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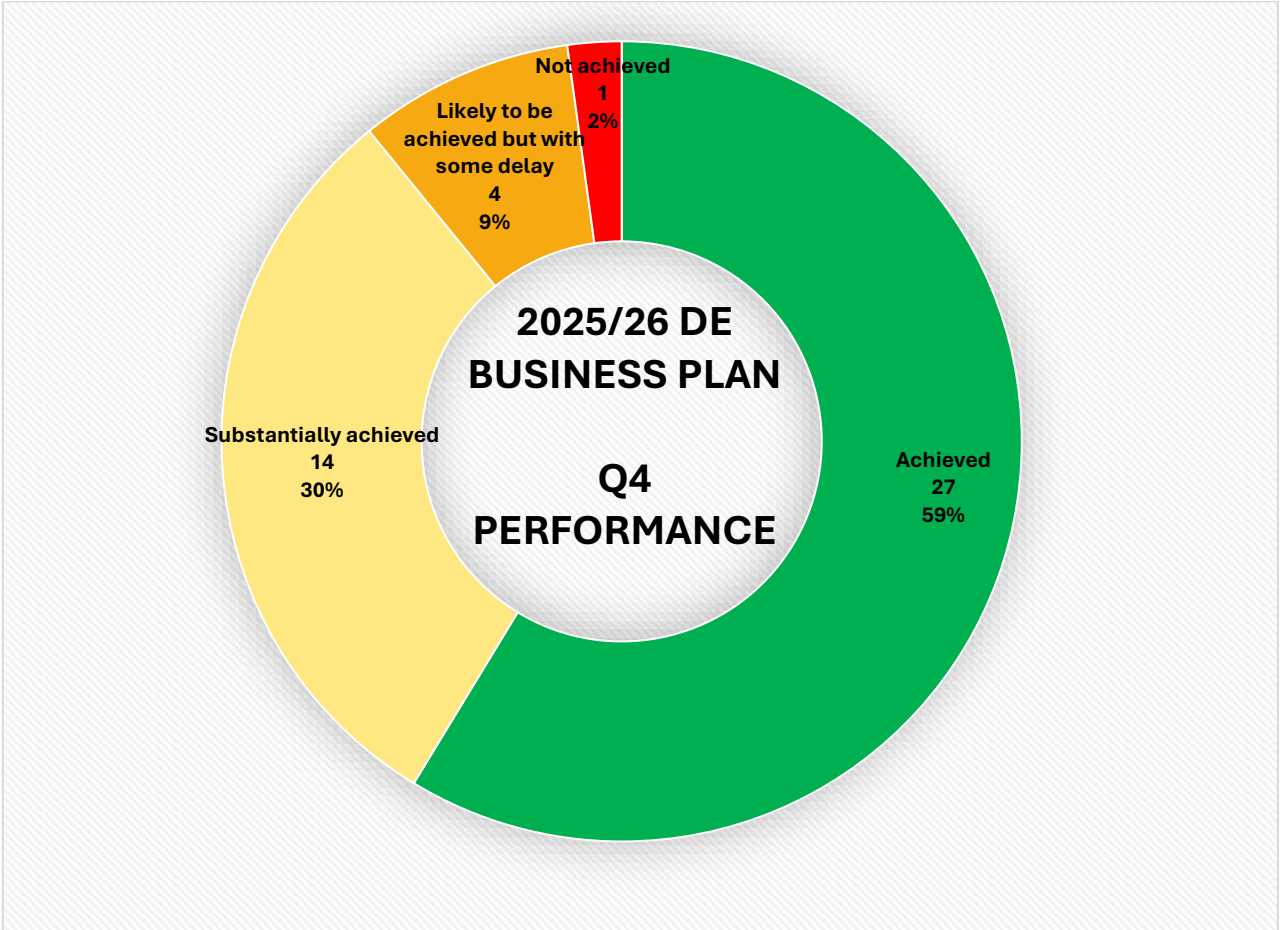
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION BUSINESS PLAN
2025/26 END-YEAR MONITORING REPORT



Summary




The table below sets out a summary of end-year performance against 2025/26 Business Plan actions:



Descriptor	Circumstances for use	End-year Outturn Position (Number)	End-year Outturn Position (Percentage)
Achieved (Green)	When the action has been completed in full within the business year.	27	59%
Substantially achieved (Amber)	When a substantial part of the action has been delivered within the business year.	14	30%
Likely to be achieved but with some delay (Orange)	When the action has not been fully achieved by the end of the business year, but some progress has been made and it is being carried forward to be completed in the next business year.	4	9%
Not achieved (Red)	When the action has not been achieved by the target date and is not being revised or carried forward to the next business year; or When no progress was made on the action during the business year, but it is being carried forward to the next business year.	1	2%
Total		46	100%








Business Plan Strategic Priorities and Actions with End-Year Ratings and Comments

DE Strategic Priority 1 - Meeting the learning needs of our children and young people and developing their knowledge and skills, enabling them to fulfil their potential

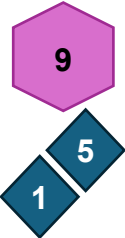
Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
1.1 	We will develop and publish a costed implementation plan to support delivery of <i>Transform ED</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication of the implementation plan. 	Substantially achieved (Amber)	Implementation Plan in draft, to be published in May.
1.2  	We will deliver an independent review of the Northern Ireland curriculum and commence implementation of its recommendations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review report published during May 2025. 	Achieved (Green)	The work of the Subject Working Groups has now been completed, with all groups finalising their contributions to the draft curriculum framework. The Curriculum Taskforce is currently reviewing the outputs, with full sign-off scheduled for April. This will enable the



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				Department to progress to Ministerial consideration in line with the reform programme timeline.
1.3 	We will refresh the 2016 Learning Leaders Strategy to reflect the current challenges and priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated Learning Leaders Strategy published by June 2025. 	Substantially achieved (Amber)	The draft Strategy is awaiting public consultation and it is hoped this will be scheduled during the summer term, depending on other TransformED priorities, with the finalised strategy then being published by autumn 2026.
1.4 	We will roll-out a comprehensive programme of teacher professional learning (TPL) to support the teaching workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme published by June 2025. Programme delivered September 2025 - March 2026, with each project subject to evaluation. 	Achieved (Green)	All of the TPL commitments for 2025/26 under TransformED have been achieved and those for 2026/27 are well advanced, with the Professional Qualification for Headship procurement nearing completion and proposals for collaborative working and subject specialisms approve, with proposals

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				for middle leaders, experienced Principals and the further expansion of Induction well advanced.
1.5  	We will introduce a new system level check in literacy and numeracy for children in their final year of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> System level check administered by Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) during February 2026. 	Achieved (Green)	Pupils in years 4, 7 and 10 sat the first assessments during March 2026 in a cross-representative sample of approximately one third of all schools (including all Irish Medium schools) that were identified to participate in this academic year. CCEA administered the tests and provided invigilator assistance to minimise workload in schools. The tests will be marked by CCEA and the system level data will be available in June 2026.
1.6 	We will undertake research and engage with stakeholders to inform the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission of proposals for Ministerial consideration. 	Achieved (Green)	Consultation on the future of CCEA GCSE, AS and A levels and subsequent engagement events

Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
	development of a qualifications reform strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress next steps as appropriate. 		were completed, advice provided to the Minister, decisions announced by way of oral statement in the Northern Ireland Assembly on 3 March and a general qualifications policy framework published on the same day.
1.7  	We will develop a new School Improvement Policy to provide a framework to support schools in driving excellence and to provide an improved model of external support when needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New policy published by September 2025. 	Likely to be achieved but with some delay (Orange)	A draft policy has been developed ready for pre-engagement with delivery partners and a sample of school leaders in the coming months prior to issuing the draft for public consultation. Progress has been delayed due to the prioritisation of work to strengthen legislation to ensure that the statutory inspection process can operate as intended and to address the findings of the Supreme Court

Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
				<p>that the lack of inspection of Religious Education was a serious gap. In addition, work has been taken forward to strengthen support for school improvement in the controlled sector through the establishment of a Controlled Schools' Unit and work to progress the creation of a dedicated body to support the controlled sector acting on evidence which demonstrates that controlled schools are more likely to require sustained external support to improve and there is a 10% differential in educational outcomes between non-grammar schools in the Catholic maintained sector and the controlled sector. Work has also been progressed to</p>

Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
				pilot a Leaders of Education Programme which will enable high-performing, experienced school leaders to be released to provide mentoring, coaching and additional support to schools identified as in need of support. The work outlined will assist in shaping the new operational support model that will form part of the new school improvement policy.
1.8 	We will engage relevant stakeholders to inform and develop the content of legislation to raise the age of education participation, for its delivery by 31 March 2027.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % completion of agreed delivery plan. 	Substantially achieved (Amber)	A final 16-18 Bill has been submitted to the Northern Ireland Executive for consideration in March 2026. If agreed, this will be introduced to the Northern Ireland Assembly shortly afterwards.


Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
1.9 	We will standardise over time pre-school education session lengths so all target age children can access 22.5 hours per week, with c. 100 settings transitioning in 2025/26.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of pre-school settings transitioning to full time in September 2025. • Number of settings approved during 2025/26 for transition to full time for September 2026. • Increased % pre-school places that are full-time (annual measurement at date of census). 	Achieved (Green)	All September 2025 cohort settings are open and providing full-time provision, with the result that 54% of pre-school children are now in a full-time place based on census data. The Minister has also approved a further 102 settings to transition to full-time from September 2026.
1.10 	We will implement the analytical work programme to support evidence informed policy development and evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions set out in the Analytical Work Programme for 2025/26 will be implemented (% completed). 	Achieved (Green)	Of the 16 projects designated as inescapable in the 2025/26 Analytical Work Programme (AWP), 12 have been completed and 4 are in progress. Prioritisation of projects for 2026/27 is underway.



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1.11	The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) will undertake a comprehensive programme of inspection activity to build capacity within the organisations inspected to provide high quality education and outcomes for all learners and to inform policy, improvement and practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of the agreed inspection plan, across all phases, for academic year 2025/26. • Dissemination of highly effective practice and identification of areas for action. • Inspection empowering improvement. 	Achieved (Green)	ETI completed its planned programme of inspection activity during this period.
1.12	We will bring forward legislation to ensure that the statutory arrangements for inspection are robust and operate effectively, in all circumstances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill drafted by end of Quarter 1 2025/26. • Bill introduced by end of Quarter 2 2025/26. 	Substantially achieved (Amber)	In March 2026, the Northern Ireland Executive agreed the Department's policy proposals to introduce legislation to ensure that the statutory inspection process can operate as intended at all times by defining non-cooperation as unacceptable professional conduct

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				and, additionally, to remove the exemption that exists in current legislation that prevents Religious Education (RE) from being inspected. The latter additional element was included following the Supreme Court ruling in November 2025 which included findings that the lack of inspection of RE was a serious gap. A Bill has been drafted ready for introduction, subject to Executive agreement, after Easter recess.
1.13	We will work with CCEA to progress a review of CCEA's Key Stage 4 and Post 16 qualification specifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of a programme of review. 	Achieved (Green)	Advice provided to the Minister on the outcome of the consultation and engagement process. Decisions announced by way of oral statement in the Northern Ireland Assembly on 3 March 2026, and a general



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				qualifications policy framework, which will provide the context for the development of a regulatory framework for the revision of CCEA's qualifications was published on 3 March 2026.
1.14	We will publish new literacy and numeracy strategies based on international best practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New strategies published by end of March 2026. 	Substantially achieved (Amber)	The underpinning evidence-based Literacy Framework was published December 2025. Development of new Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is underway - publication is expected in 2026/27 following completion of the Irish-medium Literacy Framework and development of a separate Numeracy Framework.


DE Strategic Priority 2 - Helping all our children and young people by supporting their well-being and learning


Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
2.1 	We will invest in whole community and place-based approaches to raise achievement and to reduce educational disadvantage through the roll out of the RAISE Programme in localities across Northern Ireland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Area Plans in place. Projects commissioned and in delivery by December 2025. 	Achieved (Green)	Strategic Area Plans have been published for each of the 18 RAISE localities and are available on the Department's website. 65 projects were successful in the first open call for Locality Led Projects, with these now beginning delivery following the agreement of Letters of Offer. Further calls for Locality Led Projects issued in March 2026 with a closing date of 22 April 2026. A wide range of cross-cutting Initiatives are also underway and several others are under development.

Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
2.2  	<p>We will:</p> <p>(i) commence implementation of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Reform Agenda to improve outcomes and better support the inclusion of children and young people with SEN and disabilities;</p> <p>(ii) progress an Inclusive System Development Programme by building capacity and increasing efficiency through implementation of the Graduated Response Framework and roll out of the Education Authority's (EA) Local Impact Teams</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % SEN Placements at key transition points confirmed by end of June. • % of Statements completed within 26 week statutory timeframe. • % of referrals to Statutory Assessment which are made by parents. • % appeals upheld by Special Educational Needs Tribunal. • Measure of parental confidence. • % of funding secured vs funding required to support implementation of SEN Reform. 	Substantially achieved (Amber)	<p>(i) Implementation of the SEN Reform Agenda and Delivery Plan commenced in 2025/26. A number of year one actions have been delivered / commenced including support for pre-school education settings through the Pre-school Inclusion Fund, commencement of a programme of training in SEN for classroom assistants in pre-school and Foundation Stage and an Inclusive Play programme. The EA has developed its Enhanced Support Model which issued for consultation on 24 March. Progress on implementation of some projects has been paused since December 2025 whilst a stocktake review took place. Subject to approval by the</p>

Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
	and we will work with the EA to ensure a SEN First approach to planning within Operational Plan 2 and to make improvements to the Statutory Assessment process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No of children / schools / families supported through the SEN Reform Agenda. 		Public Sector Transformation Board, it is expected that these projects will commence in term 3 of 2025/26. (ii) The Inclusive Capacity Building Programme has been paused pending the outcome of the stocktake review. An Inclusion symposium is now expected to take place in September 2026 and training and resources on Inclusive Education will be developed over the coming months and made available on the EA online TPL platform being developed as part of Transformed. Performance metrics are not yet available and are expected in 2026/27.

Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
2.3 	We will develop an Executive Early Learning and Childcare Strategy by autumn 2025.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Executive Early Learning and Childcare Strategy published for public consultation by Autumn 2025. 	Achieved (Green)	The draft Early Learning and Childcare Strategy was launched by the Minister on 17 December 2025. Public consultation ended on 24 March 2026. Officials will prepare a revisited strategy for the Minister's consideration based on the consultation responses and budget availability.
2.4 	We will support the affordability of childcare for working parents through the Northern Ireland Childcare Subsidy Scheme (NICSS) which will, as a minimum, maintain a 15% subsidy on childcare costs for all working parents eligible to Tax Free Childcare with a child below primary school age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % uptake of eligible parents. % savings the scheme provides to parents. 	Achieved (Green)	To improve childcare support, the Minister introduced the Northern Ireland Childcare Subsidy Scheme (NICSS) in September 2024. NICSS provides financial assistance to working parents, and when combined with HMRC's Tax-Free Childcare (TFC) scheme, eligible families can receive support of up to 32%. Since its introduction, NICSS,

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				alongside TFC, has supported approximately 26,500 children and helped reduce childcare costs for parents by around £43.8 million.
2.5 	We will continue to invest in the joint Department of Education (DE) / Department of Health Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Education Framework in 2025/26 and beyond subject to budget availability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. / % of schools engaged with one or more Framework projects. Project-level annual outcomes-focused plans. 	Achieved (Green)	Through continued Departmental investment the framework projects - Being Well Doing Well and REACH - were fully funded and operational this year. While funding was available, RISE KS2 was only partially operational in one Trust area due to operational challenges. The Department of Health funded Emotional Wellbeing Teams in Schools project was operational. The projects operate and report on an academic year basis, in the 2024/25 year 49% (540) schools engaged with the four projects. All



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				project-level Outcome Based Accountability report cards demonstrated improvements in knowledge, understanding and benefits from engagement.
2.6 	We will continue to implement Targeting Social Need (TSN) funding together with programmes such as Extended Schools to support schools and to ensure an equitable foundation of supports for our children and young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TSN funding data and use as per TSN planner. • Extended Schools funding data and use drawn from Extended Schools reporting. 	Achieved (Green)	Targeting Social Need (TSN) funding of over £72m was provided to schools in 2025/26. The Department has seen a significant increase in completion rates on uses of funding reported through the TSN Planner. A reminder on completion of the TSN Planner issued to schools in February 2026. £8.1m of funding was provided to schools included in the Extended Schools programme and is on course to be fully utilised by year end.


Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
2.7	We will progress a School Uniforms Bill with a focus on addressing affordability issues for parents and carers through the Northern Ireland Assembly to come into operation by autumn 2025.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary legislation will come into operation. • % of schools publishing information on the rationale for and cost of uniform requirements. • % reduction in reports of parents facing affordability issues relating to school uniforms. 	Achieved (Green)	The School Uniforms (Guidelines and Allowances) Act (Northern Ireland) 2026 is now in operation. The associated School Uniforms Guidelines issued to all grant-aided and independent primary and post-primary schools on 23 February 2026 and apply to school uniform policies for the 2026/27 school year onwards.
2.8	We will undertake a pilot of the use of mobile phone inhibiting devices in a small number of post primary schools to inform future policy decisions in this area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch and progress pilot in line with agreed timescales (Pilot anticipated to complete in early Financial Year 2026/27). 	Achieved (Green)	Pilot across the 9 schools concluded in March 2026. Kings College London are conducting the independent evaluation of the pilot which will inform future policy proposals for the Minister's consideration.


Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
2.9	We will work with the EA to ensure the effective implementation of the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data sources developed, refined and monitored to evidence implementation and impact of the Act. 	Achieved (Green)	Results on bullying type behaviour were published as part of the 2024 School Omnibus Survey report, after questions on this issue were included for the first time. An ETI report on bullying information gathered from school inspections and surveys was provided to the Department – the first report of this type. Further ETI work on the Board of Governors role has recently taken place and an associated report will issue to the Department shortly. The Department is exploring with the EA the potential for accessing anonymised regional bullying as part of the EdIS digital change programme. Implementation is dependent on wider EdIs timelines.


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				An Outcome Based Accountability reporting process is embedded between the EA and the Department.


DE Strategic Priority 3 – Delivering an effective, child-first, collaborative and high-quality education system

Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
3.1  	We will develop a coherent accountability framework to demonstrate value to government, taxpayers and parents and drive improvement through responsibility and answerability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent review of accountability arrangements in Northern Ireland completed by October 2025. New accountability framework published by March 2026. 	Not achieved (Red)	When developing the TransformED Delivery Plan, it was considered that other key work areas must be actioned prior to this review progressing. The agreed published Plan advises that "An independent review of accountability will be commissioned after the reviews of assessment, funding targeted at disadvantage and the independent review of workload. This will ensure it reflects the latest position in these areas and takes account of the findings of these key reviews." The new targets for this review include

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				that: Independent Review panel to be established by summer 2026; review to be completed by January 2027; the framework will be a key deliverable of the independent review of accountability and will be published by March 2027. Work has been progressed to fill vacancies to establish a team to lead this work from April 2026.
3.2 	Following the 2021-24 Pay Agreement and continuing discussions on 2024/25 Pay, we will continue to develop industrial relations with our teaching workforce and trade unions seeking agreement on a programme of work in an attempt to find a resolution to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure appropriate consultation with Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) regarding new initiatives and policy development. • Ensure Ministerial priorities and appropriate 	Achieved (Green)	On 6 January 2026 an offer to NITC for a 4% consolidated pay award to all teacher salary scale points with effect from 1st September 2025. In addition, Teaching and Special Needs Allowances will be increased by 4% from 1st September 2025 was made. On 13 January this pay offer was accepted by NITC and was

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	the current dispute on both pay and workload.	funding are reflected in pay negotiations with NITC via Management Side (MS). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and advise MS in the delivery of a pay offer for 2024/25 and 2025/26. 		implemented in the February payrolls. An update on workload from the Minister was issued to all teachers on 3 February 2026 and an action plan is being developed for publication at the end of April 2026.
3.3 	We will oversee the implementation of a new Controlled Schools' Unit (CSU) with the EA, to improve management of schools within the Controlled sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSU to be in shadow form by April 2025 and in operation by September 2025. 	Achieved (Green)	The Controlled Schools' Unit (CSU) in the EA was established in September 2025 in embryonic form and has since worked alongside the Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC) to engage with school leaders across the sector to identify the gaps in support and needs of controlled schools in order to shape the priority work of the CSU moving forward. The Unit was officially launched in early February 2026

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				and feedback from the public consultation on proposals in this area demonstrates that the Unit is already having impact and has been well received.
3.4 	We will engage with relevant stakeholders to inform and begin to develop legislation for a new managing authority for controlled schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of proposals for Ministerial consideration. • Progress next steps as appropriate. 	Substantially achieved (Amber)	Whilst there was significant delay in securing Executive agreement to the policy proposals to create a dedicated statutory body to support and manage controlled schools, a public consultation was progressed in October - December 2025 and consultation outcome report published in January 2026 demonstrating strong support for the proposals. At the end of February, Executive agreement was secured to engage the Office of the Legislative Counsel on the drafting

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				of legislation. In the interim, to bolster support for the controlled sector, a dedicated Controlled Schools' Unit has been established within the Education Authority, which was formally launched in February 2026.
3.5 	We will (i) bring proposals forward for the establishment of an Area Planning Taskforce to develop a new approach to Area Planning to reconfigure the current network of schools to create thriving, sustainable schools that support higher standards of education and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Area Planning Taskforce established. • Work commenced to produce proposals / steps to reconfigure the network of schools. • Increase in the # and % of children and young people pupils being educated in sustainable schools. 	Substantially achieved (Amber)	(i) Work is ongoing to develop options for establishing an Independent Planning Commission. This aligns with the recommendations of the Independent Review of Education and the Department's five year budget strategy. (ii) Ongoing engagement continues with Area Planning stakeholders to advance the aims and objectives of the Strategic Area Plan 2022–27,



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	<p>promote inclusion for all children and young people;</p> <p>(ii) continue to work with Area Planning stakeholders to deliver the aims and objectives of the Sustainable Schools Policy, the Strategic Area Plan and the Strategic Area Plan for Special Education and progress those actions brought forward by proposers from Operational Plan 2.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All published development proposals progressed in line with the statutory framework effectively and efficiently. 		<p>supporting improvements to the school network and increasing the number of children and young people educated in sustainable schools across Northern Ireland. Development Proposals continue to be brought forward, with associated reports prepared to support Ministerial decision making. Stakeholders are also progressing preparatory work to inform the final Operational Plan (OP3) scheduled for publication in September 2026.</p>
3.6	<p>We will take the necessary actions to prioritise effectively the Education budget and to ensure that we invest in key</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How much of the Minister’s approved capital & resource budget strategies have we delivered? 	<p>Likely to be achieved but with some delay (Orange)</p>	<p>Following the January Technical Exercise and the allocation of £214.6m the Department and the Education Authority have taken every step possible to deliver</p>

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	Education priorities and apply sound financial controls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimal utilisation of budgets, i.e. minimal underspends & no overspends. • Capital projects delivered as a result of 2025/26 funding. • % of DE budget invested in SEN vs the % of children with SEN in schools. • Maximise compliance with Better Business Case Northern Ireland requirements, i.e. improved test drill results. 		savings at pace and DE is expected to operate within budget this year.
3.7	We will take forward the Minister's decision on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill drafted by end of Quarter 2. 	Achieved (Green)	All agreed milestones have been achieved. Officials continue to

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	establishing an effective professional body for teachers, preparing and introducing a Bill to secure all necessary changes to primary legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill introduced by end of Quarter 3. 		support the Committee's scrutiny of the Bill and are already working closely with the Departmental Solicitor's Office (DSO) to develop a set of Subordinate Regulations. The Bill remains on track to complete its passage during quarter 3 - quarter 4 of 2026/27.
3.8	We will bring forward proposals for Regulations that prescribe the circumstances for the removal of members of school Boards of Governors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of proposals for Ministerial consideration. • Progress next steps as appropriate. 	Substantially achieved (Amber)	Delay in achieving action due to delays in receiving DSO and Counsel advice. Minister provided approval on initial proposals. Draft regulations approaching completion. Further Ministerial consideration / approval and public consultation to follow.
3.9	We will continue to promote the completion of Child Rights Impact Assessment (CIRA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DE staff completion rates for the CRIA training. 	Achieved (Green)	Children and Young People's Strategy Team continue to advise DE colleagues on the application of

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	training in order to support policy and decision making.			Child Rights Impact Assessments and alongside monitoring training completion rates, will also explore additional opportunities to promote their use as required.

DE Strategic Priority 4 - Inspiring all our children and young people to make a positive contribution to society

Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
4.1 	We will work with colleagues in EA, Department for the Economy (DfE) and other stakeholders to develop work programmes and implement actions set out in the 14-19 Framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of action plans for 14-19 themed working groups. 	Substantially achieved (Amber)	DE officials have secured the Minister's agreement to the progression of a "Building Futures: Post-16 Policy". This will help to progress the policies which underpin the 16-19 legislation. The work will involve consulting and collaborating with a wide range of stakeholders including other departments, schools, Further Education colleges, Area Learning Communities, employers, training providers and so on.
4.2 	We will continue to embed Shared Education in the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued delivery against the 23 actions of the MSE 	Achieved (Green)	Phase Two of implementing Mainstreaming Shared Education

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	education system through implementation of the Mainstreaming Shared Education (MSE) Strategy.	<p>Strategy Phase Two Delivery Plan and development of the draft Phase Three Delivery Plan by June 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of the 23 actions of the Phase Two Delivery Plan by June 2025 and implementation commenced for the Phase Three Delivery Plan by September 2025. • Improved educational outcomes and promotion of good relations as reported by Shared Education partnerships by September 2026. 		(MSE) Strategy successfully concluded and new Phase Three Delivery Plan developed and agreed during 2025/26 with delivery of associated actions ongoing. Partnership evaluation data for 2025/26 not available until end of current academic year.

Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
4.3	We will progress development of an Education Model to exploit curricular and sharing opportunities offered by the Strule Shared Education Campus and enable promotion of equality, inclusion and community cohesion while respecting the ethos and identity of the individual schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of agreed action plans for workstreams. 	Likely to be achieved but with some delay (Orange)	The team are continuing to work on the development of campus educational policies in line with available school resource. Work is underway on the development of an aligned timetable to enable scoping of initial shared options at post-16, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 3 for September 2026. A draft safeguarding policy and operational plan has been developed.
4.4	The Strule Shared Education Campus project will progress work to maximise access to the Northern Ireland Curriculum and the Entitlement Framework, including developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of agreed action plans for workstreams. 	Likely to be achieved but with some delay (Orange)	The team are continuing to work with the schools in line with available resource on developing a shared curriculum model for the campus to enable Go Live September 2028, this includes looking at models for timetabling. A


Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
	enhanced curriculum linkages between schools and Omagh Learning Community partners and local business to support Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) provision and encourage innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise.			draft safeguarding policy and operational plan is in place which is supporting understanding of the capacity for curricular sharing on the campus for day 1. Significant school and community stakeholder engagement has been undertaken to increase awareness of the campus and its opportunities. A draft Community Use policy is under development to support community use of the sports and STEAM facilities once the campus opens.
4.5	We will develop a new youth policy, taking on board views from a public consultation for Minister's final approval.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery against approved policy review timeframe. 	Substantially achieved (Amber)	Submission on review findings issued to Minister in November 2025; Minister provided policy direction of travel in December 2025. Draft policy developed and

Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
				will issue for consultation following Minister's approval.
4.6	We will publish an updated Integrated Education (IE) Strategy and Action Plan and work towards delivery of the actions therein.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of IE Strategy and Action Plan. • Publication of a report on IE demand. • Annual update on delivery of the IE Action Plan. 	Substantially achieved (Amber)	IE Demand report is being reviewed post S3 consultation with Stakeholders. The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) Business Plan for 2026/27 updated to reflect IE Action Plan.
4.7	We will commence the development of an Irish-Medium Education (IME) Strategy and Action Plan to address the growing demand for IME and meet the unique challenges faced by this sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of engagements with key stakeholders in the sector through the creation of an IME Strategy Working and Steering Group. • Agreement from IME Strategy Steering Group of some aspects of a draft Strategy. 	Achieved (Green)	Work is ongoing and on track for Mid 2027 completion.

Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of some aspects of a draft Action Plan. • Working towards the publication of an IME Strategy by mid-2027 		
4.8	We will bring forward proposals for the Department's future approach to providing sustainable support for Nurture provision so that future funding is effectively targeted to ensure maximum impact for those children most in need of this form of support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of proposals for Ministerial consideration. • Progress next steps as appropriate. 	Achieved (Green)	External independent evaluation report completed into the current and future impact and return on investment of the Department's investment in Nurture provision. Evaluation report published. Submission outlining options for the Department's future support for Nurture provision provided to the Minister.
4.9	We will progress the review of the Traveller in Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in line with the agreed action plan. 	Substantially achieved	Progress delayed due to reduced resource for this work area during

Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
	Framework in line with the agreed action plan.		(Amber)	last six months. Stakeholder Group to be reconvened shortly with view to recommence plans of surveys and focus groups.
4.10	We will develop and publish a DE Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan and work towards delivery of the actions therein.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of a Sustainability Strategy and action Plan. 	Achieved (Green)	Officials continue to engage with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) regarding the obligations for DE within the Climate Change. At this stage, it is no longer envisaged that a DE Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan will be required. Officials are drafting a short policy statement to set out how DE will meet its climate change obligations.

DE Strategic Priority 5 – Championing the needs and aspirations of all our children and young people and the positive impact of education

Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
5.1 	We will make the case for the required level of investment in education, including capital in 2025/26, as part of a future executive budget process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission of bids at every monitoring round and timely engagement with Department of Finance on future years exercises, to ensure maximisation of departmental funds. Capital projects delivered as a result of 2025/26 funding. 	Achieved (Green)	As part of the January Technical Exercise £6.8m Resource was allocated to the Department, alongside £214.6m from a reserve claim, which has provided Education with the Resource needed this year. The Department expects to operate withing its Capital allocation as well.
5.2	We will engage with all relevant stakeholders to develop a 10-year capital investment strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan in place for quarter 2 of 2025/26. Improved estate data and information to inform priorities for investment. 	Substantially achieved (Amber)	The 10-year strategy is undergoing review prior to consultation with relevant stakeholders. The final strategy will be in place in quarter 1 2026/27 subject to Ministerial

Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
				approval. The third year of the 5 year cycle of stock condition surveys has been completed to inform future capital investment and the budget strategy
5.3	We will further develop the Executive Children and Young People’s Strategy (CYPS) 2020-2030 monitoring and reporting structures to facilitate input from non-statutory partners and focus cooperative effort on priority areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress in developing reporting structures to support the CYPS Monitoring and Reporting Board. 	Achieved (Green)	The CYPS Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) Board convened on 17 February 2026. Following circulation of the second iteration of the multi year Delivery Plan, the Board reviewed and discussed the CYPS Delivery Plan for 2025–2028. The Plan has been refined to transition from a comprehensive catalogue of departmental activities to a more strategic focus on thematic, cross departmental priorities.

Action number	What we are going to do	Measure(s) of success (including completion of enabling actions)	Status	Comments (at 31 March 2026)
5.4	We will seek Executive agreement to a set of Participation Principles with the aim of improving engagement with children and young people, ensuring their views are sought, listened to and acted upon in policy development and decision making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive endorsement and publication of the Participation Principles. 	Achieved (Green)	The final and agreed set of Principles of Participation were issued by the Minister to Executive colleagues on 26 June 2025. The Principles have been published on the DE website and circulated to all staff in the Department.




Department of Education (DE) Corporate Risks

There are six key Corporate Risks which have the potential to affect the delivery of actions in the Business Plan, as follows:

Risk	Description
1	Financial: DE Budget fails to deliver on Strategic Priorities.
2	Alignment & delivery: DE's activities do not give children and young people the best start in life.
3	Relationships: Ineffective partnerships with stakeholders impact negatively on services.
4	Safeguarding: The Safeguarding and Child Protection framework fails to protect children and young people.
5	People: Ineffective management of the workforce inhibits positive outcomes.
6	Programme: Infrastructure does not support delivery of education or provide a safe environment.

These risks are contained within the Department's Corporate Risk Register and are overseen and managed throughout the year by the Departmental Board, with the assistance of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

The Business Plan contains the following symbols:

	Denotes an action which contributes to the delivery of the TransformED NI Ten-Point Plan for Educational Excellence in Northern Ireland (Annex A)
	Denotes an action which contributes to the delivery of a key priority within the 2024-27 Programme for Government
	Denotes an action which contributes to the delivery of a recommendation arising from the Independent Review of Education (Annex B)

ANNEX A - Ten Point Plan for educational excellence in Northern Ireland (TransformED NI)

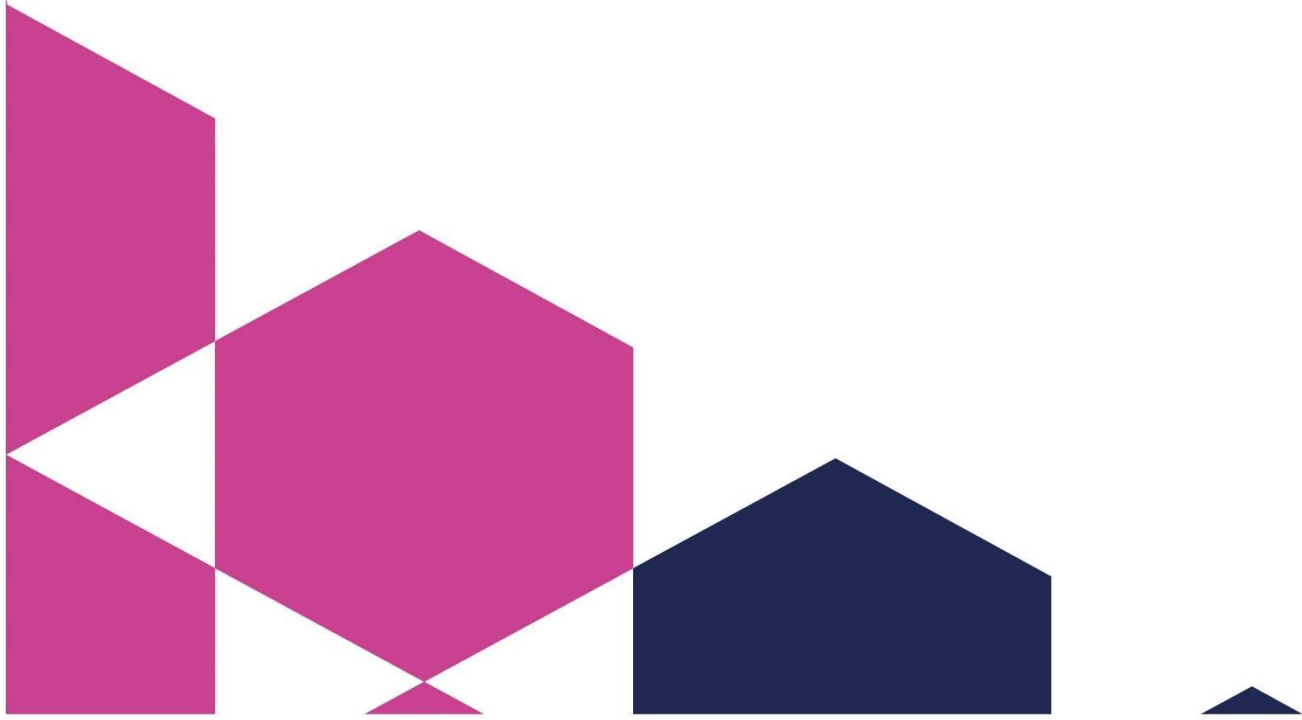
			X-ref to Business Plan action
1	A KNOWLEDGE-RICH CURRICULUM	We will review and redesign the Northern Ireland curriculum to ensure every child enjoys an ambitious and knowledge-rich curriculum that develops their learning in a well sequenced and explicit manner.	1.2
2	HIGH-QUALITY CURRICULUM ADVICE AND RESOURCES	We will provide greater investment in high-quality curriculum advice and resources to support teachers in the classroom.	1.2
3	PRIORITISING TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	We will ensure there is sustained investment to provide a coherent approach to Teacher Professional Learning that supports teachers throughout their career.	1.3 & 1.4
4	EVIDENCE INFORMED APPROACHES TO LITERACY AND NUMERACY	We will introduce new literacy and numeracy strategies informed by evidence and based on international best practice.	1.5
5	HIGH STANDARDS AND SYSTEM LEVEL DATA	We will introduce a new system of attainment measures for end of Key Stage assessment to set high standards for all children and provide reliable system level performance measures.	1.5
6	PORTABLE, PROGRESSIVE AND FIT FOR PURPOSE QUALIFICATIONS	We will review the qualifications landscape to ensure availability of high-quality qualifications that are up to date, portable and fit for purpose to support progression to a higher level of learning, training, or into employment.	1.6

7	A FOCUS ON CONTINUAL EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT	We will introduce a new school improvement policy to provide a framework to support excellence and an improved model of external support for schools.	1.7
8	AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TACKLE EDUCATIONAL DISADVANTAGE	We will deliver an integrated approach to tackling educational disadvantage providing a continuum of evidence-based interventions within schools, families and communities.	2.1
9	ALL LEARNERS ENGAGED IN EDUCATION TO 18	We will introduce legislation to ensure all learners remain in education, apprenticeship or training until age 18.	1.8
10	EFFECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY DRIVING IMPROVEMENT	We will introduce a coherent accountability framework to demonstrate value for money to government, taxpayers and parents and drive improvement through responsibility and answerability.	3.1

ANNEX B - Independent Review of Education Report – List of Recommendations

	Recommendation	X-ref to Business Plan action
1	Raise the age of education participation.	1.8
2	Expand early years education.	1.9
3	Give everybody the opportunity to access basic education throughout their lifetime free of charge.	For DfE
4	Major reform of the curriculum and keep it under continual review.	1.2
5	Modify the transition process.	1.2, 1.8, 4.1
6	Provide new curricular pathways for all at 14.	4.1
7	Ensure assessment supports progression.	1.5
8	Reform the Careers Service to promote understanding of the world of work.	4.1
9	Retain local talent.	For DfE
10	Invest in education.	5.1
11	Transform SEN support to cater equitably for the needs of all learners.	2.2
12	Value the education workforce.	3.2
13	Provide expert curriculum advice.	1.2
14	Facilitate learner-centred interventions.	1.7, 2.1
15	Give additional support to allow parents to get into work.	2.4
16	Prioritise wellbeing.	2.5
17	Combat disadvantage.	2.6
18	Establish a single Department for the entire education journey.	For Northern Ireland Executive

19	Reform school management arrangements.	3.3, 3.4
20	Reconfigure the network of schools.	3.5
21	Promote learners learning together.	4.2
22	Promote a cost effective, thriving and value for money college sector.	For DfE
23	Use broad measures of success.	1.10
24	Strengthen accountability.	3.1
25	Introduce a legislative framework that enables innovation.	Not in current mandate



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION BUSINESS PLAN
2025/26 END-YEAR MONITORING REPORT

