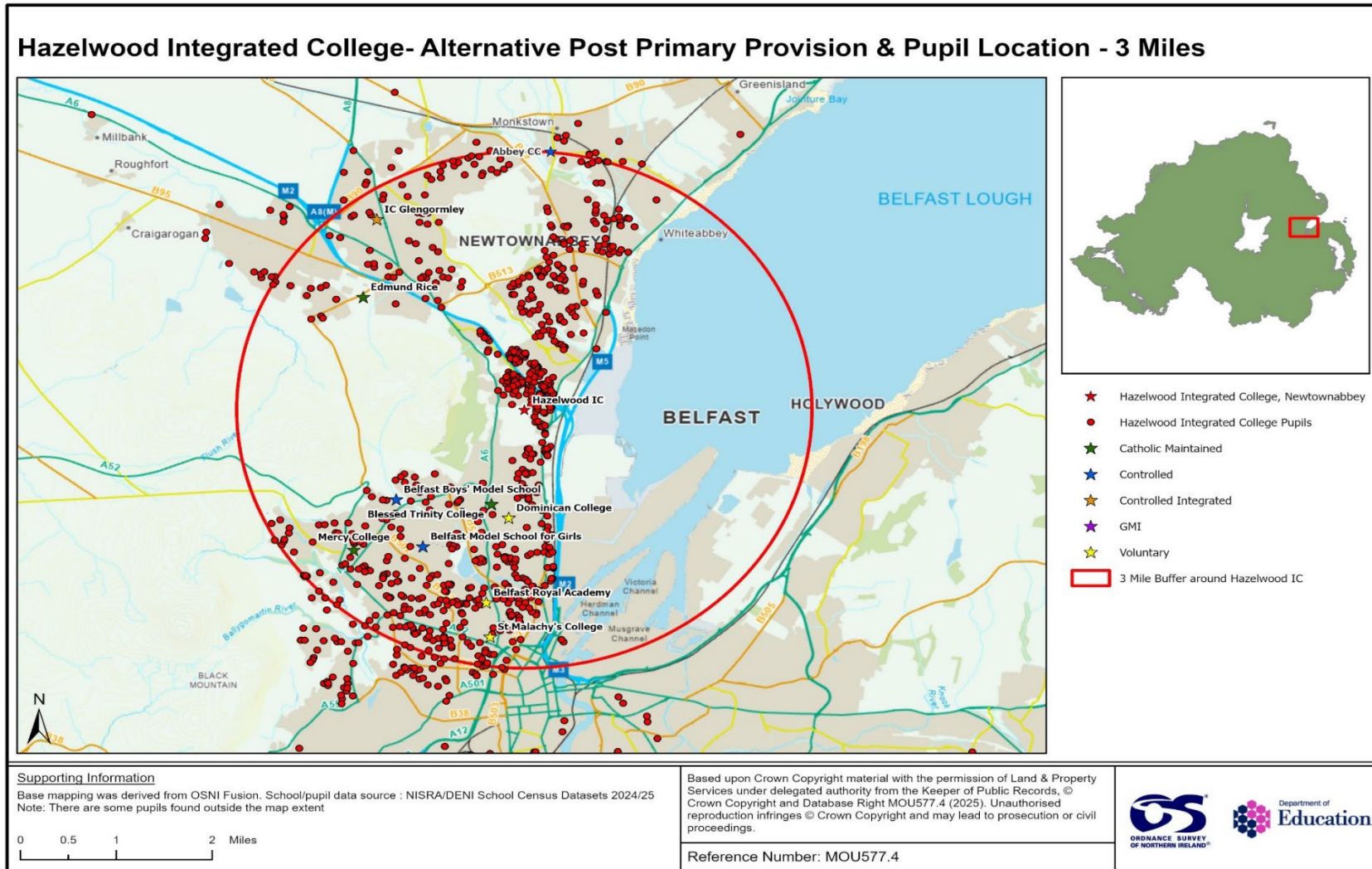
Map 1: Hazelwood Integrated College location and pupil location (at 3 and 9 mile radius)



Map 2: Hazelwood Integrated College and Alternative Integrated Post-Primary Provision (9 mile radius)

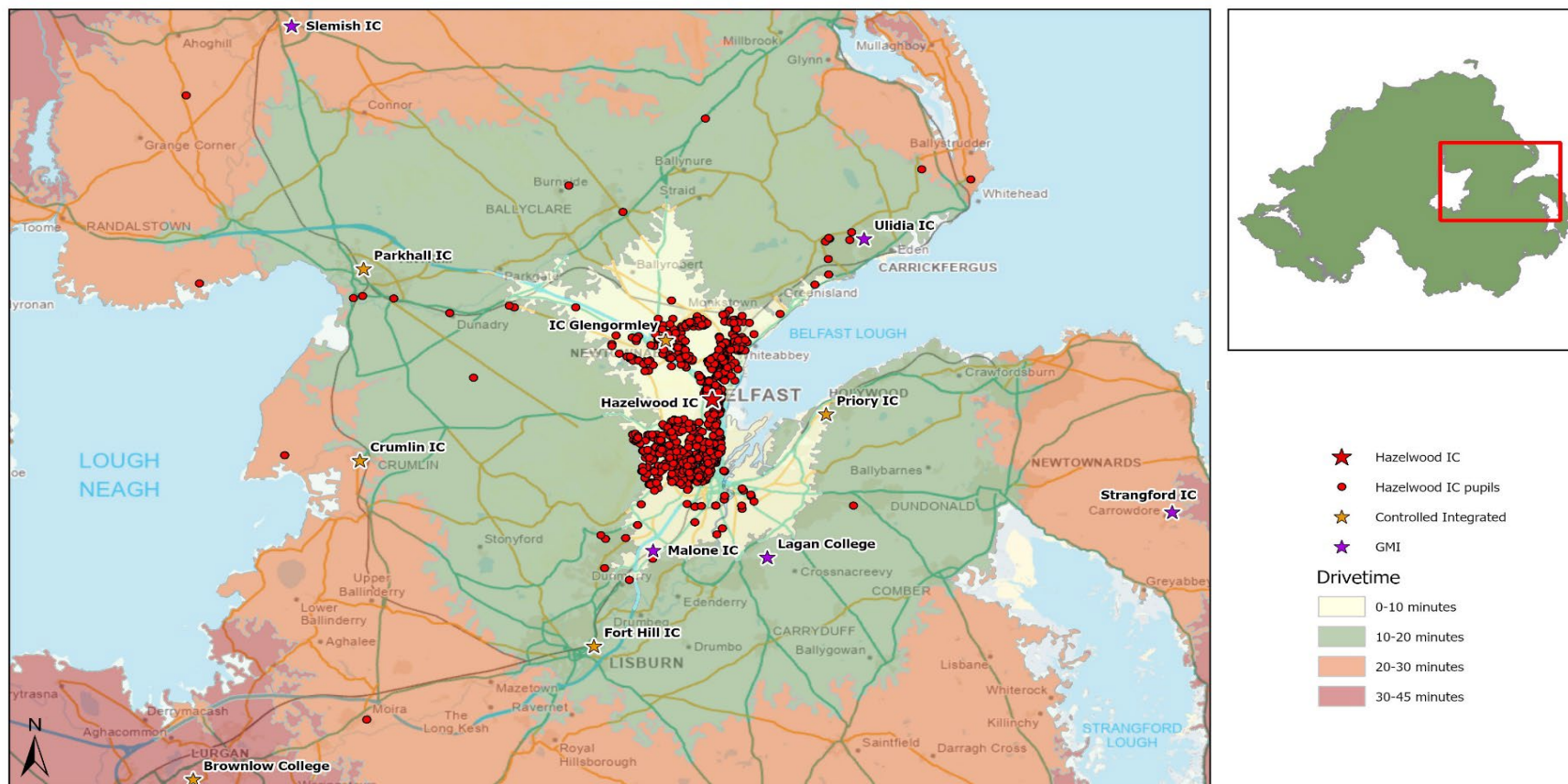


Map 3: Hazelwood Integrated College and Alternative Post-Primary Provision (3 mile radius)

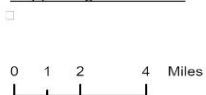


## MAP 4 Hazelwood Integrated College Drive Time Map

### Hazelwood IC : Pupil locations & alternative integrated provision up to a 45-minute drive time



#### Supporting Information



The dataset used in this analysis has been derived from OSNI Fusion. Drive times are approximations estimated using Road Classification and settlement limits and do not use actual speed limits. Local variations regarding Speed Limits can exist within the terms of the Road Traffic (Speed Limits) Bill 2015

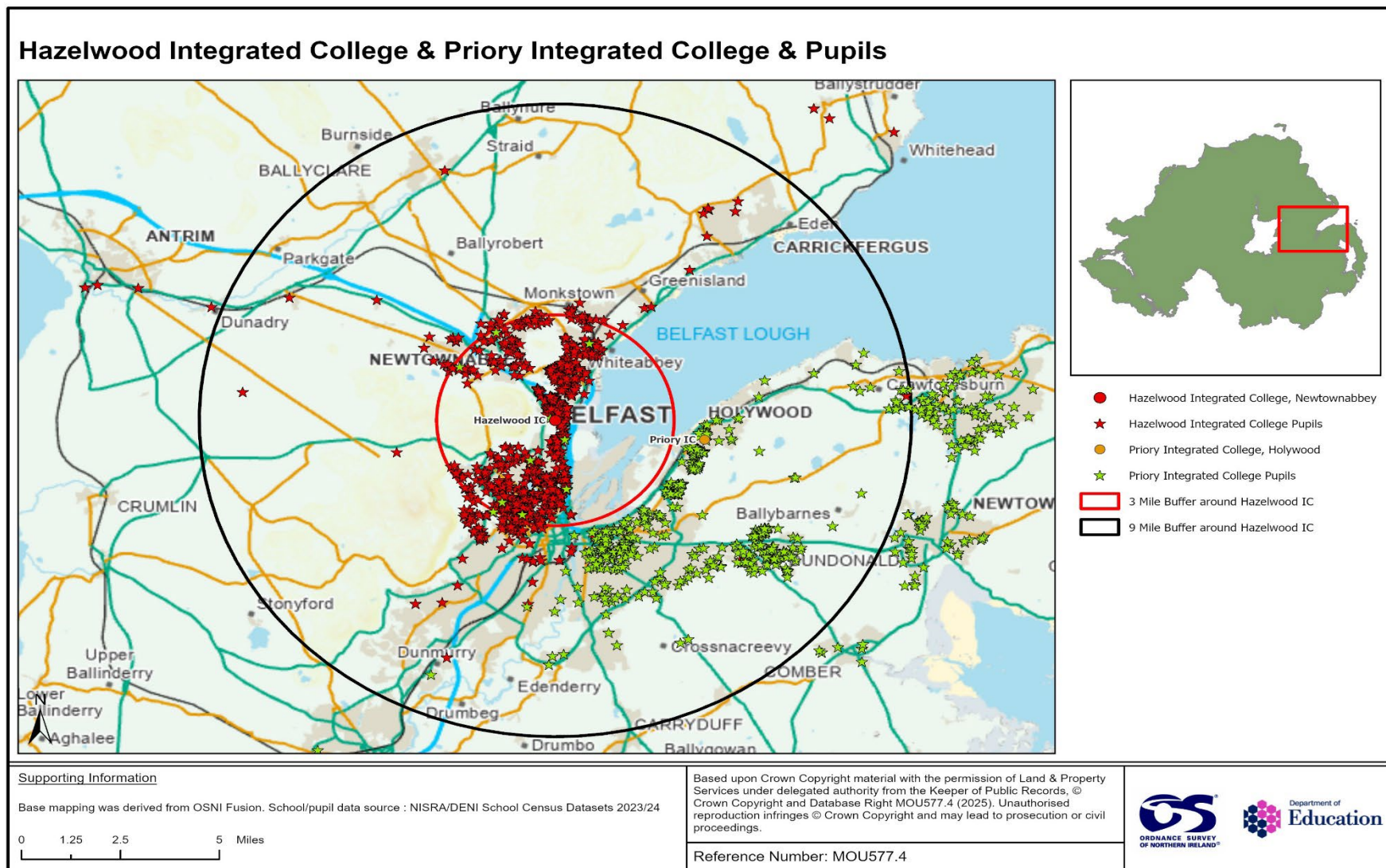
Base mapping also derived from OSNI Fusion.  
School & pupil data : NISRA/DENI School Census Datasets 2024/25

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Reference Number: MOU577.4 Map created :11/06/2025



# MAP 5 Hazelwood Integrated College and Priory Integrated College Pupil Locations



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<b>APPENDIX I</b>	ETI Comments

## INTRODUCTION

1. On the 10 April 2025 the Education Authority (EA), on behalf of the Board of Governors (BoG) of Hazelwood Integrated College (IC), published Development Proposal (DP) 747 which states that ***“Hazelwood Integrated College will increase its approved admissions number of from 160 to 175 with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter.”***

2. The two-month statutory objection period for the proposal commenced on the date of publication and ended on 10 June 2025. Copies of the published proposal and the proposer’s Case for Change (CfC) are attached at **Appendix A** and **Appendix B** respectively. The Equality Screening document for DP 747 is attached at **Appendix C**.

3. The CfC states that the College currently has an admissions number of 160 which has been consistently oversubscribed (since 2016/17) and they have sought and been granted several temporary variations (TVs) to address this. This proposal would formalise the admissions and allow school leaders to plan appropriately. The approved enrolment number at the College was increased from 850 to 1010 in 2017, and the CfC indicates that due to the restructuring of sixth form no increase to the current enrolment number of 1010 is required.

## BACKGROUND

### School and area

4. Hazelwood IC is a non-selective, co-educational Grant-Maintained Integrated (GMI) post-primary school, catering for students aged 11-19. It is situated on a 4.8-hectare site on the Whitewell Road in North Belfast (see **MAP 1**). The school draws around 62.2% of its pupils from the Belfast Local Government District (LGD) and most of the remainder from the Antrim and Newtownabbey LGD.

5. The College was established in 1985 with an enrolment of 17 pupils. It transferred to its current site in September 1986 with a student body of 70 pupils. The College gained GMI status in September 1988.

### *Previous Area Planning Activity*

6. On 24 February 2017, DP 480 was approved confirming that Hazelwood IC would increase its approved admissions from 140 to 160 and its approved enrolment number from 850 to 1010 on a phased basis from September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.

## Area Context

7. Hazelwood IC is situated in the Belfast LGD. On the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017, Bellevue 2, where the school is located, is placed 123 out of 890 (1 being the most deprived and 890 being least deprived). Poverty and Income Deprivation remains a key issue in the Tigers Bay, Mount Vernon, Whitewell / White City areas which are all withing walking distance of the College.

## Strategic Area Plan (2017-2020) & Annual Action Plans

8. The *Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2022-27*, published on 29 June 2022, provides the strategic direction for Area Planning over the next five years. Hazelwood IC's intention to increase its admissions number was highlighted as a medium-term workstream in Operational Plan 1: 2022-2024 and was carried forward as a short-term workstream in Operational Plan 2: 2024-2026. The proposal aims to increase parity of access for all to appropriate pathways.

## Admissions and Enrolment

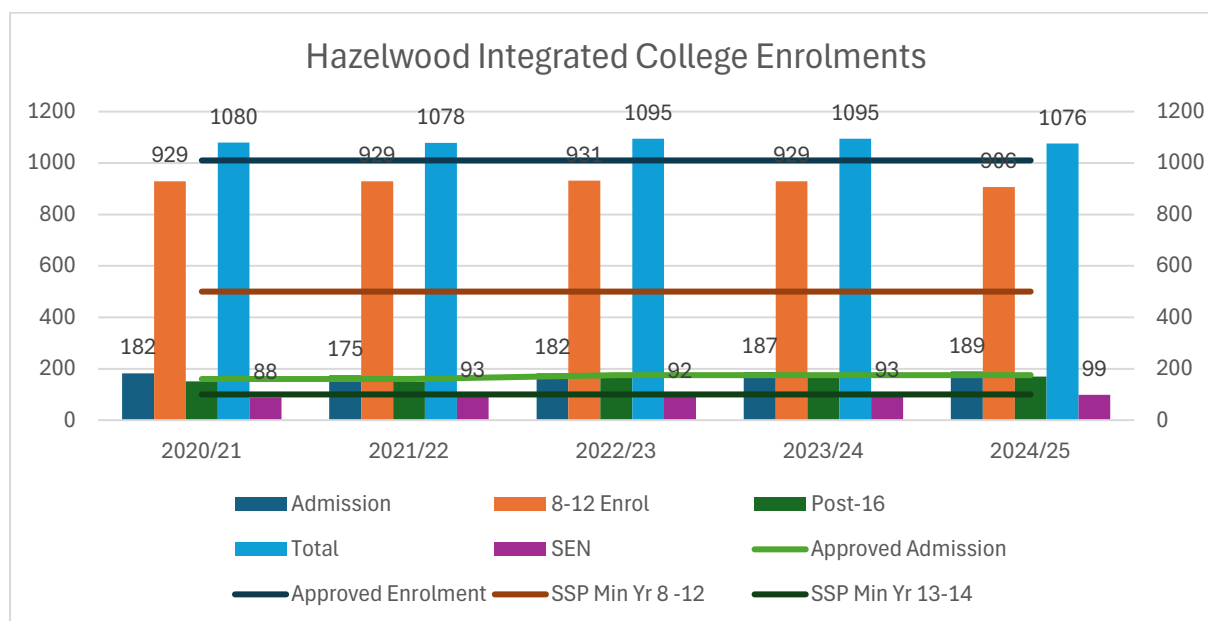
9. Since 2022/23 Hazelwood IC has had approved admissions increased to 175. These approved numbers were agreed by the Department's School Admissions Team (SAT) as part of the Additional Year 8 Places exercise, on a temporary basis in anticipation of an increased cohort transferring to post-primary education and as a means to alleviate pressures on the transfer process.

10. In 2024/25 Hazelwood IC had: -

- 1076 pupils enrolled of which 189 were in Year 8; there were 906 pupils in Years 8-12 and 170 at post-16;
- 99 pupils with a Statement of Special Education Need (SEN) (Stage 3) and 160 at Stage 1-2 of the process;
- 525 (48.8%) of pupils entitled to Free School Meals (FSM); and
- 483 (44.89%) pupils from Protestant tradition; 331(30.76%) from the Roman Catholic tradition and 262 (24.35%) who identify at Other.

11. **Chart 1** illustrates the admissions and enrolments at Hazelwood IC over the past five years. The total admissions and enrolment numbers include pupils with Statements of SEN.

**Chart 1 Admissions and Enrolment History at Hazelwood Integrated College**



Source: Annual Census Return

12. “Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools” (SSP) recommends that a post-primary school should have a minimum enrolment of 500 pupils for Y8-Y12 and 100 pupils for sixth form. **Chart 1** shows that Hazelwood IC has exceeded the recommended figure for Y8-Y12 and at post-16 in each of the last five years.

### **Alternative Post-primary Provision in the Area**

13. A snapshot of post-primary education provision in the area, detailing the admission and enrolment data and the latest Education Training Inspectorate (ETI) inspection assessment, is attached at **Table 1**. Within a three-mile mapping radius of Hazelwood IC there are 11 alternative post-primary schools. As this proposal relates to Integrated provision, alternative Integrated provision has been considered within a nine-mile radius and alternative provision in other sectors within a three-mile radius.

### **Alternative Integrated Provision within a nine-mile radius**

14. **Map 2** shows alternative Integrated post-primary schools located within a nine-mile radius of Hazelwood IC, together with their respective pupil catchment areas. While the majority of these schools serve largely distinct geographical cohorts, there is evidence of some overlap in pupil distribution, most notably between Hazelwood IC and Integrated College, Glengormley.

15. Two of these are Controlled Integrated Schools and three are GMI Schools. Together the six Integrated schools have a total of 5580 approved places and in 2024/25 the actual total enrolment was 5931 including supernumerary pupils. Each of the schools are considered below.

16. Integrated College, Glengormley is a co-educational, non-selective Controlled Integrated post-primary school located in Glengormley in the Antrim and Newtownabbey LGD. The school transformed to Integrated status in 2022 and it is 3.1 miles from Hazelwood IC by road. In 2024/25 the school had approved admission and enrolment figures of 210 and 1250 respectively, with actual admissions and enrolment of 207 and 1149 (including supernumerary pupils). The school had 245 available places.

17. Priory IC is a co-educational, non-selective, Controlled Integrated post-primary school situated in Holywood, within the Ards and North Down LGD. While this is 3.81 miles from Hazelwood IC it is across Belfast Lough and is actually 8.6 miles by road. In 2024/25 Priory IC had approved admissions and enrolment figures of 100 and 600 respectively, with actual admissions and enrolment of 134 and 710. The school had only three available places. The most recent ETI inspection of the school conducted in November 2016 concluded that the Priory IC demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement. As shown in **MAP 5**, the catchment areas for Hazelwood IC and Priory IC are quite distinct therefore this has not been included as one of the closest schools when considering Integrated provision later in the submission.

18. Malone IC is a, co-educational, non-selective, GMI post-primary school situated in Belfast 10.1 miles by road from Hazelwood IC. In 2024/25 the school had approved admissions and enrolment figures of 130 and 800 respectively, with actual admissions and enrolment of 148 and 778 (including supernumerary pupils). The school had 90 available places. The most recent ETI inspection of the school conducted in April 2017 concluded that the school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement.

19. Lagan College is a co-educational, non-selective, GMI post-primary school situated in Manse Road, Belfast. It is in Lisburn and Castlereagh LGD and is 7.4 miles by road from Hazelwood IC. In 2024/25 the school had approved admissions and enrolment figures of 220 and 1300 respectively, with actual admissions and enrolment of 241 and 1480 (including supernumerary pupils). The school had no available places. The most recent ETI inspection was impacted by Action Short of Strike (ASOS) and the April 2013 inspection assessed provision as 'Good'.

20. Ulidia IC is a co-educational, non-selective, GMI post-primary school situated on Victoria Rise, Carrickfergus. It is in the Mid and East Antrim LGD and is 7.83 miles from Hazelwood IC (8.9 miles by road). In 2024/25 the school had approved admissions and enrolment figures of 110 and 620 respectively, with actual admissions and enrolment of 129 and 738. The school had no available places. The most recent ETI inspection was impacted by ASOS and the Inspection in April 2016 concluded that the school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement.

### **Alternative Catholic Maintained Provision**

21. **Table 1** shows three alternative Catholic Maintained post-primary schools within a three-mile mapping radius of Hazelwood IC. They are Blessed Trinity College, Belfast; Edmund Rice, Newtownabbey; and Mercy College, Belfast. In 2024/25 these schools when considered together had approved admissions and enrolment of 425 and 2,790 respectively with actual admissions and enrolment of 487 and 3073 (including supernumerary pupils). Together the schools had 50 available places with Edmund Rice having no available places.

22. The most recent completed ETI inspections were impacted by ASOS, however the previous reports assessed Edmund Rice as 'very good' and Mercy College as 'Good'. Blessed Trinity had a new style report in January 2025 which does not provide an overall rating.

### **Alternative Controlled Provision within a three-mile radius**

23. As shown in **Map 3**, and on the snapshot at **Table 1** there are three Controlled post-primary schools located within a three-mile (mapping) radius of Hazelwood IC. They are the Boys' and Girls' Model Schools and Abbey Community College. In 2024/25 these schools, when considered together, had approved admissions and enrolment of 340 and 2965 respectively with actual admissions and enrolment of 548 and 3113 (including supernumerary pupils) and 143 available places.

24. ETI inspections at each of the three alternative controlled schools have been impacted by ASOS, however the most recent completed ETI inspections assess the quality of education at Belfast Boys' Model and Abbey Community College as having "Capacity to identify and bring about improvement". The Girls' Model was last reviewed under a Specialist School Inspection in 2009.

### **Alternative Grammar Provision**

25. **Table 1 and MAP 3** show there are three alternative Voluntary Grammar schools (VGS) located within a three-mile radius of Hazelwood IC. They are Dominican College, Fortwilliam; Belfast Royal Academy and St Malachy's College, Belfast. In 2024/25 when considered together these schools had approved admissions and enrolment of 520 and 3,599 respectively with actual admissions and enrolment of 542 and 3,749 respectively. In 2024/25, both Belfast Royal Academy and St Malachy's College had no available places, while Dominican College had only two available places.

26. The most recent completed ETI inspection Belfast Royal Academy concluded that the school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement,

while the quality of education at Dominican College was assessed as 'good' and at St Malachy's College was 'very good'.

TABLE 1 Hazelwood Integrated College Snapshot

Hazelwood Integrated College - Alternative Provision - 3 mile radius & Integrated Provision - 9 mile radius																					
DE Ref Number	School Name & Postcode	Urban or Rural	Lookup Distance	Distance in Miles as per Google maps	2024/25 & 2025/26 Approved Enrolment Numbers	2022/23 Actual Enrol Y8-Y12 (incl. Supernumerary pupils)	2022/23 Actual Enrol Post 16 (incl. Supernumerary pupils)	2022/23 Total Enrolment	2023/24 Actual Enrol Y8-Y12 (incl. Supernumerary pupils)	2023/24 Actual Enrol Post 16 (incl. Supernumerary pupils)	2023/24 Total Enrolment	2024/25 Actual Enrol Y8-Y12 (incl. Supernumerary pupils)	2024/25 Actual Enrol Post 16 (incl. Supernumerary pupils)	2024/25 Total Enrolment	2024/25 Supernumerary pupils	2024/25 Available Places	2024/25 Actual Y8 Admissions (incl. Supernumerary pupils)	2024/25 & 2025/26 Approved Admissions Numbers	2025/26 Total Y8 1st Pref. Apps	2025/26 Over /Under Subscribed at Y8 - 1st Pref. Apps	ETI reports - Date of Inspection Overall Assessment
1260269	Hazelwood Integrated College, Newtownabbey BT36 7ES	Urban			1010	931	164	1095	929	166	1095	906	170	1076	99	33	189	175	187	O - 12	Feb 2019 - ASOS Feb 2016 - Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
<b>Subtotal</b>					<b>1010</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>1095</b>	<b>929</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>1095</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>1076</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>187</b>		
<b>Controlled Integrated</b>																					
3250202	Integrated College, Glengormley BT36 5HP	Urban	2.69	3.1	1250	880	71	951	1015	69	1084	1084	65	1149	144	245	207	210	162	U - 48	Feb 2020 - ASOS March 2017 - ASOS
4250024	Priory Integrated College, Hollywood BT18 9ER	Urban	3.81	8.6	600	644	68	712	624	92	716	627	83	710	113	3	134	100	73	U - 27	Nov 2016 - Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
<b>Subtotal</b>					<b>1850</b>	<b>1524</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>1663</b>	<b>1639</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>1800</b>	<b>1711</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>1859</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>235</b>		
<b>GMI</b>																					
1260294	Malone Integrated College BT10 0JB	Urban	5.97	10.1	800	682	67	749	683	100	783	684	94	778	68	90	148	130	114	U - 16	April 2017 - Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
4260255	Lagan College, Belfast BT8 6SA	Rural	6.18	7.4	1300	1155	297	1452	1167	308	1475	1162	318	1480	124	0	241	220	300	O - 80	Feb 2019 - ASOS April 2013 - Good
3260299	Ulidia Integrated College, Carrickfergus BT38 7JL	Urban	7.83	8.9	620	596	126	722	594	103	697	609	129	738	76	0	139	110	173	O - 63	May 2019 - ASOS April 2016 - Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
<b>Subtotal</b>					<b>2720</b>	<b>2433</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>2923</b>	<b>2444</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>2955</b>	<b>2455</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>2996</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>587</b>		

DE Ref Number	School Name & Postcode	Urban or Rural	Lookup Distance	Distance in Miles as per Google maps	2024/25 & 2025/26 Approved Enrolment Numbers	2022/23 Actual Enrol Y8-Y12 (incl. Supernumerary pupils)	2022/23 Actual Enrol Post 16 (incl. Supernumerary pupils)	2022/23 Total Enrolment	2023/24 Actual Enrol Y8-Y12 (incl. Supernumerary pupils)	2023/24 Actual Enrol Post 16 (incl. Supernumerary pupils)	2023/24 Total Enrolment	2024/25 Actual Enrol Y8-Y12 (incl. Supernumerary pupils)	2024/25 Actual Enrol Post 16 (incl. Supernumerary pupils)	2024/25 Total Enrolment	2024/25 Supernumerary pupils	2024/25 Available Places	2024/25 Actual Y8 Admissions (incl. Supernumerary pupils)	2024/25 & 2025/26 Approved Admissions Numbers	2025/26 Total Y8 1st Pref. Apps	2025/26 Over /Under Subscribed at Y8 - 1st Pref. Apps	ETI reports - Date of Inspection Overall Assessment
<b>Catholic Maintained</b>																					
1230321	Blessed Trinity College BT15 4DZ	Urban	1.15	1.9	1300	984	290	1274	1032	328	1360	1034	328	1362	98	36	211	195	204	O - 9	Jan. 2025 - New Style report Dec 2018 - ASOS
3230203	Edmund Rice College BT36 7AU	Urban	2.13	3	25/26 - 750 24/25 - 740	670	129	799	684	167	851	685	161	846	91	0	138	115	95	U - 20	Feb 2018 - ASOS Nov 2010 - Very Good
1230104	Mercy College, Belfast BT14 7QR	Urban	2.41	3.3	750	693	117	810	724	130	854	721	144	865	129	14	138	115	67	U - 48	Feb 2018 - ASOS Oct 2011 - Good
<b>Subtotal</b>					<b>25/26 - 2800 24/25 - 2790</b>	<b>2347</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>2883</b>	<b>2440</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>3065</b>	<b>2440</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>3073</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>366</b>		
<b>Controlled</b>																					
1210022	Belfast Boys' Model School BT14 6RB	Urban	1.69	2.4	1045 *	939	165	1104	975	166	1141	958	170	1128	137	54	190	190 *	161	U - 29	Dec 2018 - Demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement
1210021	Belfast Model School for Girls' BT14 6NQ	Urban	1.91	3.2	1100 *	919	166	1085	961	134	1095	973	127	1100	53	53	203	200	129	U - 71	Jan 2017 - ASOS Dec 2009 - Specialist School Inspection
3210313	Abbey Community College, Newtownabbey BT37 0EA	Urban	3.01	3.6	820	772	89	861	773	101	874	777	108	885	101	36	155	140	115	U - 25	Dec 2019- ASOS Jan 2017- Capacity to identify and bring about the necessary improvements.
<b>Subtotal</b>					<b>2965</b>	<b>2630</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>3050</b>	<b>2709</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>3110</b>	<b>2708</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>3113</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>405</b>		
<b>Voluntary</b>																					
1420082	Dominican College FortWilliam BT15 4AQ	Urban	1.19	2	1050	815	262	1077	816	262	1078	811	258	1069	21	2	156	150	151	O - 1	Jan 2018 - ASOS Oct 2010 - Good
1420028	Belfast Royal Academy BT14 6JL	Urban	2.27	3	1410	1052	376	1428	1055	399	1454	1055	415	1470	50	0	210	200	250	O - 50	Oct 2019 - Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
1420030	St Malachy's College, Belfast BT15 2AE	Urban	2.66	3.5	25/26 - 1165 24/25 - 1139	908	248	1156	929	251	1180	929	281	1210	48	0	176	170	139	U - 31	Jan. 2020 - ASOS March 2014 - Very Good
<b>Subtotal</b>					<b>25/26 - 3625 24/25 - 3599</b>	<b>2775</b>	<b>886</b>	<b>3661</b>	<b>2800</b>	<b>912</b>	<b>3712</b>	<b>2795</b>	<b>954</b>	<b>3749</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>540</b>		
<b>Grand Total</b>					<b>25/26 - 14970 24/25 - 14934</b>	<b>12640</b>	<b>2635</b>	<b>15275</b>	<b>12961</b>	<b>2776</b>	<b>15737</b>	<b>13015</b>	<b>2851</b>	<b>15866</b>	<b>1352</b>	<b>566</b>	<b>2635</b>	<b>2230</b>	<b>2320</b>		

ASOS - Action Short of Strike

The actual enrolment and admissions numbers include supernumerary pupils (as per annual Census information).

The 1st preference applications do not include supernumerary pupils - position at the conclusion of the EA Post Primary School Admissions Process, info provided by the EA on 14.05.2025

DP 619 - St Malachy's College - Approved 27.3.2022. Increase in approved numbers from 1050/150 > 1190/170, from Sept 2022. Annual phased increase in the approved enrolment number.

DP 660 - Glengormley HS - Approved 16.3.2022. Transform to Controlled Integrated status, from Sept. 2022. New name is Integrated College, Glengormley.

DP 546 - Belfast Model School for Girls - Approved 15.5.2019. Increase in approved numbers from 950/160 > 1250/200, with effect from Sept. 2019 or asap thereafter. Annual phased increase in the approved enrolment number.

\* It should be noted that this school has requested a temporary reduction in its approved enrolment number effective from the 2024 /25 School Year due to issues securing additional accommodation.

DP 545 - Belfast Boys' Model School - Approved 10.5.2019. Increase in approved numbers from 905/151 > 1250/200, with effect from Sept. 2019 or asap thereafter. Annual phased increase in the approved enrolment number.

\* It should be noted that this school has requested a temporary reduction in its approved numbers effective from the 2024/25 School Year due to issues securing additional accommodation.

DP 444 - Edmund Rice College - Approved 23.3.2016. School to be Co-Ed and increase approved numbers to 750 / 115, with effect from Sept. 2016 or asap thereafter. Annual phased increase in the approved enrolment number.

## CASE FOR CHANGE (CfC)

27. The CfC highlights that the BoGs have been in favour of Hazelwood IC applying for temporary increases to admissions for a number of years. Prior to the TV application for the September 2022 intake, it was agreed that the school would stabilise its requests for increase in admissions to a maximum of 175. The total enrolment will remain at 1010. The College has Departmental approval in place for a temporary increase of its admissions number to 175 until September 2025. The full CfC presented by the EA on behalf of Hazelwood IC is attached at **Appendix B**.

28. The CfC outlines the rationale for the proposed increase to admissions. The key assertions are summarised below: -

- The College has an approved admissions number of 160 and this is consistently oversubscribed;
- The proposal is in response to the sustained high demand for Integrated Education in North Belfast; Hazelwood IC has long been the Integrated choice for families in North Belfast, Newtownabbey and the surrounding areas;
- The need for growth has been recognised by the Department in their approval of TV for the College in 2018 (194 places); 2019 (200 places) and since 2022 (175 places). The temporary nature of these increases presents insecurity and an inability for school leaders to plan appropriately for the future;
- The demand for places is not limited to Year 8. The College holds a significant number of applications on a waiting list across all year groups;
- The Governors believe this DP is in line with the strategic Area Planning to *“create a network of viable and sustainable schools that are of the right type, the right size, located in the right place and have a focus on raising standards”*;
- Integrated College, Glengormley, which transformed to Integrated status in 2022 is the nearest Integrated School and therefore most likely to feel an impact from the increased admissions at Hazelwood IC. However, Hazelwood IC has had several increases in its admissions since 2022 and despite this Integrated College, Glengormley has still shown considerable growth in applications and enrolment;
- There is a statutory duty under Article 64 of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 for the Department to encourage, facilitate and support the development of Integrated education. The meaning of ‘support’ is further clarified in the Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.

- The CfC outlines the sustainability of Hazelwood IC and asserts that the College is financially stable and demonstrates education outcomes which are consistently high; and
- The CfC sets out how Hazelwood IC meets all of the requirements of an Integrated school. It also notes that the location of Hazelwood IC historically is a recognised 'interface' area where young people from different religious backgrounds and communities would not ordinarily have the opportunity to get to know one another or build relationships.

## **STATUTORY DP PROCESSES**

### **Pre-publication consultation**

29. The CfC confirms that the BoG decided to proceed with the DP on 24 November 2023. Members of staff were informed of the BoG decision following the meeting on 24 November 2023 and updated during Principal briefings at Staff Development Days. Staff were formally invited to e-mail to schedule 1-1 or small group meetings to discuss the DP with the Principal between 2 – 31 May 2024. No concerns were raised by staff.

30. A four-week consultation process took place with stakeholders between 1 May and 31 May 2024. The Principal wrote to 172 principals of primary schools within a 10-mile radius using an on-line questionnaire. The same questionnaire was issued to parents / carers seeking their feedback, and students were asked for their views through Student Council representatives in April and May.

31. A total of 52 responses to the online questionnaire were received from the following: -

- 1 member of staff at Hazelwood
- 1 member of the community
- 5 principals of feeder primary schools
- 1 member of staff from a feeder primary school
- 42 parents / carers of students at Hazelwood
- 2 other – Principals from Primary Schools within a 10-mile radius

32. Of those who responded 97% (50 respondents) stated that they were in favour of the DP and 3% (two (2) parent respondents) stated that they were not. A number of positive comments were also received, and these can be found in CfC at **Appendix B**.

33. In accordance with Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, a copy of the proposal was sent on 23 January 2025 to schools, which in

the opinion of the EA might be affected by the proposal. A total of 119 schools which might be affected by the proposal were forwarded correspondence and invited to submit their responses to the EA 5 March 2025.

34. The EA received one response from an affected schools and one from the Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC), both were not in support of the proposal.

35. The CfC provides a summary of the responses and notes the following key issues: -

- The current capacity in post-primary integrated schools in the local area is higher than demand for integrated post-primary places;
- Acknowledges the significant growth in the enrolment but emphasises that there are available Year 8 places in a local Integrated College in the area;
- The falling enrolment trajectory in the primary sector which will impact at post-primary level, 2026 and beyond needs to be considered. While TVs for Hazelwood IC, from 160 to 175, have not had an impact on Integrated post-primary provision in the area to date, declining live births in the Antrim and Newtownabbey and Belfast LGDs suggest that this will not be the case going forward should the admissions of 175 be made permanent.
- While Hazelwood IC is consistently oversubscribed at Year 8, the Transformation of Integrated College Glengormley has increased the post-primary places available in the area.

## **EA Comments**

36. The EA have commented, acknowledging their duty to assist the Department's statutory duty to encourage, facilitate and support integrated education under the Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. However, the EA does not support the proposal for Hazelwood IC to increase its approved admissions from 160 to 175.

37. The EA assert that the additional places (TVs) awarded to Hazelwood IC in the years 2022 to 2025 were required to address population peaks. In strategically planning for integrated post-primary places within the area, primary schools are showing a downturn in enrolment numbers which, this year, is filtering into the post-primary sector. Enrolments and applications to the main feeder primary schools for Hazelwood IC are declining.

38. Currently there are available Year 8 places at post-primary schools in the area. The Integrated College, Glengormley transformed from Controlled to Controlled

Integrated status in 2022 and, while numbers have increased, the College has available places at Year 8.

39. Therefore, in consideration of the declining trajectory in transfer numbers from primary schools and current available places in the Integrated College, Glengormley, any increase in admissions at Hazelwood IC will have a negative impact on other local Integrated post-primary schools.

### **Two-month Statutory Objection Period**

40. The statutory objection period on the proposal began on 10 April 2025 and ended on 10 June 2025. During the objection period the Department received three letters of objection and two letters of support. The objections came from two local post-primary schools and the CSSC and the letters of support from the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) and the Integrated Education Fund (IEF). Copies of the responses received by the Department are included in full at **Appendix D**. A summary of the key issues is set out below: -

### **OBJECTIONS**

#### **1. The Board of Governors of Integrated College, Glengormley: -**

- Despite significant growth in enrolment at Integrated College Glengormley, there is still capacity at Year 8 admissions;
- Demographics show a falling birth rate and a downward trend in the number of primary school pupils which will impact on post-primary schools shortly;
- Integrated College, Glengormley strongly advocates for pupils to have access to an integrated education. However, it appears that capacity in post primary integrated schools is currently higher than demand for such places, and with the falling enrolment trajectory in the primary sector about to impact at post primary level (2026 and beyond), we find the request for a permanent increase in admissions to be misguided and not yet needed; and
- Hazelwood should continue to use the temporary variation mechanism for the next number of years, as opposed to a permanent change in admissions.”

#### **2. The Board of Governors of Belfast Model School for Girls.**

- The BoG notes that Hazelwood IC participated in the Department’s ‘Additional Year 8 Places’ exercise from 2022/23 to 2025/26, increasing its admissions from 160 to 175. However, this action was taken by the Department in response to a significant increase in the size of the cohort transferring to post-primary education through the competitive admissions process;

- Hazelwood IC is consistently oversubscribed at Year 8 and the figures provided in the CfC demonstrate parental demand for integrated education. However, this proposal must be considered in its wider area planning context;
- The Belfast Model School for Girls had a DP approved in 2018 to increase enrolment from 950 pupils to 1250 pupils, however no additional building work has taken place, and the extension of the school dining centre has still not yet been provided therefore this DP has not been fully implemented;
- NISRA data quoted in Operational Plan 2 identifies declining birth trends for the Antrim and Newtownabbey and Belfast Local Government Districts, areas from which both the Model School for Girls and Hazelwood College draws most of their pupils;
- The recent Transformation of Glengormley High School to Integrated College Glengormley, has increased integrated post-primary places available in the area; and
- Within the North Belfast Area Learning Community there are ten post primary schools, which includes four selective schools and one special school, who year on year have full Year 8 admission numbers, resulting in an even more reduced pool of students seeking admission in Year 8 to non-selective post primary schools within north Belfast.

### **Advisory Bodies**

41. The Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 places an onus on the Department that, in exercising any functions relating to integrated education the Department of Education must consult with: -

- a) any body appearing to the Department of Education to have as an objective the encouragement or promotion of integrated education, and if required; and
- b) any other body the Department of Education considers appropriate.

CSSC, NICIE and IEF were invited to comment on the proposal as Advisory Bodies under Section 3 of the Integrated Education Act 2022 and the following responses were received during the statutory objection period.

### **CSSC Comments**

42. The CSSC noted the requirement for the Department of Education to consider the implications of the Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (IE Act), in its assessment of DPs and to consult with relevant bodies in accordance with Section 3. The submission represents the Council's response to the statutory consultation process and comments in respect of consultation in accordance with the provision of Section 3 of the IE Act. The full commentary objecting to the proposal is reproduced at **Appendix E**. A summary of the main themes is detailed below:

- CSSC notes that Hazelwood IC is consistently oversubscribed at Year 8 and the figures provided in the CfC demonstrate a demand for integrated education. However, this proposal must be considered in its wider area planning context;
- The Transformation of Integrated College, Glengormley, in September 2022 increased the number of integrated post-primary places in the area. It is also the nearest alternative integrated school;
- Hazelwood IC participated in the Department of Education's 'Additional Year 8 Places' exercise for 2022/23, increasing its admissions from 160 to 175, and subsequently responded to Department's application of a similar exercise for Transfer 2023, 2024 and 2025 retaining the revised admissions number of 175. While CSSC acknowledges this was an appropriate response to the increase in size of the cohort transferring to post-primary education in 2022, there is now a changed context in terms of live births and their impact on projected applications which now must be considered in evaluating this proposal;
- The CfC argues that while the increased admissions number for Hazelwood IC has not had a negative impact on provision in the area to date, declining live births in the areas from which the College draws its pupils suggest that this will not be the case going forward should the admissions number of 175 be made permanent;
- CSSC notes the EA's decision not to support the proposal and specifically the EA's description of a changed area planning context noting '*primary schools are showing a downturn in enrolment numbers which, this year, is filtering into the post-primary sector*'; and
- Whilst the CSSC recognises the Department's duty to encourage, facilitate and support the development of integrated education, CSSC has significant concerns about the potentially detrimental impact of this proposal. The proposal must be considered in the context of area planning, noting the empirical evidence of declining live births and taking into account the Department's duty to ensure effective and efficient use of public funds in a context of increasingly constrained financial resource for all schools.

## IN SUPPORT

### NICIE Comments

43. NICIE has provided a commentary in support of the proposal as its response to the statutory objection period for DP 747 and to the Department's invitation to NICIE to comment as an 'advisory body' under Section 3 of the Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022; this is reproduced at **Appendix F**. A summary of the key assertions from NICIE's conclusion can be read below:

- Hazelwood IC is a sustainable post-primary school which meets the meaning and purpose of Integrated Education as outlined by Sections 1 and 2 of the 2022 Act;
- As the Integrated Post-primary school that is primarily attracting young people from North Belfast, it has been oversubscribed for at least the last eight years and less than 80% of 1st preference applicants have been admitted over this time frame;
- This is evidence of demand for Integrated Education, as identified by the Department in '*Vision 2030*';
- The Department's Section 10 Report (2024) mentions Hazelwood IC specifically as a school in a locality of interest to the Department in relation to meeting demand for Integrated Education and complying with the duty to '*support*' as outlined in the 2022 Act. '*Vision 2030*' identifies both Belfast and Antrim and Newtownabbey LGDs as areas where NICIE will be commissioned to approach schools with a view to increase admissions and enrolment numbers;
- The school has taken into account the local educational dynamics and is seeking to increase admission number by a small amount with no proposed adjustment to the school's enrolment number. This proposal takes into account the context of area planning and the overall sustainability of the school estate, as well as consideration of the increasing demand for Integrated Education at Integrated College, Glengormley;
- Having a stable admission and enrolment number will assist the school to plan their workforce effectively and better plan for class size, curriculum and stability of employment contracts for valued staff members;

- The supernumerary status of pupils with Statements of Special Education Need is complicating the landscape, making it a challenge to understand the reality of both ICG [Integrated College, Glengormley] and Hazelwood IC's total enrolment. Some EA and Department datasets include supernumerary pupils and some do not, making the true picture over time difficult to bring into focus;
- There is compelling evidence that Hazelwood IC will continue to attract applications over and above their proposed 175 admission number and also that ICG will continue to experience growth in their 1st preference applications. There is no evidence to suggest that there is any correlation between the application patterns of the two schools. It is our view that both schools are providing excellent Integrated Education opportunities for pupils in their respective localities and will both be oversubscribed within the next few years;
- It is not reasonable to assume that birth rate data, and/or the current cohort of Primary school pupils in a given area, even with adjustments for migration and cross-LGD travel, is an effective tool to predict demand for Integrated Education. It's important to remember that the demand presented in this CfC represents real lives, with families and young people who are being denied access to Integrated Education at Hazelwood IC;
- The Department has outlined in the Section 10 Report (2024) and in 'Vision 2030', that Hazelwood IC is one of the Belfast area schools which should be approached by NICIE in relation to an increase of admissions. In our opinion, it would be short-sighted and counterintuitive for the Department to refuse this modest increase in admissions number at this time at Hazelwood IC and then subsequently commission NICIE to approach the school to discuss an admission number increase. In our analysis DP 747 is timely and necessary, having taken into account the Board of Governors' proposal and the Departmental Strategy, 'Vision 2030'; and
- Approval of this proposal would enable the Department to contribute to several of the actions laid out within the Strategy and its associated Action Plan and respond effectively to their legislative duties within the Education Reform Order (NI) 1989 and the 2022 Act to '*encourage, facilitate and support*' the development of Integrated Education.

## IEF Comments

44. The Integrated Education Fund (IEF) welcomed the opportunity to support the proposal and provided one submission covering the objection period and Section 3

comments of the Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022; this is reproduced in full at **Appendix G**. A summary of the main themes can be read below: -

- The DP and the detailed CfC document, highlight the continued high level of demand and the increase of enrolments achieved through a temporary variation. The IEF would encourage the Department of Education to approve a permanent change to these enrolment numbers to reflect this parental demand;
- Hazelwood IC's CfC presents evidence that the school has been able to maintain stable enrolment trends over the last number of years and is able to meet the six criteria for sustainable schools; The intention to increase admissions was highlighted as a medium term workstream in Operation Plan (OP) 1 and a short-term workstream in OP2; and
- The Department should take this decision with regard to its statutory duty to “encourage, facilitate and support integrated education” and its Section 6 Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 duties relating to the development of Integrated Education.

## **SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

45. The SSP sets out six criteria which have quantitative and qualitative indicators and provide a framework for consideration of a school's longer-term sustainability. An assessment of Hazelwood IC as measured against the SSP is provided below:

### **Criterion 1: Quality Education Experience**

46. The ETI carried out an inspection of Hazelwood IC in February 2019 which was impacted by ASOS and therefore the quality of education provision was not assessed at that time. This was a follow-up inspection to a post-primary inspection carried out in February 2016 which noted: -

*“The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interests of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement in:*

- *Addressing the variation in the standards attained by pupils across the subject departments through more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the quality of learning and teaching.”*

47. While the 2019 Report did not make a full assessment it did note that a new Principal has been appointed and there had been a restructuring of the Senior

Leadership Team. There was a Key Finding which stated “*Since 2016, the percentage of pupils attaining GCE A-Level or equivalent at grades A\* to C in at least three subjects has increased from 20% to 68%, which is well above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools. At GCSE Level or equivalent the percentage of pupils attaining five A\* to C grades including English and mathematics, has risen from 42 to 47% which is above the corresponding NI average. The variation in standards across subject departments has reduced significantly*”.

48. While now dated the February 2016 ETI Report sought to: -

- evaluate the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the pupils;
- evaluate the school’s leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and standards; and
- inform the school’s planning for improvement.

The overall findings of the inspection showed: -

Overall Effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Achievements and standards	Good
Provision for Learning	Good
Leadership and Management	Very Good

### **Examination Achievements**

#### **General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)**

49. Examination results were suspended for the years 2019/20 – 2021/22 due to the impact of the Covid pandemic. Following a stepped return to pre-pandemic awarding standards Summer 2024 saw a first full series of CCEA examinations.

50. **Table 2** shows that at the threshold of five or more GCSEs at A\* to G or equivalent, the performance of Year 12 pupils at Hazelwood IC was consistently over the period from 2018/19 – 2023/24, above the average for non-grammar schools. Results for those attaining five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C, have also been above the average for non-grammar schools.

51. Over the same period, performance of Year 12 pupils achieving 5 GCSEs at grades A\* to C (or equivalent), including GCSEs in English and mathematics, has been variable but has been slightly below the NI average for non-grammar schools.

<b>Table 2 - Proportion (%) of Pupils Obtaining 5+ GCSEs Grades A* - G</b>						
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Hazelwood Integrated College	100%	-	-	-	98.2%	99.4%
Non Grammar School Average	97.7%	-	-	-	97.7%	97.9%
<b>Proportion (%) of Pupils Obtaining 5%+ GCSE Grades A* - C</b>						
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Hazelwood Integrated College	90.1%	-	-	-	92.3%	92.9%
Non Grammar School Average	79.7%	-	-	-	87.3%	84.0%
<b>Proportion (%) of Pupils Obtaining 5 GCSEs A* - C (including English and Maths)</b>						
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Hazelwood Integrated College	47.3%	-	-	-	62.5%	53.5%
Non Grammar School Average	54.8%	-	-	-	64.7%	58.4%

**Source:** Summary of Annual Examination Results (SAER)

**Notes:**

1. Does not include pupils' ineligible for inclusion in the SAER Return.
2. Information for 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 is unavailable as the Minister agreed that the Summary of Annual Examination Results (SAER) process should be suspended for these years.
3. Caution should be taken when drawing any conclusions relating to changes in performance in 2022/23 compared to other years. It is anticipated that CCEAs stepped return to pre-pandemic awarding standards, and the provision of advance information for qualifications in 2022/2023, will have affected figures for that year. Summer 2024 saw the first full series of CCEA examinations following the period of alternative awarding and a stepped return to pre-pandemic awarding standards.

### **General Certificate of Education (GCE) 'A' Level**

52. **Table 3** shows that in the years from 2018/19 to 2023/24 the proportion of pupils at Hazelwood IC attaining two or more A-Levels at grade A\* to E has been consistently high and has been above the non-grammar Schools average. At the threshold of three or more A-Levels at grade A\* to C, performance of pupils at Hazelwood IC results were significantly above the average in 2018/19 and while this fell following the pandemic, they have improved again in 2023/24 reaching 63.0% which is above-grammar school average of 57.6%.

<b>Table 3 Proportion (%) achieving 2+ A Levels or equivalent A* - E</b>						
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Hazelwood Integrated College	100%	-	-	-	98.4%	98.6%
Non-Grammar School Average	96.4%	-	-	-	97.2%	97.3
<b>Proportion (%) achieving 3+ Levels or equivalent A* to C</b>						
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Hazelwood Integrated College	77.4%	-	-	-	55.7%	63.0%
Non Grammar School Average	58.8%	-	-	-	59.4%	57.6%

**Notes:**

1. Does not include pupils' ineligible for inclusion in the SAER Return.
2. Information for 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 is unavailable as the Minister agreed that the Summary of Annual Examination Results (SAER) process should be suspended for these years.
3. Caution should be taken when drawing any conclusions relating to changes in performance in 2022/23 compared to other years. It is anticipated that CCEAs stepped return to pre-pandemic awarding standards, and the provision of advance information for qualifications in 2022/2023, will have affected figures for that year. Summer 2024 saw the first full series of CCEA examinations following the period of alternative awarding and a stepped return to pre-pandemic awarding standards.

## **Entitlement Framework**

53. The Entitlement Framework (EF) is a key component of the statutory curriculum. It has been instrumental in ensuring that all learners receive, through access to an appropriate curriculum, a high-quality education which both enriches their lives and enables them to contribute to the economy. The EF ensures that all young people, regardless of where they live, which school they attend or their gender, have equality of access to a broad and balanced range of economically relevant and individually engaging courses at Key Stage 4 and post-16.

## **Curricular Offer**

54. In order to meet the statutory requirements of the EF, schools are required to provide access to a minimum of 21 courses at Key Stage 4 (KS4) and 21 at Post-16, of which at least one third must be applied and one third general.

55. The EF audit report 2023/24 shows that Hazelwood IC is fully EF compliant at KS4 and post-16. **Table 4** below sets out the EF data for the 2023/24 academic year.

<b>Table 4 Hazelwood Integrated College Curricular Offer</b>		
	<b>Key Stage 4 (Year 11)</b>	<b>Post-16 (Year 13)</b>
Applied courses	22	14
General courses	10	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>21</b>

56. At KS4 the school offered 32 qualifying courses, where 28 (88%) courses were delivered, no courses were delivered in collaboration. The total number of KS4 pupils at year 11 and 12 was 378.

57. At post-16 the school offered 21 qualifying courses, where 17 (81%) courses were delivered and one course was delivered in collaboration with St Malachy's College. The total number of post-16 pupils at year 13 and 14 was 164.

58. The CfC highlights the importance of staff understanding the challenges faced by many members of the school population. To support this every new member of staff engages in a 'community context' tour and training to build understanding of the demographics of the area where students live. It also emphasises that the academic expectations on young people are supported by a broad and varied curriculum at GCSE and A Level, which exceeds the requirements of the Entitlement Framework. This motivating and aspirational offer promotes high attendance and retention at both levels.

59. 14-19 Strategy Team note that EA consultation responses indicate that while Hazelwood IC is consistently oversubscribed at Year 8, the transformation of Integrated College, Glengormley has increased integrated post-primary places available in the area. In considering the provision at Integrated College, Glengormley the EF audit report 2023/24 shows that the College is also fully EF compliant at KS4 and post-16.

- At KS4 Integrated College Glengormley offered 30 courses where 26 (87%) courses were delivered, and no courses were delivered in collaboration. The total number of KS4 pupils at year 11 and 12 was 359; and
- At post-16 the school offered 23 courses where just 9 (39%) courses were actually delivered, which included just two general courses, and no courses were delivered in collaboration. The total number of post-16 pupils at year 13 and 14 was 68 which falls below the key sustainability indicator in the DE Sustainable Schools policy that sixth forms should have a minimum of 100 pupils.

### ***Physical Environment***

60. The CfC states that *“The College 4.8-hectare site centre's around Graymount House, a building of historical significance which was listed in 1987. In addition to Graymount House there are two other core buildings and a range of modular buildings. The College has an outdoor basketball court and an all-weather pitch”*.

61. The CfC also notes that Hazelwood IC was approved for a ‘New Build’ by the Department of Education in 2022, and allocated funding via the Fresh Start Agreement. While the Fresh Start funding was repurposed in the UK government's financial settlement for the executive in early 2024, the project remains live as part of the capital builds programme (major works).

62. The Department's Investment and Infrastructure Directorate (IID) have commented that the school's major work project continues to progress based on an approved enrolment of 1010, including 210 sixth form pupils plus additional SEN accommodation. This proposal will have no impact on the number of centrally timetabled classrooms or ancillary accommodation other than a minor reduction in the sixth form provision.

63. The technical design/pre-tender estimate (RIBA Stage 4) has been completed by the design team and a summary submitted to the Department. A presentation to the Department's technical advisors (EAB) is scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> December 2025. Following on from the presentation, the full RIBA Stage 4 including appendices will be formally submitted to EAB who will commence their review early in 2026.

## **Special Education Provision**

64. The CfC notes that Hazelwood IC supports a high number of students on the Code of Practice for SEN, in 2024/25 there were 99 pupils at Stage 3 and a further 160 pupils at Stage 1-2 of the process. The school has a dedicated Additional Educational Need (AEN) Department led by an Assistant Principal.

65. The ETI sustaining improvement inspection in 2019 noted: -

*“The SLT and staff members with key responsibilities for safeguarding and additional education needs provision are highly skilled and experienced, showing a strong commitment to the welfare and learning of pupils. There is a growing level of expertise which addresses, with increasing effectiveness, the complex barriers to learning encountered by some pupils. In particular, through the very well-conceived and collaborative professional learning opportunities, the capacity of education support workers and teachers is enhanced as they plan together to secure progress and avoid potential delays in learning”.*

## **Pastoral Care**

66. The 2016 ETI report indicated that the care and support of each pupil is afforded a high priority. The ETI noted *“it is underpinned by an inclusive ethos and is driven by a whole school unity of purpose to strengthen the ethos as well as the pupils’ attendance, behaviour and attainment. The restructured model for pastoral provision connects strategically and effectively to the pastoral and academic priorities of the school; consequently, there is a more cohesive, holistic approach to supporting the pupils in their learning and developing their wider skills and dispositions.”*

67. The 2019 ETI report highlighted *“The contribution made by health professionals, learning mentors, classroom assistants, social workers and youth workers plays an essential role in supporting the emotional well-being and health of the pupils. The pupils discussed their awareness of the wide range of supports that exists in the school and understand that it contributes to their progress.*

## **Criterion 2: Stable Enrolment Trends**

68. The SSP recommends a minimum enrolment threshold of 500 pupils in Years 8-12 and 100 pupils in Years 13-14 (if applicable) for a sustainable and viable post-primary school.

69. The current approved admissions and enrolment numbers at Hazelwood IC are 160 and 1010 respectively. However, from 2022/23 approved admissions have

been increased to 175, by the Department on a three-year temporary basis, as part of an additional places exercise.

70. SEN pupils are supernumerary to the admissions and enrolment numbers under the open enrolment procedures. The total number of SEN pupils enrolled at Hazelwood IC has slightly increased from 2020/21 (from 88 to 99) see **Table 5**.

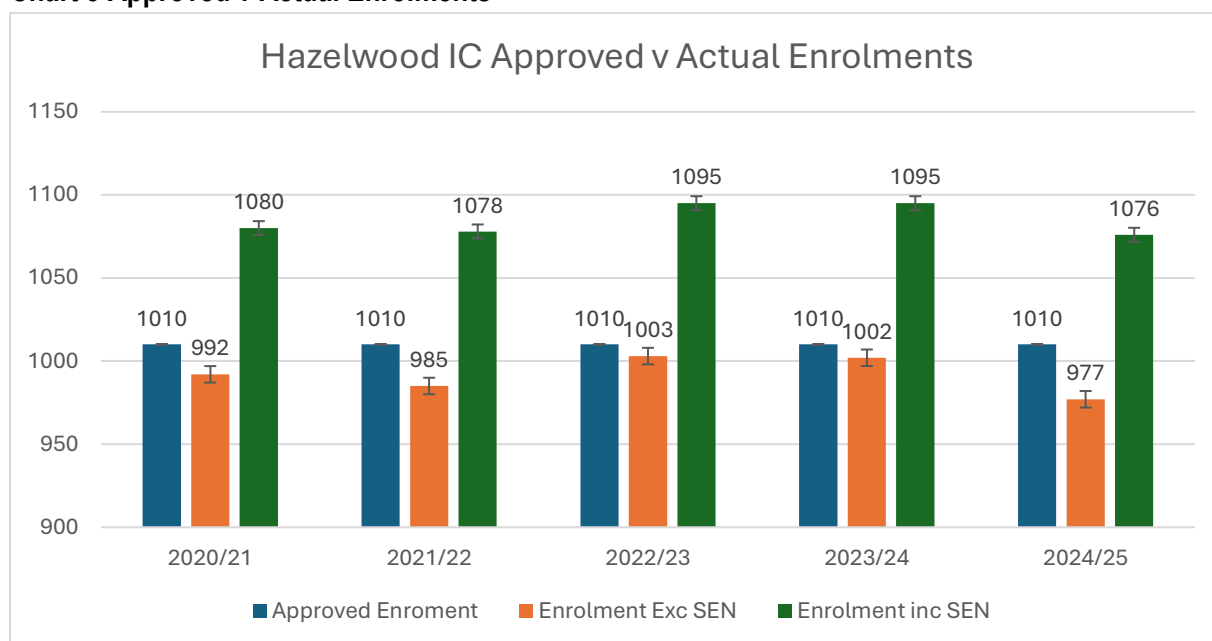
**Table 5 – Hazelwood Integrated College Enrolment Trends**

<b>Table 5 - Hazelwood Integrated College Enrolment Trends</b>					
<b>Section</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
Number of pupils in year 8	182	175	182	187	189
Number of pupils in year 9	211	181	174	183	186
Number of pupils in year 10	197	207	181	180	179
Number of pupils in year 11	168	198	202	177	176
Number of pupils in year 12	171	168	192	202	176
Number of pupils in year 13	81	81	97	83	98
Number of pupils in year 14	70	68	67	83	72
<b>TOTAL PUPILS (incl SEN)</b>	<b>1080</b>	<b>1078</b>	<b>1095</b>	<b>1095</b>	<b>1076</b>
<i>Total SEN pupils</i>	88	93	92	93	99
<b>TOTAL PUPILS (excl SEN)</b>	<b>992</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>1003</b>	<b>1002</b>	<b>977</b>

\*\*Source: School Census Return

71. **Chart 3** shows that Hazelwood IC has exceeded its approved enrolment number in each of the last five years when supernumerary places are included but falls slightly below the approved enrolment when they are excluded.

**Chart 3 Approved v Actual Enrolments**



72. **Table 6** demonstrates the number of first preference applications received by Hazelwood IC for the last five years, showing that the college has been oversubscribed at first preference each year. Hazelwood IC received 187 first preference applications and 204 total applications for Year 8 admissions for September 2025/26 and has accepted 175 pupils.

<b>Table 6 - Hazelwood IC First Preference Analysis</b>				
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>Approved</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Preference</b>	<b>Total Applications</b>	<b>Admissions **</b>
<b>2021/22</b>	160	202	234	160
<b>2022/23*</b>	175	232	255	176
<b>2023/24*</b>	175	256	277	175
<b>2024/25*</b>	175	190	219	175
<b>2025/26*</b>	175	187	204	175

\*Approved admissions number amended by the Department on a temporary basis in advance of the transfer process

\*\* Excluding SEN pupils

### ***Temporary Variations***

73. If a school receives more applications for admission than it has places available it can request a TV of its admissions and/or enrolment numbers from the Department. The Department may approve TVs to a school's numbers to respond to particular demographic pressures in an area in a particular year.

74. In March 2022 in anticipation of oversubscription of Year 8 places for the Transfer cohort in years 2023/24 – 2025/26, the Department pre-emptively invited schools in the following areas to apply for additional admissions places: -

- Belfast;
- North Down;
- South County Londonderry;
- Antrim Town; and
- Foyle,

75. Following an application, Hazelwood IC was awarded an additional 15 places for the years 2023/24 to 2025/26, therefore approved admissions in these years was set at 175. It was indicated that this process did not replace the TV procedure and further places could still be sought via TV.

76. A number of schools were allocated additional places under this initiative; however, this is due to end in 2025/26. This will reduce the number of approved Integrated places in the wider area by 45 from 2026/27 (Hazelwood IC (15 places); Lagan College (20 places) and Ulidia IC (10 places)).

### **Criterion 3: Sound Financial Position**

77. As a GMI school, the accounting arrangements for Hazelwood IC differ from those of controlled or maintained schools and there is no available data on the school's surplus/deficit position.

78. The school received a total Common Funding Formula budget of **£6,856,917** in the 2025-26 financial year for **1,076<sup>1</sup>** FTE pupils, which generates a per capita of **£6,373**. The average for all secondary schools is **£5,957**.

79. The total Free School Meals Entitlement for the school is **525<sup>1</sup>** pupils, which represents **48.79%** of the total FTE, which places the school in **Band 3** for funding purposes.

80. The school is not in receipt of any Small Schools Support funding. The school's delegated budget includes a total of £285,729 for Landlord Maintenance and Administrative costs factor funding, not applicable for controlled or maintained schools.

81. The CfC asserts that the College *"has managed the resources entrusted to it for the education of its students in a way that provides value for the public purse"*. The CfC further states that accounts are annually audited externally and internally with all financial reports shared with the Department, the College continues to operate within the financial limits set by DE.

82. The CfC further asserts that *"over the last number of years, the school has been operating at a small surplus as a result of cautious financial management in response to inflationary increases that outstrip the common formula funding position"*.

### **Criterion 4: Strong Leadership and Management**

83. The ETI Sustaining Improvement Inspection report of February 2019 was impacted by ASOS and a conclusion on quality of education could not be provided. There has been no recent assessment of leadership and management. However, the report states that *"In the interim period, a new principal was appointed and there has been a restructuring of the senior leadership team (SLT)"*.

84. One of the findings from the previous report noted *"The recently established senior leadership team (SLT) structure, with an emphasis on distributed leadership, has its origins in the clear-sighted and strategic vision by senior leaders for the school."*

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<sup>1</sup> The school's funding allocation is based on the previous year's census data (e.g. the October 2024 census data was used to determine the 2025-26 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).

*This well-defined distribution of leadership roles and responsibilities is a strength and has already forged measurable, coherent and productive links between the pastoral and academic work of the school”.*

85. The CfC asserts that *“The strong leadership at Hazelwood IC directly influences the standards of attainment, the quality of teaching, academic achievement student attendance, student behaviour and motivation of the staff”.*

86. The CfC also notes that the Principal and Vice-Principals have long established membership of the North Belfast Area Learning Community (NBALC) and NICIE forums which promote the sharing of good practice and collaborative working.

### **Criterion 5: Accessibility**

87. **Map 1** shows the location of pupils attending Hazelwood IC. The map shows that pupils predominantly travel from North Belfast and Newtownabbey area and **MAP 4** shows majority of pupils live within a 0-10 minute drive time with most of the remainder around 20 minutes.

88. The SSP outlines that for a post-primary pupil, home to school travel time should not exceed 45 minutes. The CfC states that *“The main catchment area covers a radius of 10 miles. Ease of access is provided via several major roads, including Shore Road (A2), Antrim Road (A6) and the M2/M5”* and that the travel times of the students are well within the recommended guidelines.

### **Criterion 6: Strong Links with the Community**

89. The CfC states that Hazelwood IC is at the heart of the North Belfast community where it is located. There are long established relationships with a range of primary and post-primary schools and arrange of organisations including community groups, charitable organisations and further and higher education providers. The College has strong links with other Integrated schools through NICIE’s Integrated Principals Forum.

90. The CfC asserts that there are strong relationships between the school, parents and carers. The College is part of the North Belfast Locality Planning Group which enable connection to community organisations. Partnerships with organisations such as Streetbeat; Alternatives; the Family Support Hub; The Ashton Community Trust and many more, have positively impacted the lives of many families providing vital support and help.

91. The College enjoys a close working relationship with a range of Community, Business and Organisational bodies which are set out in Appendix 2 of the CfC together with a description of the role that they play.

## Summary - Sustainability Assessment

92. The most recent ETI inspection in 2019 was impacted due to ASOS and therefore did not provide a full evaluation of educational quality. The previous comprehensive inspection in 2016 concluded that Hazelwood IC “demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interests of all learners.” Since that review, a new Principal has been appointed and the Senior Leadership Team has been restructured. Given the passage of time since the last inspection however, this information cannot be relied upon to be representative of the current cohort.

93. Performance in exams is variable within the school. At GCSE level the proportion of Hazelwood IC pupils attaining five or more GCSEs at grade A\* to G and A\* to C is above the NI average for non-grammar schools. However, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs at grade A\* to C, including English and Mathematics, remains below the NI average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils at Hazelwood IC attaining two or more A-Levels at grade A\* to E has been consistently high and above the non-grammar schools’ average. At the threshold of three or more A-Levels at grade A\* to C, performance of pupils at Hazelwood IC results in 2023/24 is also above the average for non-grammar schools.

94. The school is EF compliant at KS4 and post-16 and the CfC asserts that the offer at GCSE and post-16 is motivating and aspirational, ensuring high attendance and retention at both levels.

95. Admissions have consistently exceeded the 160 approved level and this has been accommodated through TVs and pre-approved places set by the Department. However, the overall enrolment has not exceeded the 1010 approved places, except when supernumerary places are included which is why the College has not sought to increase the overall enrolment figure.

96. As a GMI school the accounting arrangements differ, and the Department does not hold data on the school’s current surplus/deficit position. At £6,373 the school does generate a higher per capita than the average post-primary school (£5,957). The CfC asserts that the college “*has managed the resources entrusted to it for the education of its students in a way that provides value for the public purse*”.

97. The 2019 ETI report notes the appointment of a new principal and a restructuring of the SLT however as the inspection was impacted by ASOS there has been no recent ETI evaluation of the leadership and management to the school.

98. The school is located in North Belfast and many pupils live within 20 minutes of the school. **Map 4** indicates that the school is accessible to its pupils and travel time should be within the limits as set out by the SSP. The CfC states that “*the school also*

*provide several bespoke bus services for its students covering the following areas – Shankill, Ardoyne, Oldpark, Cliftonville, Antrim Road, Shore Road, Monkstown, Rathcoole and the City Centre”.*

99. The CfC provides examples of its community links, including community organisations serving the North Belfast area. As well as being a member of the North Belfast Area Learning Community, the College has strong relationships with other Integrated Schools through the NICIE Integrated Principals Forum.

100. In summary some of the evidence is dated and gives an incomplete picture on some of SSP criteria. However, taking account of all of the evidence above, the Department is content that the school is sustainable when assessed against the sustainability criteria.

## **STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Statutory duty to encourage and facilitate the development of Integrated education**

101. The Department of Education has a statutory duty under Article 64 of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) 1989 Order, to “*encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education, that is to say the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils*”.

### **Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022**

102. The Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, which came into operation on 26 October 2022, amended Article 64 of the 1989 Order in respect of the Department’s statutory duty towards integrated education to “*encourage, facilitate **and support** the development of integrated education*”.

103. Section 1 of the Act defines Integrated Education as the education together, in an integrated school, of:

- (a) those of different cultures and religious beliefs and of none, including reasonable numbers of both Protestant and Roman Catholic children or young persons;*
- (b) those who are experiencing socio-economic deprivation and those who are not; and*
- (c) those of different abilities.*

104. An Integrated school has now been defined for the first time in Section 2 as *‘a school which intentionally supports, protects and advances an ethos of diversity, respect and understanding between those of different cultures and religious beliefs and of none, between those of different socio-economic backgrounds and between those of different abilities.’ and which has achieved either grant maintained or controlled integrated status.*

105. The Act amends the previous duty on the Department under Article 64 of the 1989 Order and now includes “support” which is defined in the Act as follows: -

*5 (1) A reference in any provision of Northern Ireland legislation to support for Integrated education (including support for the development of Integrated education) is a reference to –*

- (a) identifying, assessing, monitoring and aiming to meet the demand for the provision of Integrated education within the context of area planning and the overall sustainability of the school estate (including, in particular, monitoring the number and success of applications for Integrated education), and*
- (b) providing sufficient places in Integrated schools to aim to meet the demand for Integrated education within the context of area planning and the overall sustainability of the school estate (including examining evidence of expected future demand).*

*5(2) In subsection (1)(a) “monitor” means monitor by reference to data collected in respect of relevant catchment and other areas.*

106. The Department must also be mindful of the ruling by Treacy J in the judicial review *McKee v Department of Education, 2011*<sup>2</sup>. He said at paragraph 44: “the Department may facilitate and encourage the Irish medium [and therefore also Integrated] sector in ways that it need not for other sectors by:

- taking positive steps; or
- removing obstacles which inhibit the statutory objective.”

107. As this DP seeks to increase admissions at Hazelwood IC, approval of the proposal would increase capacity within the integrated sector. This would provide the opportunity for more pupils to access an integrated post-primary school. Not to approve the DP may be perceived as creating an obstacle to the development of the sector.

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<sup>2</sup> [Judgment](#)

108. Hazelwood IC is already recognised as an Integrated school and the following sets out how it meets the requirements: -

## Section 1

**(a) those of different cultures and religious beliefs and of none, including reasonable numbers of both Protestant and Roman Catholic children or young persons;**

109. The CfC notes that Hazelwood IC draws its students from a large geographical area across North Belfast, Newtownabbey and beyond. Integrated schools aim to have a minimum of 30% of the school's enrolment from the minority tradition (Protestant or Roman Catholic).

110. **Table 7** shows the enrolment of Hazelwood IC over the past five years and demonstrates that the school has a good religious balance. In 2024/25 there were 483 pupils (44.89%) who identified as Protestant; 331 pupils (30.76%) as Roman Catholic and 262 (24.35%) as Other (or no religion).

**Table 7 Hazelwood Integrated College Enrolment by Religion**

Table 7 Hazelwood IC - Enrolment by Religion										
Section	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
	No. Pupils	%	No. Pupils	%	No. Pupils	%	No. Pupils	%	No. Pupils	%
Protestant	531	49.17	538	50.0	531	48.49	494	45.11	483	44.89
Roman Catholic	304	28.15	290	26.9	302	27.58	330	30.14	331	30.76
Other religions / religion not known	245	22.69	249	23.1	262	23.93	271	24.75	262	24.35
<b>Total</b>	<b>1080</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1078</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1095</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1095</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1076</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*\*Source: Annual School Census Return

111. The percentage of newcomer pupils at Hazelwood IC has remained relatively low over the past four years, with a slight increase in 2024/25.

**Table 8 Hazelwood Integrated College Newcomer Pupils**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Newcomer Pupils</b>	<b>% of Newcomer Pupils</b>
2021/22	15	1.4%
2022/23	10	0.9%
2023/24	14	1.3%
2024/25	19	1.8%

112. The CfC states that the College supports newcomer pupils with guidance from EA Intercultural Service, as well as staff on site who are trained to work with students for whom English is an additional language. The College celebrates the nationalities and cultures of all within the school community by promoting religious festivals and events.

**(b) Those experiencing socio-economic deprivation and those who are not.**

113. On the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017, Bellevue 2, where the school is located, is placed 123 out of 890 (1 being the most deprived and 890 being least deprived). Poverty and Income Deprivation remains a key issue in the Tigers Bay, Mount Vernon, Whitewell / White City areas which are all within walking distance of the College.

114. The current level of FSM at Hazelwood IC is 48.8%. The CfC states that the College Governors and Principal are acutely aware of the levels of need and are proactive in providing support for those experiencing socio-economic deprivation. For several years the College has provided free meals for all throughout the winter months to ease financial burden on families. The introduction of a free breakfast resulted in a marked decrease in the number of pupils visiting the school nurse.

**(c) Those of different abilities.**

115. Hazelwood IC caters for a range of abilities and supports a high number of pupils with a statement of SEN. The CfC notes that the College has a dedicated Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Department led by an Assistant Principal, supported by an Assistant Learning Support Co-ordinator; three Specialist Teachers; three Learning Mentors and a large team of Teaching Assistants.

116. Hazelwood IC offers a broad and balanced curriculum across all Key Stages. The CfC states that the offer is consistently higher than the recommendations of the DE Entitlement Framework and that it is revised annually based on the NI Skills Barometer and the profile of the student cohort.

117. The information provided demonstrates Hazelwood IC's ongoing ability to meet the definition of Integrated Education as outlined in Section 1 of the Integrated Education Act 2022.

### ***Shared Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2016***

118. The Shared Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 makes legislative provision to Shared Education. It provides a definition of Shared Education and confers a duty on the Department of Education to encourage, facilitate and promote Shared Education and a power on arms-length bodies to encourage and facilitate Shared Education.

119. Hazelwood IC is not currently involved in a funded Shared Education partnership. Previously the College was in a partnership with Edmund Rice College, supported through the Shared Education Signature Project, but it did not continue into Mainstreaming Shared Education.

120. The CfC acknowledges the importance of promoting a shared future and asserts that the history of Hazelwood IC demonstrates the deep belief that Integrated Education is the key to a shared future in Northern Ireland. The location of college is historically recognised as an 'interface' area where young people from different religious backgrounds and communities would not have the opportunity to get to know one another or build relationships. The CfC asserts that *"the College has been pivotal in building a culture of acceptance, mutual respect and togetherness, not only within its walls, but in the community beyond"*.

### ***Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998***

121. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities designated (including: the Department of Education, the EA and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) etc) to carry out all their functions: -

- with due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity in respect of religious belief, political opinion, gender, race, disability, age, marital status, dependents and sexual orientation; and
- to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

An Equality Screening document is attached at **Appendix C** of the submission and asserts that *"the impacts of this policy, if approved, will have a positive impact for the young people attending Hazelwood Integrated College and the wider community in North Belfast and its surrounding areas"*.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### VISION 2030 – A Strategy for Integrated Education 2025-2030 & Action Plan

122. The Department published Vision 2030 - A Strategy for Integrated Education on the 11 June 2025. Vision 2030 is the second strategic plan for Integrated Education, covering the period 2025–2030. It builds on the legislative foundation of the Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, aiming to expand and strengthen Integrated Education across the region. The strategy outlines an overarching vision for Integrated Education:-

- *“A vibrant and supported network of sustainable Integrated schools providing high-quality Integrated Education to children and young people.”*

123. The Vision 2030 document is building on the initial findings within the Department’s Section 10 report which identified six localities where oversubscription data suggests there is unmet demand for Integrated Education at post-primary level (Belfast, Lisburn and Castlereagh, Ards and North Down, Antrim and Newtownabbey, Mid and East Antrim, and Newry, Mourne and Down).

124. The first target in the strategy states that the Department *“By 2030, will aim to achieve a reduction in the post-primary gap between the percentage of first preferences for Integrated Education being met (currently 87%) and the Northern Ireland post-primary average (currently 90%).”* It should be noted that the following action below is included in the Vision 2030 (Integrated Education – Action Plan 2025-2030): -

What: Priority Outcomes	How: Activities	Who: Responsibility	When: Target date for delivery
1. Increased access to Integrated Education	<p><b>Action 1:</b> DE will commission NICIE to engage with Integrated schools and EA in the six localities currently identified where Integrated Education is oversubscribed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ NICIE and the other educational stakeholders will engage in partnership with Integrated schools in Belfast, Lisburn and Castlereagh, Ards and North Down, Antrim and Newtownabbey, Mid and East Antrim, and Newry, Mourne and Down to review their enrolment numbers and school capacity and, as required prepare, and bring forward Development Proposals with their Board of Governors to increase admissions and enrolment numbers.</li> <li>■ This work is completed by NICIE as the Department will be the decision-maker on the Development Proposals and must not compromise the operation and outcome of that key statutory process.</li> </ul>	<p>NICIE</p> <p>DE Collaboration and Climate Change Directorate (DE CCCD)</p> <p>DE Statistics &amp; Research Team (DE SRT)</p> <p>EA</p>	<p>Commenced by March 2025 and then Annually</p>

125. Legislative requirements of the Integrated Education Act are for the Department to support Integrated Education by:

- (a) identifying, assessing, monitoring and aiming to meet the demand for the provision of Integrated Education within the context of area planning and the overall sustainability of the school estate (including, in particular, monitoring the number and success of applications for integrated education), and
- (b) providing sufficient places in Integrated schools to aim to meet the demand for Integrated education within the context of area planning and the overall sustainability of the school estate (including examining evidence of expected future demand).

### **Demand for Integrated Education**

126. There has been significant demand for Integrated provision, in the area around Hazelwood IC, for a number of years. In 2024/25 for the 5580 approved enrolment places across Controlled Integrated and GMI schools, there was an actual enrolment of 5931 pupils (including supernumerary pupils). When supernumerary pupils are excluded, there was a total of 371 available places across the six schools, the majority of these places are at Integrated College, Glengormley (245) which transformed to Integrated status in 2022/23.

127. **Map 2** illustrates the respective pupil locations of Hazelwood IC; Integrated College, Glengormley; Malone IC; Ulidia IC and Lagan College within a nine-mile mapping radius of Hazelwood IC. While Priory IC is within a four-mile mapping radius of Hazelwood IC, it is 8.6 miles by road and, as shown in **Map 5**, the pupil locations are quite distinct therefore it is not considered the closest Integrated provision.

128. During the statutory objection period the BoG of Integrated College, Glengormley raised some concerns about the proposal stating “*despite our significant growth in enrolment at Integrated College, Glengormley there is still capacity for us to accept additional Year 8 students – our school is not yet oversubscribed. Therefore, increasing admissions at Hazelwood Integrated is increasing capacity for integrated education where there is still capacity that is still unfilled elsewhere*”. The response also referred to the downward trend in primary school demographics which it feared could impact on post-primary enrolments from 2026.

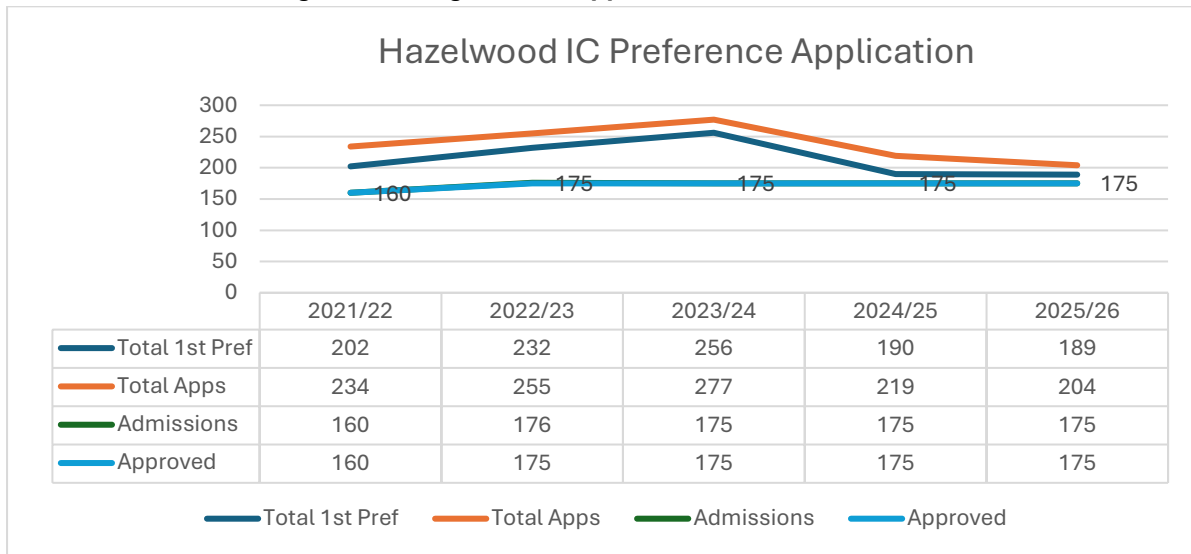
129. **Charts 4-8** below illustrates the first preference and total applications for Integrated Provision in the area over the last five years. In 2025/26 there were a total of 938 first preference applications for the 845 approved places (not including Priory IC). This includes three of schools being allocated a total of 45 additional approved places as part of the Year 8 Additional Places exercise: -

- Hazelwood IC – 15 additional places
- Lagan College – 20 additional places
- Ulidia IC – 10 additional places

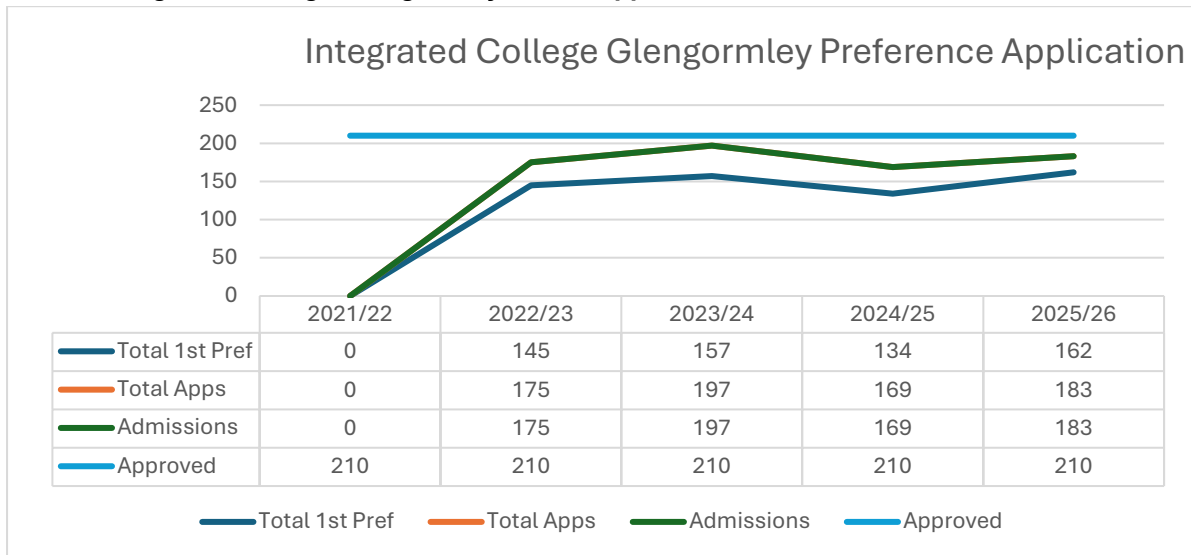
130. These additional places are due to end in 2025/26 which would result in a reduction of a further 45 post-primary places at Year 8 in the area.

131. All of the schools, except Integrated College Glengormley, have consistently filled to their approved admissions number (or above with the approval of TVs) in each of the past five years. When Glengormley High School transformed in 2022/23 it retained the approved admissions and enrolment of 210 and 1250 respectively. However, admissions and enrolments were significantly lower in the preceding five years, for example in 2020/21 the admissions were 178 and overall enrolment of 748. Since Transformation enrolment has risen significantly, reaching 1149 in 2024/25. This demonstrates clear evidence of the demand for Integrated education in the area.

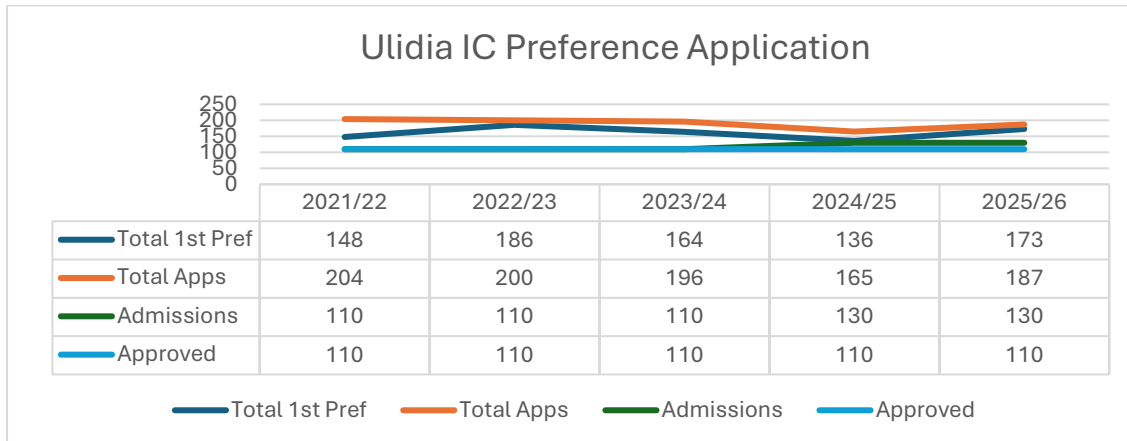
**Chart 4 Hazelwood Integrated College Year 8 Applications**



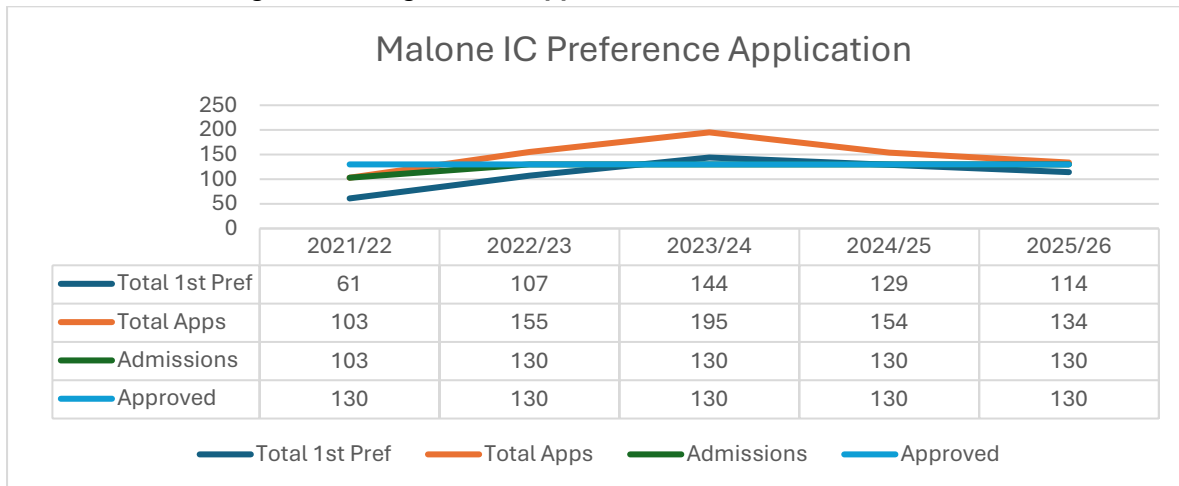
**Chart 5 Integrated College Glengormley Year 8 Applications**



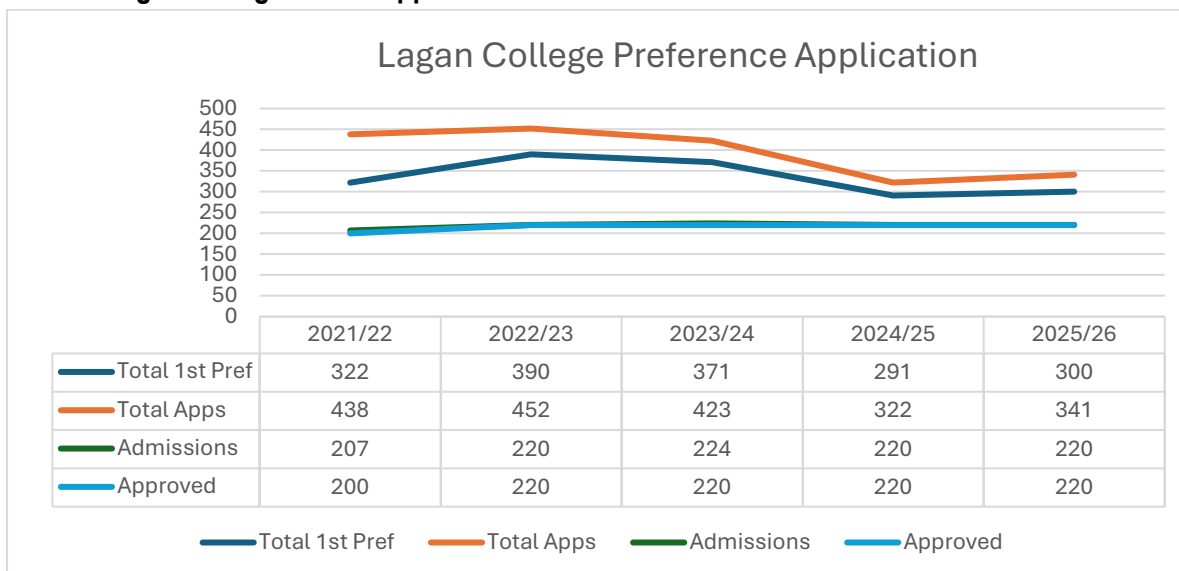
**Chart 6 Ulidia Integrated College Year 8 Applications**



**Chart 7 Malone Integrated College Year 8 Applications**



**Chart 8 Lagan College Year 8 Applications**



132. The Department also notes the demand for Integrated Education in the [Vision 2030 Action Plan 2025-2030](#). Priority Outcome 1 relates to ‘Increased Access to Integrated Education’ and the action states “*DE will commission NICIE to engage with Integrated schools and the EA in the six localities currently identified where Integrated Education is oversubscribed*”. The areas include Belfast; Lisburn & Castlereagh; Ards & North Down; Antrim & Newtownabbey; Mid & East Antrim and Newry Mourne and Down.

133. Hazelwood IC is located in one of the priority areas and has been oversubscribed with first preference applications for eight consecutive years. The proposal to increase admission from 160 to 175 therefore directly supports the Department’s duty to provide sufficient place to meet demand and is in line with Vision 2030.

## Impact of the Proposal on Other Provision

### Alternative Controlled Provision

134. There are three Controlled post-primary schools within a three-mile radius of Hazelwood IC, they are the Belfast Boys' Model, the Model Schools for Girls' and Abbey Community College. In 2019, both Model Schools received approval to increase their admissions to 200 and their enrolment to 1250. However, in 2024, they requested a temporary reduction to 190 in admissions and 1045 in enrolments with effect from the 2024/25 academic year. This temporary reduction was due to difficulties in securing additional accommodation. The overall enrolment across the three schools for 2024/25 is therefore 2965. The actual approved enrolment across the three Controlled schools is 3113, including 291 supernumerary pupils, and 143 available places.

135. The BoG of the Belfast Model School for Girls' also raised an objection during the statutory objection period. While they understood that additional places had been allocated to Hazelwood IC as part of the 'Additional Year 8 Places' exercise from 2022/23, they state that this action was taken by the Department in response to a significant increase in the size of cohort transferring to post-primary schools through the competitive admissions process. With NISRA data showing declining birth rates in both the Antrim and Newtownabbey and Belfast LGDs the falling enrolment trajectory is likely to impact on the post-primary sector from 2026 onwards, therefore the BoG assert that the request for a permanent increase in admissions is misguided and not yet needed.

136. Consideration of the enrolments at feeder primary schools, for both Hazelwood IC and Integrated School, Glengormley (**Table 9 below**), shows that over the past four years the enrolments have fallen by around 3.2%.

Table 9 Falling Enrolments at Feeder Primary Schools

<u>Colour Code</u>	<u>Represents</u>
	<u>Pupils transfer to both Hazelwood IC and IC Glengormley</u>
	<u>Pupils Transfer to Hazelwood IC only</u>
	<u>Pupils Transfer to Integrated College, Glengormley only</u>

Sch Ref	SCHOOL	2021/22 Enrolment	2024/25 Enrolment
1010063	Currie Primary School, Belfast	196	151
1010205	Forth River Primary School, Belfast	212	205
1010221	Springfield Primary School, Belfast	174	172
1010266	Seaview Primary School, Belfast	404	395
1010267	Nettlefield Primary School	357	372
1010282	Carr's Glen Primary School, Belfast	334	302
1010323	Edenbrooke Primary School, Belfast	371	382
1010325	Ligoniel Primary School, Belfast	177	172
1010831	Cavehill Primary School, Belfast	403	402
1016059	Black Mountain Primary School, Belfast	157	149
1016076	Ballysillan Primary School	208	193
1016485	Glenwood Primary School, Belfast	521	482
1016498	Malvern Primary School, Belfast	115	137
1016537	Lowwood Primary School, Belfast	186	193
1016604	Harmony Primary School, Belfast	220	211
1030194	Holy Cross Boys' Primary School, Belfast	393	399
1030313	Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, Belfast	627	617
1030327	Holy Rosary Primary School, Belfast	483	437
1030331	Holy Cross Girls' Primary School, Belfast	192	178
1036048	St Mary's Star of the Sea Primary School, Belfast	133	168
1036132	St Therese of Lisieux Primary School, Belfast	426	414
1036246	St Joseph's Holland Drive, Belfast	383	381
1036566	Holy Family Primary School, Belfast	430	424
1036589	St Teresa's Primary School, Belfast	589	627
1036698	St Patrick's Primary School, Belfast	468	417
1046641	Scoil an Droichid, Belfast	156	155
1056483	Cliftonville Integrated Primary School, Belfast	386	377
1056535	Forge Integrated Primary School, Belfast	402	404
1066531	Hazelwood Integrated Primary School, Newtownabbey	404	390
1620028	Ben Madigan Preparatory School	114	32
3010696	Woodburn Primary School, Carrickfergus	202	199
3010779	The Thompson Primary School, Ballyclare	177	171
3010817	Greenisland Primary School, Carrickfergus	398	410
3010827	Whitehouse Primary School, Newtownabbey	403	381
3010846	Whiteabbey Primary School, Newtownabbey	410	422
3010879	Straidhavern Primary School, Crumlin	38	39
3010880	King's Park Primary School, Newtownabbey	337	283
3010895	Rathcoole Primary School	97	117
3010862	Abbots Cross Primary School, Newtownabbey	317	296
3013301	Carnmoney Primary School, Newtownabbey	386	379
3013323	Mossgrove Primary School	211	171

3016015	Mossley Primary School, Newtownabbey	586	544
3016038	Hollybank Primary School, Monkstown	163	185
3016058	Parkhall Primary School, Antrim	164	189
3016170	Ballyhenry Primary School, Newtownabbey	181	159
3016244	Ashgrove Primary School, Newtownabbey	354	376
3016249	Earlview Primary School, Newtownabbey	193	161
3016257	Oakfield Primary School, Carrickfergus	240	233
3036100	St James Primary School, Newtownabbey	212	195
3050791	Glengormley Integrated Primary School, Newtownabbey	299	263
3056708	Mallusk Controlled Integrated Primary School	107	136
4016401	Pond Park Primary School, Lisburn	620	623
4036591	Our Lady Queen of Peace Primary School, Belfast	335	295
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>16,051</b>	<b>15,565</b>

- Schools list based on 2023/34 Transfer Information from Statistics Branch
- 103-0326 was removed as school now closed and only related to one pupil

**TOTAL reduction in enrolment of 3.2%**

	2021/22 Enrolment	2024/25 Enrolment	% fall
Transfers to both Hazelwood IC and Integrated College, Glengormley	7259	7045	2.94%
Transfers to Hazelwood IC only	4769	4596	3.32%
Transfers to Integrated College Glengormley only	4023	3924	2.46%

### Alternative Maintained Provision

137. The closest Maintained provision to Hazelwood IC is available at Blessed Trinity College, Edmund Rice College and Mercy College all in Belfast. In 2024/25 each of the schools was oversubscribed when supernumerary pupils were included and they are unlikely to be significantly impacted by this proposal. No concerns were raised during the statutory objection period.

### Alternative Grammar Provision

138. **Table 1** shows that there are three VGS's within a three-mile mapping radius of Hazelwood IC. In 2024/25 Belfast Royal Academy and St Malachy's College had no available places. Dominican College, Fortwilliam, had only two available places. Each of the schools is oversubscribed when supernumerary pupils are included in the enrolment. It is unlikely that this proposal will significantly impact on these schools.

## **Current Consultations**

139. The Department has recently completed two public consultations which could potentially impact on this proposal: -

### **Accounting for Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs: Changing the Supernumerary Status**

140. In March 2023 the Independent Review of Special Educational Needs Services and Processes recommended that *'DE should ensure that children with a statement of SEN should not be supernumerary within the school, they should be included within the school's overall enrolment numbers and enrolled at the same time as other pupils.'*

141. Under open enrolment arrangements all mainstream schools must admit children up to the approved admissions number and within an overall enrolment number. Children who have a statement of SEN, children admitted on appeal and children admitted by direction of the Exceptional Circumstances Body (ECB) (Years 8-12 only) are treated as supernumerary for the year of admission.

142. The proposed phased approach would be to treat children who have a statement as supernumerary for the year of admission only, and only where a change of placement is necessary. In 2024/25 Hazelwood IC had 189 actual admissions including supernumerary pupils. In 2024/25 the school had 99 supernumerary places including 19 in Year 8. If the Accounting for Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs policy had been in place for 2024/25, those 19 pupils in Year 8 would be supernumerary and the additional 80 supernumerary pupils would be added to the school enrolment. Therefore, the school would have had an actual enrolment number of 1,057, and thus it would have been oversubscribed by 47 places.

143. The consultation ended on 26 June 2025 and a paper passed to you which you approved on 1 December 2025.

### **Changing School Numbers**

144. The second consultation seeks views on how the Department could change its approach to amending schools' approved admissions and enrolment numbers. At present any significant change to the approved numbers is given effect using a DP and is done through the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. Such changes when approved and implemented are permanent and any further changes require another DP.

145. Articles 11 and 12 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 permit the Department to determine an enrolment and admissions number for every school, in

consultation with the BoG and having considered any representations made by CCMS (for Catholic Maintained Schools) and the EA. This power is used frequently to change a school's approved admissions and/or enrolment via TVs. TVs address temporary population growth and enable localised pressures to be managed as they arise. This power may be used to vary numbers for a single school year: however, the legislation does not limit the change in any time-bound way.

146. Since 2019 the Department has made frequent use of the 1997 Order to facilitate increases to post-primary Year 8 increases in areas ongoing demographic pressure. This has been a pro-active approach to address the challenge of over-subscription by allocating additional places in advance of the process. Hazelwood IC has been allocated 15 additional places in each of the past three years under this process.

147. The proposal for changing the current process is that the Department would, on an annual basis, identify all primary and post-primary schools that have exceeded their numbers through TVs in three of the last four years and consider an uplift to the school's approved numbers (Hazelwood IC would fall into this category).

148. The Department would examine the following:

- a. The extent to which the school's admissions criteria adhere to the Department's guidance and whether they are driving the need for TVs;
- b. Alternative provision in the area (a four-mile radius for primary schools and a ten-mile radius for post-primary) in the same sector and sustainability;
- c. Whether the additional places can be facilitated within existing approved accommodation;
- d. Any views on the proposed number by the EA and in the case of Catholic maintained school, CCMS;
- e. The pattern of placement of children with a statement of SEN at the school;
- f. The significance of change and its likely impact on the wider area; and
- g. Any other relevant departmental educational policy that is applicable in the circumstances of the school.

149. If a change is to be made, it is intended that this will be for a period of three years, before it is reviewed. This is to provide schools with a horizon of certainty in their numbers. After the three years the position will be reviewed, and the increase may be extended for another three-year period, considered permanent, or the approved numbers will revert to previous levels. However, this would not address the Hazelwood IC aim of providing stability in terms of workforce planning and retention.

150. The consultation period ended on 23 June 2025 and you are considering the way forward.

## **Resource Implications**

### **Staffing**

151. The CfC states that Hazelwood IC currently operates with the following staffing structure: -

- Senior Leadership Team - Principal; two Vice Principals; five Assistant Principals; Director of Finance and Corporate Services; Support Services Manager and Curriculum Operations Manager; and
- Teaching and Support Staff -61 full time equivalent staff; 13 part-time teaching staff and 130 support staff.

152. The CfC asserts that no additional staffing is required for this DP but that the approval would allow some temporary teaching posts to be advertised in a permanent capacity.

### **Accommodation**

153. The CfC asserts that no additional accommodation is required for the increase in admission numbers as no increase has been requested in enrolment.

154. Hazelwood IC was one of five school projects included in the second tranche of Fresh Start projects announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 23 November 2018. The Fresh Start funding was repurposed in the UK government's financial settlement for the executive in early 2024 at which point the project transferred to the Department's Major Capital Implementation Team and is now being taken forward under the Major Capital Works Programme with Executive funding.

155. The project was to address the accommodation shortfall as a direct result of the increase in pupil numbers from 850 to 1010 pupils (including a sixth form of 210). There is also 690m<sup>2</sup> of SEN accommodation included in this proposal, made up of 145m<sup>2</sup> of the original SEN schedule of accommodation plus an additional 500m<sup>2</sup> approved by the Department.

156. The school's major work project continues to progress based on an approved enrolment of 1010, including 210 sixth form pupils plus additional SEN accommodation. This proposal will have no impact on the number of centrally

timetabled classrooms or ancillary accommodation other than a minor reduction in the sixth form provision.

157. The technical design/pre-tender estimate (RIBA Stage 4) has been completed by the design team and a summary submitted to the Department. A presentation to the Department's technical advisors (EAB) is scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> December 2025. Following on from the presentation, the full RIBA Stage 4 including appendices will be formally submitted to EAB who will commence their review early in 2026.

## **Transport**

158. The Department's Transport and Food in Schools Directorate have commented that given the numbers involved it would be anticipated the financial implications for the transport budget would not be significant.

## **CONCLUSION**

159. Hazelwood IC is popular Integrated post-primary school, with over 1000 pupils, located in a deprived area of North Belfast. The school has demonstrated clear evidence of unmet demand for places at Year 8 as first preference applications have consistently exceeded the approved admissions number of 160 since 2018/19 and the College sought, and was granted, TVs to address this.

160. Since 2022/23 the Department has increased the approved admissions number at Hazelwood IC to 175, on a temporary basis (until September 2025/26), to address an increased cohort transferring to post-primary education. Increases were approved for a number of schools in the area but this process is due to end at the 2025/26 academic year which would result in reduction of 45 approved places across three local Integrated schools – Hazelwood IC (15); Lagan College (20) and Ulidia IC (10).

161. This DP proposal seeks to stabilise the enrolment at Hazelwood IC at 175 to allow the school to more effectively plan class sizes and assist workforce planning which would allow some temporary teaching posts to be advertised. The DP does not seek any increase in the overall enrolment of 1010 as, due to the restructuring of sixth form provision, the College believes no increase is required. Restricting the approved admissions number to 175 will also provide an opportunity for Integrated College Glengormley to attract Year 8 pupils as Hazelwood IC had had first preference applications in excess of 175 in each of the past five years.

162. Hazelwood IC has confirmed that existing accommodation is sufficient to accommodate the proposed increase without the need for additional capital investment. Staffing requirements can be met with current resources, and the proposal has no significant financial implications for the Department.

163. Evidence above demonstrates that Hazelwood IC is a sustainable school and that it fully meets the Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 definition of an Integrated School, including having a good religious balance. The curricular offer fully meets the requirements of the EF.

164. Objections to this proposal have come from the EA, CSSC and two local schools (Integrated College, Glengormley and Belfast Model School for Girls). The main objections relate to the declining trajectory in transfer numbers from local primary schools and the number of available places in Integrated College, Glengormley.

165. The objections to the proposals noted the falling birth rates and stated that enrolments and applications to the main feeder primary schools were declining. Consideration of the enrolment figures from feeder primary schools show that over the past four years enrolments have fallen by around 3%. However, it is still expected that demand for Integrated post-primary places in the area will remain strong.

166. While analysis of feeder primary schools indicates a slight overall decline in enrolments between 2021/22 and 2024/25, reflecting the wider demographic trends, this reduction is relatively modest and does not diminish the strong demand for integrated post-primary provision. Both Hazelwood IC and Integrated College, Glengormley continue to attract strong application numbers, with Hazelwood IC remaining oversubscribed. This suggests that even with a slight decline in feeder numbers, Hazelwood IC should not experience a significant impact in the short to medium term.

167. It should be noted that Integrated College, Glengormley retained the approved admissions of 210 when it Transformed to Integrated status in 2022/23 but it had not met this admissions number in the past ten years. The first preference applications and admissions have increased significantly since Transformation, in 2025/26 Integrated College, Glengormley had 162 first preference applications and accepted 187 pupils.

168. The Department has a statutory duty under the Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 to encourage, facilitate and support the development of Integrated Education. Evidence above shows there is a significant demand for Integrated education provision in the North Belfast area, the six local Integrated schools within a nine-mile radius have a total 5,580 approved places, however, in 2024/25 the actual enrolment was 5,931 (including supernumerary pupils).

169. The Department has recognised in Vision 2030 that Belfast is one of six localities where there is demand for Integrated Education in excess of supply. NICIE

assert that the Department specifically included Hazelwood IC as part of an early commissioning letter to NICIE in September 2024, to ascertain if admissions could be increased to meet demand.

170. In their comments NICIE also urged the Department to consider the intentions and statements made in Vision 2030 in relation to measuring demand for Integrated Education. Officials are currently collating and reviewing data from the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey, admission preferences, a survey of parents and Transformation ballots to meet its obligation to identify and monitor demand for Integrated Education. This report is expected to be published in December 2025.

171. IMIE supports the proposal to increase Hazelwood IC admissions number to 175 as it is consistent with Vision 2030, the findings of the S10 Report, legislative duties and area planning objectives.

172. The current consultation exercises in respect of 'Changing Supernumerary Status' and 'Changing School Numbers' if approved could impact on this DP. If supernumerary pupils are included in the overall enrolment, then Hazelwood IC, together with many schools in the area, would exceed their approved enrolment number. In the short term, this could be managed through TVs, but in the longer term, a review may be required to adjust admissions and enrolment numbers to accurately reflect actual pupil numbers.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

173. Based on the evidence documented above it is recommended that you: -

(i) Approve, with a modification to the implementation date (as the proposed date has lapsed) that DP 747 which proposes that: -

*“Hazelwood Integrated College will increase its admissions number from 160 to 175, with effect from 1 September 2026, or as soon as possible thereafter.”*

(ii) Agree that this submission (with appropriate redactions) will be published on the Department's website once the EA and the school have been informed of your decision.

*Clare Foley*

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