

COPY OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION – DP 571

Cover Note

DP No.	DP 571								
School	Erganagh Primary School								
Proposal	<i>'Erganagh PS will discontinue with effect from 31 August 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter'</i>								
Department's Decision	Approved								
Date of Decision	29 April 2019								
Permanent Secretary's Comments	<p><i>"I refer to [the] submission to me dated 15 April 2019 and attachments about the above Development Proposal. I am satisfied that this is an issue on which it is appropriate for me to take a decision in the context of the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation and Exercise of Functions) Act 2018.</i></p> <p><i>The case for change in relation to this proposal is strong. The school's enrolment has been in decline and now sits at just 25. The enrolment projections for September show this decline continuing. The school is operating with two composite classes, each with more than two year groups. Although currently recording a budget surplus, the school is not currently operating within its in-year budget. There are available places at alternative neighbouring schools of a similar management type.</i></p> <p><i>I appreciate the sensitivities surrounding the closure of any school, and particularly those located in rural areas, but in light of all the information presented in [the] submission and the associated papers I agree the recommendations set out at paragraph 79 of the submission.</i></p> <p><i>It will be important that the consequential measures set out at paragraphs 62-72, particularly in respect of Temporary Variations where appropriate and home to school transport, are assessed and put in place as quickly as possible"</i></p>								
Additional Notes	-								
Information redacted	Some information and personal data may have been removed in line with the principles of the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Act.								
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Key</th> <th>Details</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>■</td> <td>redaction</td> </tr> <tr> <td>*</td> <td>refers to less than five cases where data is considered sensitive</td> </tr> <tr> <td>#</td> <td>means figure has been suppressed to prevent disclosure of sensitive information under rules of disclosure</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Key	Details	■	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
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From: BILL STEVENSON
Area Planning Policy Team

Date: 15 April 2019

To: Derek Baker
Permanent Secretary

Copy distribution below

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL (DP) 571 - ERGANAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL (PS), CASTLEDERG

Issue:	<p>To decide on DP 571: <i>Erganagh PS will discontinue with effect from 31 August 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter.</i></p>
Timescale:	<p>Urgent - there are practical reasons why an early decision is important.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents require time to express preferences for an alternative school if a closure decision results; ▪ The Education Authority requires time to put in place transport / accommodation arrangements if a closure decision results; ▪ A statutory staff consultation period is required prior to a school closure, four months for teaching staff with a minimum of three months for non-teaching staff.
Financial / Resource Implications:	<p>Closure would result in an operational saving (unquantified) in terms of recurrent costs associated with running the school.</p> <p><u>Capital</u> The Case for Change indicates the possibility of “minor additional accommodation” requirements to facilitate relocation of pupils to an alternative school, but these cannot be defined or costed until parental preference for alternative placements has been expressed and processed.</p> <p><u>Resource</u> Teaching and non-teaching staff are afforded employment protection under their respective School Re-organisation Agreements and are eligible for redeployment under transfer</p>

	<p>redundancy procedures. Staff unsuccessful in gaining redeployment or employment will be treated as supernumerary and a Centre cost. At this stage of the process these costs cannot be determined due to too many variables.</p>
<p>FOI Implications:</p>	<p>The content of this submission is likely to be fully disclosable.</p>
<p>Statutory Duty Implications:</p>	<p>The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016</p> <p>Article 44 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986</p>
<p>Presentational Issues:</p>	<p>The closure of a school will likely attract media interest. Should any queries arise the Press Office can draw upon this submission and liaise with officials as necessary.</p>
<p>Recommendation:</p>	<p>It is recommended that you:</p> <p>Approve DP 571 that: <i>Erganagh PS will discontinue with effect from 31 August 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter.</i></p> <p>Agree that this submission (with appropriate redactions) can be made available on the Department's website once the Education Authority (EA) and the school have been notified.</p>

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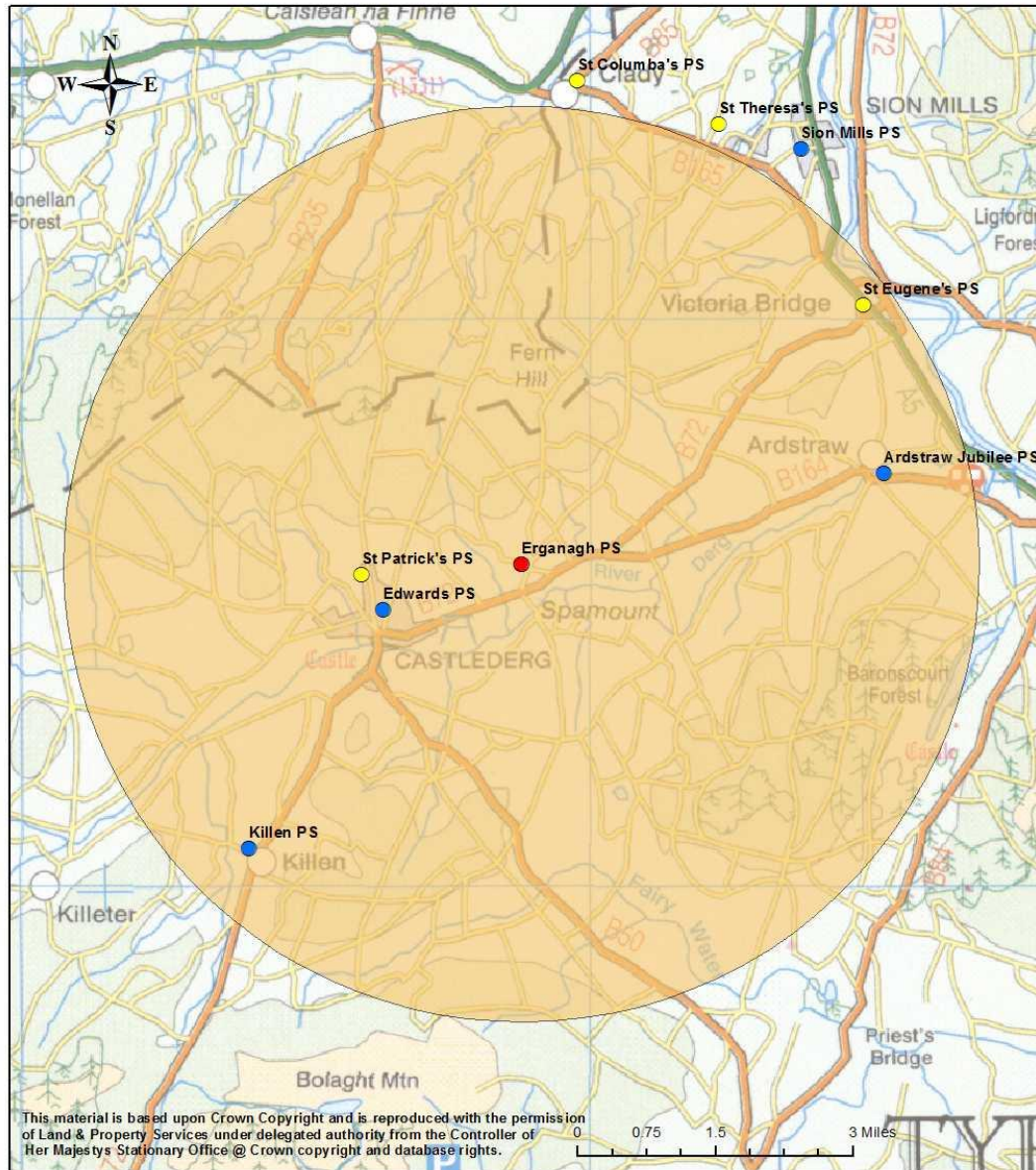
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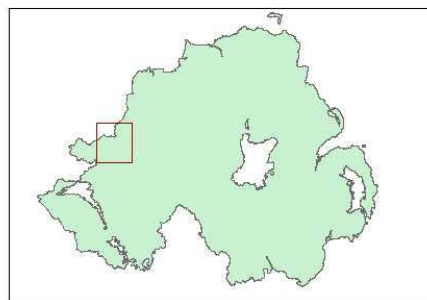
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MAP 1

Erganagh Primary School - Alternative Primary Provision (5 mile radius)

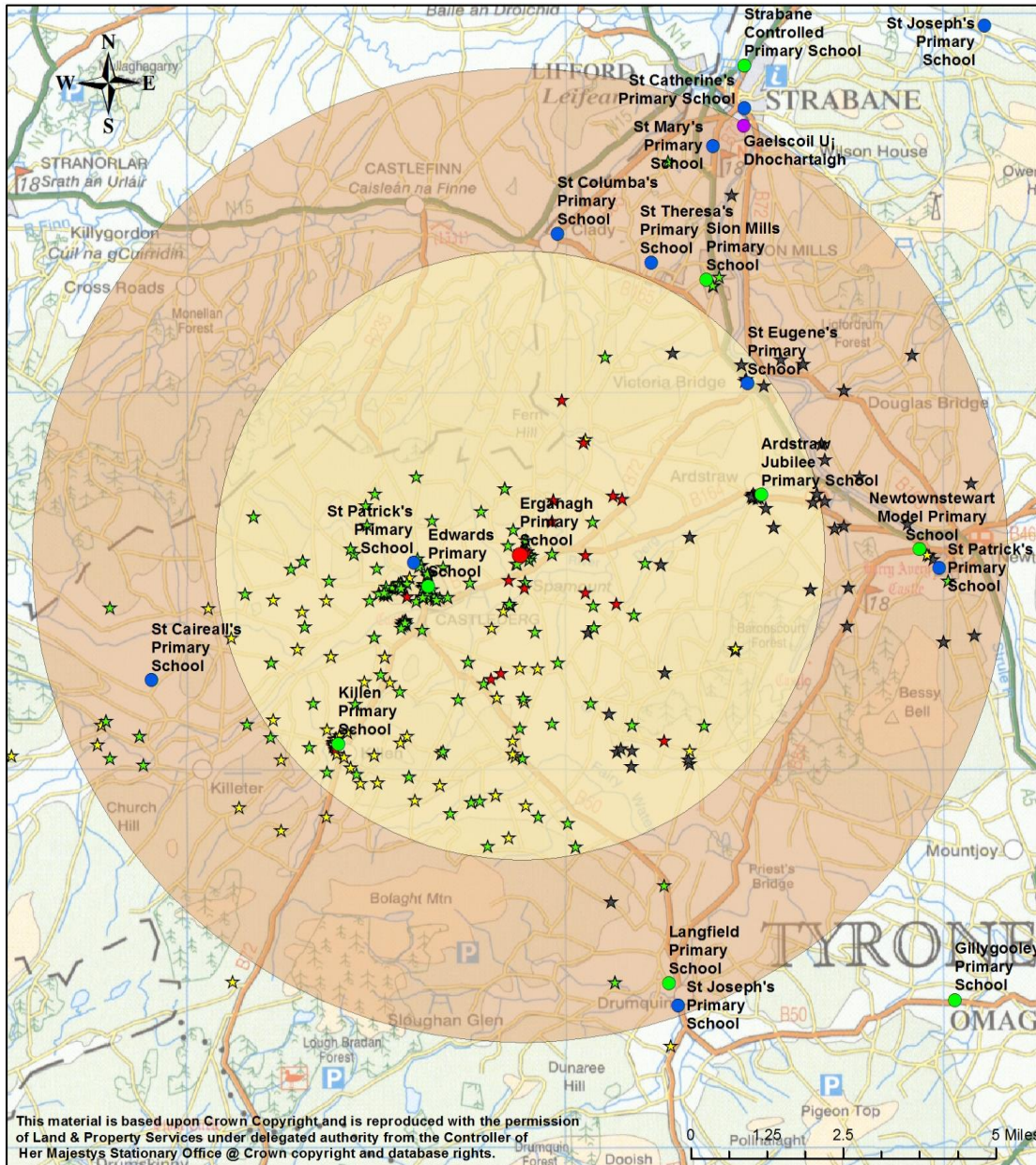


- Erganagh Primary School
- Controlled
- Controlled Integrated
- GMI
- Maintained
- Other Maintained
- Voluntary
- Buffer distance - 5 miles



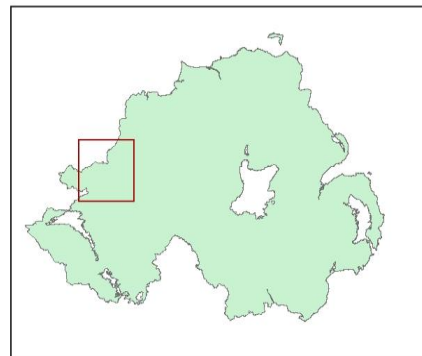
MAP 2

Erganagh PS - Alternative Primary Provision/Pupil Locations (8 mile radius)



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- Erganagh Primary School
- Controlled
- Catholic Maintained
- Controlled Integrated
- Grant Maintained Integrated
- Other Maintained
- Voluntary
- ★ Erganagh PS - Pupil locations
- ★ Edwards PS - Pupil locations
- ★ Killen PS - Pupil locations
- ★ Ardstraw Jubilee PS - Pupil locations
- 5 mile buffer of Erganagh PS
- 8 mile buffer of Erganagh PS



INTRODUCTION

1. On 17 January 2019 the EA published Development Proposal (DP) 571 proposing to discontinue Erganagh PS with effect from 31 August 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter.
2. The statutory two month objection period ended on 19 March 2019. A copy of the published DP and the supporting Case for Change are reproduced at Appendices A and B respectively.

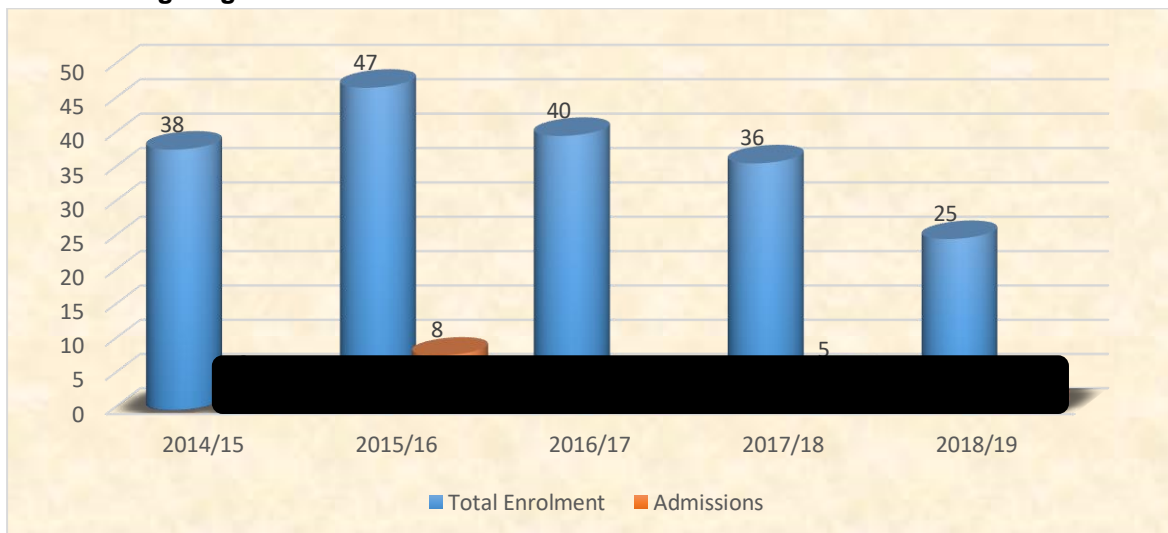
BACKGROUND

3. Erganagh Primary School is a Controlled co-educational primary school situated at 7 Listymore Road in Castlederg, illustrated by Map 1.
4. In 2018/19 all pupils enrolled lived within a five mile radius of the school, illustrated by Map 2.

Admissions and Enrolment

5. Chart 1 illustrates the pattern of admissions and enrolment at Erganagh PS, with the school's enrolment in decline since 2015/16. The school has admitted considerably less than its approved admissions number (15) in each of the last five years, peaking at 8 in 2015/16. The school's overall enrolment of 25 in 2018/19 is significantly below the Sustainable Schools Policy (SSP) minimum recommended enrolment of 105 for a sustainable rural primary school.

Chart 1 – Erganagh PS – Historical Admissions and Enrolment



Area Context

6. On the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 the Finn area, in which Erganagh PS is situated, is placed 160 out of 890 (1 being most deprived and 890 least deprived).

EA's "Providing Pathways" Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-2020

7. The Strategic Area Plan 2017–2020 (the Area Plan) identifies a number of key emerging issues from analysis of current provision in the Derry and Strabane Local Government District (LGD) area. Issues relevant to Erganagh PS are listed as *"address school provision where sustainability is an issue"*.
8. The Area Plan includes population projections provided by the NI Statistics and Research Agency, which states that there is no projected change in the population within the age range of 0-15 years in the Derry and Strabane LGD by 2024.
9. Erganagh PS initially featured in the EA's 2017/18 Annual Action Plan which identified a key issue to 'address school provision where sustainability is an issue'. This action was carried forward to the 2018/19 plan which states *"managing authority to consult on options for future provision by June 2018"*.

Alternative Primary Provision

10. Maps 1 and 2 illustrate the location of Erganagh PS and the nearest alternative primary provision, including pupil locations. The statistical data set out in the snapshot at Table 1 includes all primary provision within a ten mile (mapping) radius of the school.

Alternative Controlled Provision

11. There are three alternative Controlled primary schools within a five mile radius of Erganagh PS, with two further alternatives within eight miles of the school. In 2018/19 overall enrolment at three of these alternative schools (Edwards PS; Killen PS; and Sion Mills PS) exceeded the recommended minimum enrolment of 105 for a sustainable rural primary school under the SSP. There were 67 available places within five miles of Erganagh PS in 2018/19, with a further 207 available places within eight miles of the school. Edwards PS is the only school in the locality that is oversubscribed with first preference applications for 2019/20.
12. One of the alternative schools, Sion Mills PS, features in the EA's 2018/19 Action Plan. While its inclusion has not yet resulted in a published Development Proposal, the EA has stated an intent to *'consult on a decrease to the school's admissions and enrolment number'*. Sion Mills PS is situated some 6.8 miles away from Erganagh PS and recorded 124 available places in 2018/19.
13. Including Sion Mills PS, there are 134 approved Year 1 places across the five alternative Controlled schools listed and in 2018/19 there were 97 pupils admitted.

14. Map 2 illustrates a significant overlap in catchment area between three of these schools, with Edwards PS in particular attracting pupils from quite a geographically dispersed area, whereby some pupils are bypassing their nearest available Controlled school in order to attend Edwards PS.
15. The quality of education at four of the five alternative Controlled schools has been positively assessed by the ETI, with both Sion Mills PS and Edwards PS assessed at recent inspection as having the '*capacity to identify and bring about improvement*' and '*a high level of capacity for sustained improvement*' respectively. Ardstraw Jubilee PS and Killen PS have been assessed as 'good' and 'very good' respectively, although the most recent inspection at Killen PS was hampered by industrial action. The inspection report for Newtown Stewart Model PS recorded '*an important area for improvement*' in June 16, and the ETI has been unable to effectively evaluate progress at scheduled follow-up inspections due to the school's engagement in action short of strike.

Alternative Catholic Maintained Provision

16. There are two Catholic Maintained primary schools within a five mile radius of Erganagh PS, with a further four located within an eight mile radius. One of these schools falls below the recommended minimum enrolment of 105 for a sustainable rural primary school under the SSP. In 2018/19 a total of 234 available places were recorded, with the majority of these in St Caireall's PS (84), followed by St Theresa's PS (58) and St Eugene's PS (45).
17. There are 143 approved Y1 places at these schools, with 103 pupils admitted in the 2018/19 school year.
18. The quality of education provided by each of these schools has been assessed as good or better by the ETI, although it is noted that industrial action has hampered recent inspection attempts at two of the six schools.
19. In 2018/19 Erganagh PS enrolled a small number of pupils identifying themselves as coming from a Roman Catholic background. There is potential that these schools could therefore be viewed as viable alternatives for a small number of parents, should this DP be approved.

Alternative Integrated Provision

20. There are no Integrated Primary Schools in the locality.

Table 1: Erganagh PS - Snapshot of Alternative Provision

DE Ref No	School & Postcode	Distance from School - in miles (Google maps - by car)	Approved Enrolment Number 2018/19	16/17 Actual Enrolment*	17/18 Actual Enrolment*	18/19 Actual Enrolment*	18/19 Supernumerary	2018/19 Available places	Approved Admissions Number 2018/19	2018/19 Actual Admissions No.*	2019/20 Total 1st Pref. Applications	Variance (over/under subscribed at 1st Pref)	ETI Inspection Reports - Overall Assessment
Controlled													
201-2617	Erganagh PS, Castlederg BT81 7JG	-	107	40	36	25	■	83	15	■	2	Under - 13	October 2015 - Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
201-2638	Edwards PS, Castlederg - BT81 7HY	1.9	203	199	205	212	10	1	29	30	34	Over - 5	March 2017 - High level of capacity for sustained improvement
201-6701	Ardstraw Jubilee PS - Newtownstewart - BT78 4LA	4.4	108	85	83	87	■	22	15	12	14	Under - 1	April 2013 - Good
201-2641	Killen PS - BT81 7SD	4.6	145	110	107	105	■	44	21	17	16	Under - 5	December 2011 - Very Good June 2018 - ASOS
201-6442	Sion Mills PS - BT82 9HP	6.8	333	208	218	221	12	124	48	31	21	Under - 27	October 2016 - Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
201-6262	Newtownstewart Model PS - BT78 4EX	7.7	145	62	59	63	■	83	21	7	12	Under - 9	June 2016 - Needs to address an important area for improvement in the interests of all learners. Nov. 2017 -
Sub-total			1041	704	708	713	29	357	149	98	99		
Maintained													
203-6094	St Patrick's PS, Castlederg, BT81 7EE	2.4	259	268	267	263	7	3	37	35	42	Over - 5	February 2018 - Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
203-2682	St Eugene's PS, Victoria Bridge - BT82 9JH	5	97	59	54	51	■	45	14	■	2	Under - 12	October 2014 - Very Good June 2018 - ASOS
203-6459	St Theresa's PS, Sion Mills BT82 9NZ	5.8	165	101	105	112	5	58	24	16	15	Under - 9	June 2013 - Good
203-2730	St Columba's PS, Clady BT82 9QY	6.3	142	142	128	126	■	14	20	17	11	Under - 9	April 2013 - Outstanding
203-2694	St Caireall's PS, Castlederg BT81 7XF	7.9	190	85	92	107	5	84	27	22	16	Under - 11	January 2013 - Outstanding
203-6008	St Patrick's PS, Newtownstewart - BT78 4AQ	8	145	126	123	119	4	30	21	11	16	Under - 5	October 2011 - Very Good January 2018 - ASOS
Sub-total			998	781	769	778	24	234	143	103	102		
Other Maintained													
None													
Integrated													
None													
GRAND TOTAL			2039	1485	1477	1491	53	591	292	201	201		

* The actual enrolment and admissions numbers include stated pupils, however, exclude reception pupils.

The 1st pref applications do not include reception or stated pupils. Info. re 1st Pref applications provided by the EA - 12.3.2019

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Rural Considerations

21. Rural proofing has been a requirement for all Government Departments in Northern Ireland since 2002 and has been an integral part of the policy development process. In 2016 the commitment to rural proofing was strengthened with the introduction of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016. The Act places a duty on Government Departments to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans and when designing and delivering public services. It came into operation for Government Departments and District Councils on 1 June 2017 and applies to public authorities from 1 June 2018. Erganagh PS has a rural location within the wider Castlederg area.

Effective and Efficient use of Public Funds

22. DE must also be mindful of its duty under Article 44 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 and under Managing Public Money to ensure the effective and efficient use of public funds.

CASE FOR CHANGE

23. The Case for Change sets out the EA's rationale for the proposed closure of Erganagh PS as follows:

- The school is historically small and enrolment has not exceeded 40 over the past number of years;
- Erganagh PS operates with more than two year groups within a classroom and is a two-teacher school;
- The Annual Action Plan highlights 'sustainability is an issue';
- The school has experienced declining enrolment and currently enrolls only 24 pupils;
- In September 2018 Erganagh PS experienced a larger number of pupils transferring to post-primary than it admitted to Year 1, and this trend will continue in September 2019.
- While Erganagh PS recorded a small carryover from the 2016/17 financial year, the school does not currently live within its in-year budget;
- Alternative schools within the area have received good/very good/outstanding ETI reports, can provide for the educational needs of the pupils, and the majority have capacity;
- Larger schools would enhance the learning experience of pupils in the provision of after school activities and having class sizes that facilitate participation in both school and inter-school activities.

24. The Case for Change is reproduced in full at Appendix B.

STATUTORY DP PROCESSES

Pre-publication Consultation

25. In accordance with Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986, the EA has confirmed that parents, staff and the Board of Governors (BoG) of Erganagh PS were forwarded a copy of the proposal and supporting information on 25 September 2018. Comments were also invited from the BoGs and Trustees of schools which might be affected by the proposal on 26 September 2018 to be returned to the EA by 20 November. A total of seven schools were consulted.

26. There were 13 responses received, the majority of which objected to the proposed closure. This included responses from governors, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, parents and local residents as well as the Controlled Schools Support Council (CSSC). No responses were received from local alternative schools.

27. Responses included a number of key themes as follows:

- Quality of education at the school remains excellent in spite of the number of new initiatives and financial constraints;
- Closure would be detrimental to the area and particularly to children;
- Options looked at were not thoroughly investigated;
- Area Planning process has negatively impacted on enrolment trends;
- Closest school to Erganagh PS is already oversubscribed;
- School has been an integral part of the local community;
- Larger classes do not enhance the learning experience as individual support may not be possible;
- The school is inclusive, and options to explore transformation to Integrated status should be considered.

EA VIEW

28. As the proposer, the EA supports the proposal to discontinue Erganagh PS. In providing comments, the EA addresses some of the recurring themes identified in its consultation, namely:

A Change to Integrated status

Table 3 [Case for Change] shows the religious breakdown of the school based on 2017/18 enrolment figures. In any change of status of a school to integrated, the Sustainable Schools Policy applies and direction was given to contacting NICIE.

Availability of places at local schools

The Education Authority will, should the proposal be approved, liaise with parents, local schools, managing authorities and the Department of Education to endeavour to ensure that pupils affected by the proposal be accommodated where possible, and within current guidance/policies.

Children with Special Educational Needs

Table 4 [Case for Change] provides a breakdown of the number of SEN pupils. The support which the Education Authority provides for the pupils will continue regardless of the school they attend.

29. EA comments are reproduced alongside the Case for Change at Appendix B.

Two Month Statutory Objection Period

30. The EA published DP 571 on 16 January 2019. The statutory two month objection period ended on 19 March 2019. Only one response was received during the objection period, a letter from the Controlled Schools Support Council (CSSC). The CSSC did not wish to formally raise an objection to DP 571 but did make the following points:

- The educational experiences of pupils and the welfare of pupils and staff are paramount;
- Should DP 571 be approved, CSSC would seek assurance that arrangements will be expedited to facilitate the enrolment of displaced pupils to minimise uncertainty and avoid disruption to their education;
- If required, approvals should be granted to enable siblings to attend the same school; and
- Teaching and non-teaching staff should be supported in the process of redeployment and/or voluntary severance in keeping with the School Reorganisation Agreement.

31. The CSSC response is reproduced in full at Appendix D.

EDUCATION TRAINING INSPECTORATE (ETI) COMMENTS

32. The ETI advises that at the time of the last inspection in October 2015, the school's overall effectiveness was assessed as having *"the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners"*.

33. The ETI notes the educational benefits associated with DP 571, commenting that *"Larger schools will provide potentially more opportunities for the children to develop and apply further their skills and dispositions through participation in a broader range of extra-curricular activities at a higher and more sustained level"*

and concluding that “*it is evident that the ever-decreasing enrolment will have a negative impact on the school’s ability to be sustainable.*”

34. The full ETI commentary is reproduced at Appendix C.

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

35. The SSP sets out six criteria supported by quantitative and qualitative indicators which provide the framework for consideration of a school’s longer-term sustainability. The primary objective of this policy is to ensure that all children and young people get a high quality education in schools that are educationally and financially viable. The following is an assessment of Erganagh PS against the six criteria.

CRITERION 1: Quality Educational Experience

36. ETI carried out an inspection of Erganagh PS in October 2015 and assessed the achievements and outcomes at the school as ‘*good*’. The ETI also assessed the provision for learning as ‘*good*’. Overall, the report stated that the school had “*the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners*”.

37. The ETI Inspection Report noted the quality planning and the wide range of assessment data available for each child; highlighted the welcoming and friendly environment; and recognised a very good pastoral care provided by the school.

Special Educational Needs

38. In 2018/19 there was one pupil in Erganagh PS with a statement of special educational needs.

Teaching Staff

39. A total of two full-time equivalent teachers are employed at Erganagh PS. The SSP recommends a minimum of four teachers for a sustainable primary school.

Composite Classes

40. 2018/19 statistics show that Erganagh PS operated two composite classes, spanning four (i.e. P1-P4) and three (P5-P7) year groups respectively, as identified in Table 2. The SSP states that there should be no more than two composite year groups in a single classroom at a primary school.

Table 2 – Composite Classes at Erganagh PS in 2018/19

Year Group	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Pupils	█	5	█	█	█	█	8
TOTAL	12				13		

41. While the quality of education has been classified as ‘good’, there remain challenges for schools and staff managing composite classes with more than two year groups, and in providing opportunities for wider interaction amongst their peer group including engagement in extra-curricular activities and team-based experiences.

CRITERION 2: Stable Enrolment Trends

42. Erganagh PS has an approved enrolment number of 107. Table 3 displays the school’s enrolment across the past five years, and shows that the school has been historically undersubscribed. Barring a brief spike in 2015/16, enrolments have been in decline and currently sit at just 25 in 2018/19. Numbers at the school remain substantially below the minimum recommended enrolment of 105 for a sustainable rural primary school, as set out in the SSP.

Table 3 – Erganagh PS – Historical Enrolments (Approved 107)

2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
38	47	40	36	25

43. The school has an approved admissions number of 15. Table 4 sets out the school’s P1 intakes from 2014/15 to 2018/19 and shows that actual admissions remain consistently below the school’s approved admissions number.

Table 4 – Erganagh PS - P1 intakes (Approved 15)

2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
█	8	█	5	█

44. For the 2019/20 academic year the EA has indicated that Erganagh PS received two first preference applications at the close of the applications process.

CRITERION 3: Sound Financial Position

45. At 31 March 2018 Erganagh PS recorded a small budget surplus of £7,928, representing 4.12% of the school’s 2017/18 Aggregated Schools Budget (ASB).

46. The school received a total delegated budget of £189,990 in the 2018/19 financial year for 36 pupils (the school’s funding allocation is based on the *previous* year’s census data) representing a per capita figure of £5,277. This compares to an average for all primary schools of £2,978. The school’s delegated budget included maximum Small School Support funding of £45,183 and a further £16,420 for Principal Release Time.

47. While the Case for Change notes the operation of a surplus budget position, it acknowledges the financial savings accrued from reducing its teaching complement and indicates that the school does not currently operate within its in-

year budget. As the school's enrolment continues to decline, it will be even more challenging to live within its budget allocation.

CRITERION 4: Strong Leadership and Management

48. The ETI Inspection Report of October 2015 assessed the leadership and management of the school as 'good'. The report recognised that there was very good communication, ongoing professional discussion, and a strong sense of collegiality amongst all the staff within the school.
49. Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the report acknowledges that there can be confidence in all aspects of governance evaluated, with governors actively involved in the life of the school.

CRITERION 5: Accessibility

50. Map 2 shows the home location of 2018/19 pupils enrolled, and indicates that all of Erganagh PS' pupils come from the surrounding rural area and from within a five mile radius of the school.
51. There are five alternative Controlled primary schools available within an eight mile radius, with three of these located within five miles of the school. The map illustrates a significant overlap in catchment areas between Erganagh PS and Edwards PS in particular.

CRITERION 6: Strong Links with the Community

52. The Case for Change states that the school maintains links with the community, and sits within the heart of a small village.
53. Furthermore, the ETI Inspection report of October 2015 states that parental respondents to confidential questionnaires had "*highlighted their appreciation of the teachers' and support staff's work, the broad range of enjoyable learning activities and the warm and caring ethos*". The Report also notes that almost all staff completed questionnaires and reported very positive views of the school.
54. There is an active PTA within Erganagh PS which funds a curriculum-based science programme with an external facilitator, and the school also provides a six-week modern language programme.

Sustainability Summary

55. The school's historical enrolment has been significantly below the SSP's recommended minimum enrolment of 105 for a sustainable rural primary school and has declined to just 25 pupils in 2018/19, and the school operates with two composite classes with more than two year groups and less than the recommended four teachers for a sustainable primary school; Leadership and management at the school was assessed by ETI as 'good' at their most recent

inspection of October 2015; the school recorded a budget surplus at March 2018, however the EA have indicated that it is not currently living within its in-year budget; it is accessible to its pupils and maintains positive links with the local community, however the ETI commented on the sustainability of the school by stating that it will be “*important that the employing authority, school Governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff*”.

56. It is evident that Erganagh PS has a number of deficiencies when assessed against the SSP criteria.

ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Rural Considerations

57. The Rural Development Council’s (RDC) Striking the Balance report highlights the importance of rural proofing so that regard is given to the impact of a particular policy on rural populations (in comparison to those living in urban areas) and to help identify adjustments which might be made to reflect rural needs and ensure that services are accessible to rural communities on a fair basis. A central concern is the quality of education provided to pupils.

58. The SSP policy was assessed against the RDC rural proofing checklist (Striking the Balance, Annex 1) and no adverse impact was identified. The SSP recognises the needs of rural communities and this is reflected in the lower enrolment threshold for rural primary schools, the accessibility criterion which provides guidance on home to school travel times, and the criterion ‘Strong Links with the Community’ also recognises the central place a school has for many communities (rural and urban).

59. The Government’s commitment to rural proofing was strengthened with the introduction of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 (“The Act”). The Act requires public authorities to have ‘due regard’ to consciously consider the needs of people in rural areas when developing policies, strategies and plans and when designing and delivering public services. It defines ‘rural needs’ as “the social and economic needs of rural areas”.

60. The Case for Change acknowledges the potential impact of closing the school on the local rural area, and considers that the provision of home-to-school transport would mitigate this impact.

Effective and Efficient Use of Public Funds

61. In discharging its duties, the Department must seek to avoid unreasonable public expenditure and to make the best use of resources available to it. As a two-teacher school with only 25 pupils enrolled the school receives the maximum Small School Support funding and a per capita allocation of £5,277 which compares to an average for all primary schools of £2,978. It would represent an inefficient use of public funds to continue sustaining a school that is assessed as unsustainable against the SSP criteria.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Financial Implications

62. The Case for Change states that closure would result in an operational saving in terms of recurrent costs associated with running the school, although this could in theory be offset by a requirement for “minor additional accommodation” to facilitate the relocation of pupils to alternative schools, depending on the outworking of parental preference and how closely that aligns to the existing availability of places.
63. In the event of Erganagh PS closing, the Department will consider granting Temporary Variations (TVs) to facilitate affected children transferring to other schools in the area. However, no advance guarantee of approval can be provided as the Department must consider what other provision is available in an area at the point of application.
64. The Department’s TV policy states that a TV would be considered for those children who otherwise do not have a primary school of the same type with places available within a reasonable travelling distance of the child’s home address. For primary schools reasonable distance is defined as a distance of two miles.
65. TVs are granted on the condition that no additional accommodation will be required, and any accommodation requirements cannot be defined in advance of this DP decision for the reason set out above.

Transport

66. The Case for Change states that approximately half of the pupils attending Erganagh PS live within close proximity to the school and are not therefore in receipt of home-to-school transport. In the event of closure, home-to-school transport would likely be required for a larger percentage of pupils.
67. The Case for Change considers the additional need for transport provision as a result of closure and indicates that communication with the EA transport service is ongoing. Parents of children who fulfil the criteria stated in the EA’s transport policy would become eligible for transport assistance to suitable alternative

schools, however, the numbers involved indicate that the impact on the school transport budget would not be significant.

Staffing

68. The Case for Change does not quantify the impact closure would have on staffing. Teaching staff are afforded protection as part of the TNC School Re-organisation Agreement for a period of two years.
69. Redundancy costs will apply to those staff availing of voluntary redundancy at the point of closure, together with those teachers who have been unsuccessful in securing employment in the transfer redundancy trawl. Those teachers not gaining employment or who are unsuccessful as part of the transfer redundancy trawl will be treated as supernumerary during the two year protection period.
70. For non-teaching staff the JNC Collective Agreement for school reorganisations affords one year protection and is reviewed annually. The same scenarios regarding redeployment (for one year) as outlined above are applicable to non-teaching staff.
71. In recent years the Department has secured funding for teaching and non-teaching Voluntary Exit Schemes (VES) from the Public Sector Transformation Fund (PSTF) to fund voluntary redundancy costs across the education sector under the Department's Strategic Cost Reduction Programme (SCRIP), however, this source of funding ceases in 2018/19.
72. Consequently a funding pressure of £22m exists and it is not possible at this point to clarify whether this can be met in full, and if only met in part, then redundancy applications would have to be prioritised. In that scenario a school closure would be treated as first priority and voluntary exits would be funded from the Department's Resource budget.

CONCLUSION

73. The SSP, implemented through Area Planning, is clear that the core issue for a school's sustainability must be the continuing provision of a high quality education for children. The ETI's Inspection Report of 2015 has highlighted the good quality of education at Erganagh PS, however, it is also acknowledged that as numbers in a school decline, the challenge it must overcome in order to continue to provide high quality education rises.
74. The SSP states that ideally a primary school should have at least seven classrooms (one for each year group), no more than two composite year groups in a single classroom, and a minimum of four teachers. In 2018/19 Erganagh PS

operated with two composite classes (one consisting of four year groups; one with three) and with only two full-time equivalent teachers employed.

75. Inspection evidence shows that within a composite class of two year groups, it is possible for all children to be catered for effectively and make good progress. There is no evidence from school inspections to suggest that children taught in composite classes of two year groups are disadvantaged in any way. However, additional factors need to be considered when the composite class spans more than two year groups. Under these circumstances, ensuring adequate progression in learning and planning to meet the individual needs of children across a wider ability range and stage of development can be more challenging for the teacher. There are also issues relating to opportunities for the children to develop socially and emotionally with children of a similar age, gender and stage of development. The Case for Change states that if DP 571 is approved “*larger schools will enhance the learning experience of pupils in the provision of after school activities and having class sizes to facilitate participation both in school and inter-school activities*”.

76. In 2018/19 Erganagh PS had a total enrolment of 25 pupils. The school’s enrolment has been in decline across the last five years, and with eight children transferring to post-primary at the end of the current year and only two applications for 2019/20, this trend will continue.

77. While the school records a budget surplus position, the Case for Change notes that it does not currently operate within its in-year budget, and a school with an enrolment of 25 pupils would typically face severe sustainability pressures from both an educational and financial perspective. It would represent an inefficient use of public funds to continue sustaining a school that is assessed as unsustainable against the SSP criteria.

78. The closure of any school is a difficult decision, however, the evidence of sustainability issues impacting on this school appears compelling, and there is evidence of good quality alternative provision available which should allow for a smooth transition in the best educational interests of affected pupils.

RECOMMENDATION

79. Based on the evidence detailed above, it is recommended that you:

- (i) Approve DP 571 that “*Erganagh PS will discontinue with effect from 31 August 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter*”

- (ii) Agree that this submission (with appropriate redactions) can be made available on the Department's website once the Education Authority and the school have been notified.

80. The following appendices are attached for your consideration:

Appendix A: Copy of Development Proposal 571

Appendix B: Case for Change

Appendix C: ETI Comments

Appendix D: Statutory DP Processes

Appendix E: DE (Policy Team) Comments



BILL STEVENSON

Ext: 59310

Email: bill.stevenson@education-ni.gov.uk

cc: (by email)
Fiona Hepper
Lianne Patterson
Noelle Buick
John Smith
Janis Scallon
Eamonn Broderick
Adrian Murphy
Scott Harbinson
APPT Correspondence
Press Office

APPENDIX A

EDUCATION AUTHORITY

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 571

ERGANAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

Erganagh Primary School will discontinue with effect from 31 August 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter.

A copy of the Proposal and Case for Change may be inspected at the offices of the Education Authority, 1 Hospital Road, Omagh, BT79 0AW, between the hours of 9.00 am and 4.30 pm and www.eani.org.uk (School Management).

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

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

Gavin Boyd
Chief Executive

Case for Change
CASE for CHANGE – Supporting Information

Appendix B

SUMMARY/OVERVIEW

AREA PLANNING DISTRICT	Derry and Strabane
DP NUMBER	571
PROPOSER	John Collings Director of Education Education Authority 028 9041 3151
SCHOOL(S) NAME	Erganagh Primary School
SCHOOL REFERENCE	201-2617
TYPE	Primary
MANAGEMENT	Controlled
DP PUBLICATION DATE	Week commencing 14 January 2019
PROPOSAL	To discontinue Erganagh Primary School with effect from 31 August 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter

STATUTORY CONSULTATION

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

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

EDUCATION AUTHORITY COMMENTARY ON PRE-PUBLICATION STATUTORY CONSULTATION

<p>PROPOSER</p> <p>Provide detail of consultation with the BOGs, teachers and parents of the affected school(s) – dates of meetings/letters. Good practice suggests all staff (including non-teaching) should be consulted as well as pupils.</p> <p>Summary and assessment of views received – how were these taken into account before publication of the DP?</p>	<p>The Education Authority undertook consultation with:</p> <p>Staff: Tuesday 25 September 2018 - 4.00pm Board of Governors: Tuesday 25 September 2018 - 6.30pm Parents/Guardians: Tuesday 25 September 2018 - 7.30pm Local Schools (7): Letter – Wednesday 26 September 2018</p> <p>A pre-publication consultation questionnaire was distributed and available on the Education Authority's website for the period 26 September–20 November 2018. In total 13 responses were received. The information below provides a summary/emerging themes of the responses received.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Agree</th> <th>Disagree</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Board of Governors</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Governors</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staff – Teaching and Non-Teaching</td> <td></td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parents/Guardians</td> <td></td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other – Grandparent and Local person</td> <td></td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other – Controlled Schools' Support Council</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Responses Received</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>13</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small classes essential for children with many different needs get lost in a large class. • Smaller classes suit some children as they are given 1-1 support which may not be possible in a larger class. As class sizes are small every child gets the opportunity to shine, encouraging independent learners and building self-confidence. • Teachers will not have the time to concentrate on individuals due to their time being occupied with the big classes. • Believe in composite classes. • Amazing school. Nurturing school. The school is a successful educational institution. • The closure of the school will be a loss to the parents and pupils – it is like a big family. • Quality of education experience at Erganagh PS is excellent despite the number of new initiatives and financial constraints. • The school is a welcoming school where diversity is celebrated. • Closure would be detrimental to the area and most especially our children, many with special requirements whose educational growth would be adversely hindered in large classes. • Due to smaller classes, pupil's needs are identified quickly and assessed. • Disagree with the statement that larger school will enhance the learning experience – Erganagh PS has taken part in football, rugby and athletic events. • Options looked at were not thoroughly investigated, only cursory. 		Agree	Disagree	Total	Board of Governors		1	1	Governors	1	2	3	Staff – Teaching and Non-Teaching		2	2	Parents/Guardians		4	4	Other – Grandparent and Local person		2	2	Other – Controlled Schools' Support Council			1	Total Responses Received			13
	Agree	Disagree	Total																														
Board of Governors		1	1																														
Governors	1	2	3																														
Staff – Teaching and Non-Teaching		2	2																														
Parents/Guardians		4	4																														
Other – Grandparent and Local person		2	2																														
Other – Controlled Schools' Support Council			1																														
Total Responses Received			13																														

- Mixed religion area – school caters for both the main religions – school helps heal relationships fractured by the political divide. Worried about damage to community links.
- Explore the establishment of an integrated primary school.
- Shared Education enriched educational learning and building life-long relationships while teaching them understanding, tolerance and encouraging the appreciation and respect for other religious beliefs.
- Area planning process has caused the decrease in numbers – self-fulfilling prophecy.
- Numbers have fallen as the school was named as under review - it is the action of the EA itself to cause our enrolment to fall.
- School has always been in budget.
- School is financially viable, it has a budgetary carryover.
- Governors need to be reassured children are placed where their parents want them.
- Concerns that the nearest school is unable to accept children/ oversubscribed.
- Concern about high numbers in classrooms and the teaching quality.
- Concerned of the impact of moving school.
- Pastoral care in the transferring school should ensure that pupils continue to develop socially, emotionally and academically.
- School has been an integral part of the local community for generations – holds the rural area together.

During the consultations undertaken with governors, staff and parents/guardians recurring themes emerged:

School is inclusive, change school status to Integrated

Table 3 below details the current religious breakdown:

2017/18 Enrolment Number	Protestant %	Roman Catholic %	Other religions/religion not known %
36 pupils	33	4 or less	# (Denotes a number which has been suppressed to prevent the disclosure of information about identifiable individuals)

Table 4 below provides a breakdown of the number of Children with Special Educational Needs:


	2017/18 Enrolment Number	Pupils at SEN stage 1 to 4	Pupils at SEN stage 5
Erganagh PS	36 pupils	13	4 or less

In any change of status of a school to integrated, the Sustainable Schools Policy applies and direction was given to contacting NICIE.

Availability of places in local schools

The Education Authority will, should the proposal be approved, liaise with the parents, local schools, managing authorities and the Department of Education to endeavour to ensure that pupils affected by the proposal be accommodated, where possible and within current guidance/policies.



Children with Special Educational Needs

	<p>Table 4 provides a breakdown of the number of SEN pupils. The support which the Education Authority provides for the pupils will continue regardless of the school they attend.</p> <p>Section 75 - Comments from Questionnaires</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The closure will benefit no one except the EA and the surrounding large schools – it will only serve to demoralize staff, pupils and the local community – bigger is not always better. Negative impact on the surrounding community as a whole. • Parent - preference for children to go to smaller school, it will be like starting over again. • The school is a mixed school. Not giving us the opportunity to explore an integrated facility with NICIE is disadvantaging the religious and political situation in our area which cannot be denied. It is disadvantaging our children and future generations if the school is closed as it is such a unique facility which cannot or ever be duplicated at any of the other schools.
<p>CONFIRMATION BY THE PROPOSER</p>	<p>I confirm that the school's BOGs, Staff and Parents of pupils were consulted on 25 September 2018 and Equality Screening of the proposal has been carried out.</p> <p>NAME: John Collings</p> <p>OFFICE HELD: Director of Education</p> <p>SIGNED: </p> <p>DATE: 10 January 2019</p>

ASSOCIATED PROPOSALS

<p>DP XXX Published DD/MM/YY</p>	<p>N/A</p>
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**The following is to be completed and signed off by the EA.
EDUCATION AUTHORITY COMMENTARY ON PRE-PUBLICATION STATUTORY
CONSULTATION**

<p>THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY</p>	<p>I confirm that the schools which the EA consider might be impacted by this proposal were consulted on 26 September 2018.</p> <p>NAME: John Collings</p> <p>OFFICE HELD: Director of Education</p> <p>SIGNED: </p> <p>DATE: 10 January 2019</p>
<p>Provide detail of consultation with schools that may, in the EA's opinion, be affected by the proposal - list of schools, dates of letters issued to schools/meetings. Summary of views received (number of responses, recurring themes, petitions, community support or opposition).</p> <hr/> <p>Responses/Assurances in respect of issues raised during consultation. Dates of EA meetings e.g. Education Committee/ Board etc.</p> <p><u>Details of issues raised by members of EA Board</u></p>	<p>In accordance with Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, a copy of the proposal was sent on 26 September 2018, to schools which, in the opinion of the Authority, might be affected by the proposal. A total of 7 local schools which might be affected by the proposal were forwarded correspondence. Comments were invited from the Boards of Governors and Trustees, to be returned to the Education Authority by 20 November 2018. No responses from local schools were received.</p> <p>This development proposal was discussed by the EA's Education Committee at its meeting on 10 January 2019.</p>
<p>EDUCATION AUTHORITY COMMENTS</p> <p>In the context of planning on an area basis - what is the EA's view of the proposal, taking into account any pre-publication consultation. Does the EA support the proposal?</p> <p>NAME: John Collings</p> <p>OFFICE HELD: Director of Education</p> <p>SIGNED: </p> <p>DATE: 10 January 2019</p>	<p>The Education Authority, as the proposer, supports Development Proposal No 571 to discontinue Erganagh Primary School with effect from 1 September 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter.</p> <p>The proposal to discontinue Erganagh Primary School is being taken forward as detailed in the Case for Change.</p> <p>Consultations were undertaken with governors, staff and parents/guardians outlining the Education Authority's Case for Change detailing the rationale for the proposal. During the consultations undertaken with governors, staff and parents/guardians recurring themes emerged:</p> <p><i>Change school status to Integrated</i> Table 3 above shows the religious breakdown of the school based on the 2017/18 enrolment figures. In any change of status of a school to integrated, the Sustainable Schools Policy</p>

	<p>applies and direction was given to contacting NICIE.</p> <p><i>Availability of places in local schools</i> The Education Authority will, should the proposal be approved, liaise with the parents, local schools, managing authorities and the Department of Education to endeavour to ensure that pupils affected by the proposal be accommodated, where possible and within current guidance/ policies.</p> <p><i>Children with Special Educational Needs</i> Table 4 provides a breakdown of the number of SEN pupils. The support which the Education Authority provides for the pupils will continue regardless of the school they attend.</p> <p>In consideration of the above, and the Case for Change, the Education Authority is proposing to publish Development Proposal No 571 during the week commencing 14 January 2019.</p>
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1 BACKGROUND

Erganagh Primary School is a Controlled Primary School located on the Listymore Road, Erganagh, just under two miles outside the town of Castlederg, Co Tyrone.

The school serves the community surrounding the school and has an enrolment of 36 pupils. With effect from September 2017, the school operates as a two teacher school. In consideration that the school now operates as a two teacher school and with a declining enrolment, the school was identified in the 2017/18 Annual Action Plan as 'Managing authority to consult on options for future provision by March 2018'.

The school has an approved enrolment of 107 pupils and an admissions number of 15.

Over the past number of years the school has experienced a downturn in enrolment numbers. Table 1, below, details the historical and current enrolment figures.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Total
2007/08	4	10	4	7	9	14	11	59
2008/09	0	4	10	2	7	7	13	43
2009/10	8	0	4	10	3	7	7	39
2010/11	5	8	1	6	10	4	8	42
2011/12	7	6	8	0	7	10	3	41
2012/13	6	7	5	8	0	7	11	44
2013/14	5	7	9	5	8	0	7	41
2014/15	3	5	8	9	5	8	0	38
2015/16	8	3	5	10	8	5	8	47
2016/17	2	8	3	3	10	8	6	40
2017/18	5	3	6	3	2	9	8	36
2018/19(provisional)	4	5	3	6	3	2	9	32

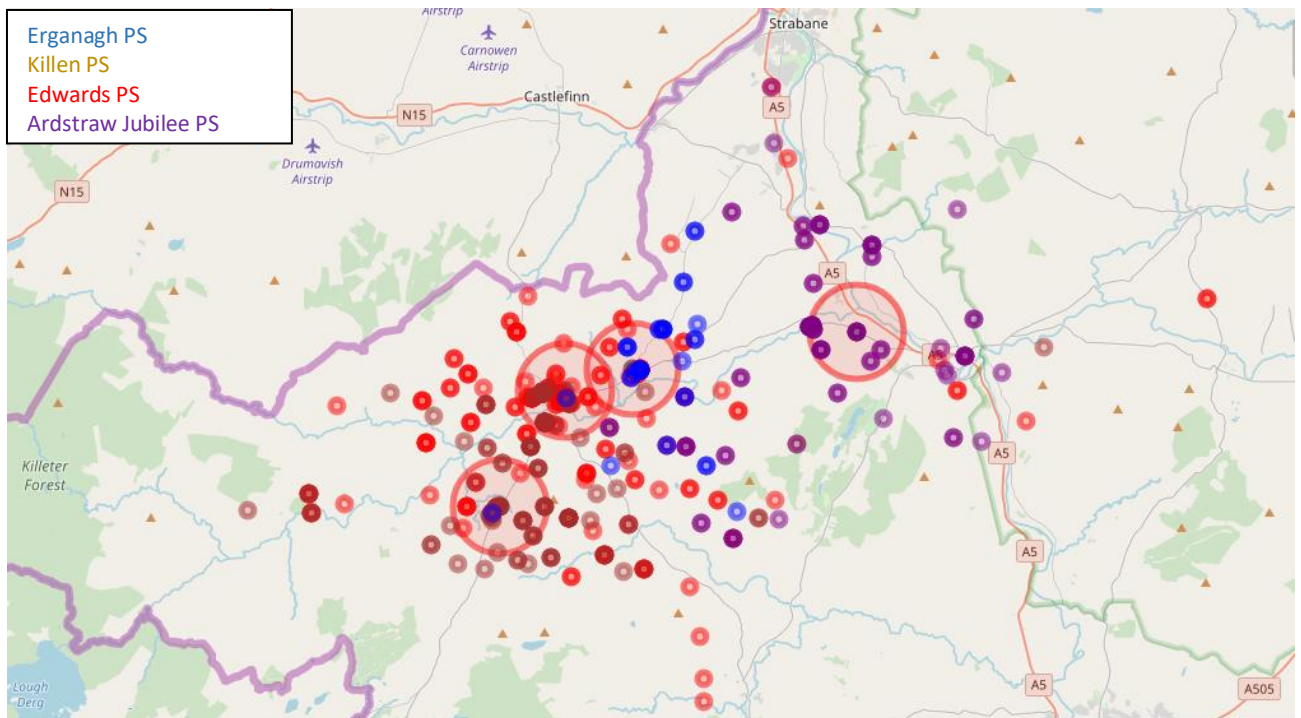
In the area, the former Western Education and Library Board took forward the closure of Bridgehill Primary School in August 2013 and it was considered that the effect of this closure may have resulted in increased numbers for Erganagh Primary School.

The enrolment statistics show that while the school has remained steady from 2008 to 2015, the last two years has shown a downturn in enrolment, particularly at September 2017. The school currently has an enrolment of 36 pupils, at September 2017, with the largest year group being Year 7 at September 2018. Should the school continue to enrol 4 or 5 pupils in Year 1 in September 2019, the enrolment will fall below 30 pupils.

Table 2 lists the schools closest to Erganagh PS. The distribution map shows in context the pupil distribution and the local schools. The map highlights that pupils are currently passing Erganagh PS and accessing local schools, in particular in Castlederg. There is some capacity within the local schools as detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Local Schools - Distance from Erganagh PS					
	Distance (miles) From Erganagh PS	Sector	Enrolment 2017/18	Approved Enrolment Number 2017/18	Unfilled Places 2017/18
Edwards PS	1.9	Controlled	205	203	-2
St Patrick's PS, Castlederg	2.4	Maintained	267	259	-8
Killen PS	4.6	Controlled	107	145	38
Ardstraw Jubilee PS	5.4	Controlled	83	108	25

The distribution map below shows the pupil distribution for Erganagh PS and the nearest schools.



In consideration of the distance of the local schools, home-to-school transport arrangements will be implemented within transport regulations.

2 SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

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

2.1 Quality of Education

Erganagh PS is a controlled primary school situated in the small village of Erganagh, near the town of Castlederg. Almost all of the children attending the school come from the surrounding rural area. The enrolment has remained low over the last two years which has resulted in the school operating as a two teacher school from September 2017.

An ETI inspection was undertaken in October 2015 with the overall findings of the inspection as good:

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Achievements and standards	Good
Provision for learning	Good
Leadership and management	Good

The ETI report indicated:

'The children are confidently and positively disposed to learning, demonstrate good motivation and work ably in the classroom. They ask and answer questions with enthusiasm; from year 4 they are able to reflect on their learning, and record their own strengths and the aspects they wish to improve. By year 7, the children are exceptionally competent in the use of information and communication technology, making films, animations and presentations for use in school and for parents. The children behave well and demonstrate good personal and social skills in class and in the playground.

The school's internal performance data shows that most of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in literacy and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.

The children display confidence and contribute well during class discussions and through the planned numeracy-based activities. They engage well in their learning during the practical activities and use mathematical vocabulary correctly. In discussions with year 7 children, they demonstrate a good understanding of their numeracy work across each of the areas of mathematics. The recent focus on mental mathematics is beginning to have a positive impact on the children's ability to understand and explain a range of strategies to solve mathematics challenges; it will be important to embed this work further.

The teachers' planning is of good quality and they gather a wide range of assessment data for each child, however they need to use this information more effectively in planning for the children's learning. In one third of the lessons observed there was thorough planning, good pace and progression with effective differentiation and resources for the wide range of individual needs within the class. A small number of the children change year groups and classes for mathematics lessons which demonstrably enable further challenge and progression in their learning.

The teachers encourage the children to reflect on and assess their learning, and mark their books with helpful guidance on how to improve further. The classroom assistants support the children's learning well through effective small group work and individualised guidance. Overall, the teachers need to give a higher priority to developing more fully the children's independent learning skills through open-ended and more challenging activities to engage them more fully in their learning.

The teachers support the children who are experiencing difficulties with their learning through appropriately differentiated activities and resources. The staff have worked diligently to develop assessment and support procedures and a range of useful classroom resources and

interventions. The individual education plans are succinct and helpful and there are regular meetings for teachers to involve parents and keep them informed of the progress and outcomes for their children.

The teachers provide the children experiencing difficulties with their behaviour or sensory processing with well-structured programmes which are used consistently to help them to settle quickly to learning; however there is a need for the staff to provide further individualised, targeted support for the children experiencing difficulties with aspects of literacy and numeracy.

The children have good opportunities to use a suitable range of practical equipment to develop further their understanding of key mathematical concepts. The whole school guidance for numeracy appropriately provides a broad and balanced coverage of the key mathematical skills, however it will be important for the school to develop systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of the learning and teaching of mathematics across the key stages robustly. There is undue variation in the teachers' planning for mathematics, the planning needs to explicitly take into account the range of abilities, specific needs and outcomes of each child.

Pastoral care in the school is very good; the school environment is welcoming and friendly with whole-school celebration of the children's achievements. The children benefit from the positive working relationships at all levels, the strong family and community ethos, and from the consistent implementation of effective strategies to support positive behaviour. They contribute to decision-making within the school through the school council, for example, in the formulation of classroom and playground rules. The children talked about their enjoyment of school and after-school activities, and particularly about their enthusiasm for World Around Us topics.

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.'

2.2 Stable Enrolment Trends

Erganagh PS has, as detailed in Table 1, experienced a downturn in pupil numbers over the past number of years. The September 2017 enrolment was 36 pupils with the largest year group, 9 pupils in Year 7, leaving in June 2019. Based on admission trends, the school's enrolment would fall below 30 pupils for September 2019. The school's enrolment falls well short of the Sustainable Schools Policy criteria for a rural school, 105 pupils. In addition there are more than two year groups within a classroom as the school operates as a two teacher school.

2.3 Sound Financial Position

Erganagh PS had a small carryover of £11,487 from 2016/17. However, it should be noted that Erganagh PS currently does not operate within its in-year budget. With the school reducing the teaching staffing complement, a financial saving is experienced. This was required to manage the school budget allocation.

2.4 Strong Leadership and Management

The ETI report in September 2016 stated that the leadership and management of the school was good.

The principal and teachers work collaboratively and effectively to lead competently in their various areas of responsibility. There is very good communication, ongoing professional discussion and a strong sense of collegiality amongst all the staff within the school.

Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are actively involved in the life of the school.

2.5 Accessibility

The school can be accessed by car and bus. Access by foot is on a very busy road. The majority of pupils attending the school are from the local area.

2.6 Strong Links with the Community

The school has links with the community as the school sits within the heart of the small village.

3 AREA PLANNING IMPACT

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

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

- ensure that the excellent quality of education available to some young people is made available to all, in both urban and rural settings, in accessible, modern, fit-for-purpose accommodation;
- improve outcomes for all but, in particular, to provide additional support to those who require it, including those children with special educational needs, to realise their full potential;
- encourage schools to co-operate in sharing best practice to support children with special educational needs and those with other barriers to learning;
- sustain strong, successful and viable schools, well-led by their governors representing local stakeholders, principals and their staff, to be the centre of the education system, supported by effective administrative and strategic direction;

In consideration of the objectives of Providing Pathways Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-2020, the Local Area Working Group identified Erganagh PS as a school to be included within the Annual Action Plan for Primary, Post-Primary and Special Schools April 2017 – March 2018. Erganagh PS was identified under key issue as ‘address school provision where sustainability is an issue’ with the action ‘Managing authority to consult on options for future provision of Erganagh PS by March 2018’.

In taking forward the Annual Action Plan for 2017/18, EA officers met with the Governors of Erganagh PS to discuss the issues impacting on the school and put forward a number of options for consideration. Appendix A details the options considered.

The EA recommended option is to discontinue Erganagh PS with effect from 31 August 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter and to take the option forward through the development proposal process. Within the area there are no active development proposals.

RATIONALE FOR PROPOSAL

Erganagh PS has always been a small primary school with an enrolment over the past number of years not exceeding 40 pupils. The school was identified in the Annual Action Plan 2017/18, identified as a school provision where sustainability is an issue' with the action 'Managing authority to consult on options for future provision of Erganagh PS by March 2018'.

In September 2018, the school experienced a larger number of pupils transferring to post primary than it admitted in Year 1. The same situation will be experienced in September 2019 resulting in an enrolment of below 30 pupils. This will place increased pressure on the financial resources of the school and also on the teaching staff.

Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 places a statutory duty on the EA to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and designing and delivering public services. The areas from which Erganagh PS attracts pupils is, according to the Inter-Departmental Urban-Rural Definition Group, defined as rural. The discontinuance of Erganagh PS will have an impact on the local area. The provision of home-to-school transport will provide for the safe transportation of pupils from the area to their nearest school.

EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

The proposal would provide for the education needs of pupils in the area. Erganagh PS has a declining enrolment and, as a two teacher school, this places pressure on the staff at the school.

The schools within the area received good/very good/outstanding ETI reports and can provide for the educational needs of the pupils of the area. In the majority of the local schools there currently is capacity. Resulting from the outcome of consultations with parents/guardians, discussions will be undertaken with the local schools regarding in year group capacity. The local schools have pupil numbers which meet the Sustainable School Policy of no more than two year groups in a classroom. The larger schools will enhance the learning experience of pupils in the provision of after school activities and having class sizes to facilitate participation both in school and inter school activities eg, football teams, quiz teams.

The pupils from Erganagh PS who have special educational requirements will continue to have these needs met within the local schools and supported through the EA's Children and Young People's Service.

6 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (IF THE PROPOSAL IS APPROVED)

The proposal is being brought forward under Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986. The implementation date for the proposal is for 31 August 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter. The timetable, pending approval from the Education Committee, for the consultation process is:

Development Proposal Timeline	
Proposal: Discontinue Erganagh PS with effect from 31 August 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter.	Proposed Timeline
Consultation with Governors, Staff, Parents – Consultation Questionnaire (8 weeks) Consultation Responses to be forwarded to the Education Authority. Responses will be considered and a Case for Change document compiled before submission to the Education Authority’s Education Committee. A deputation from the Board of Governors may also choose to attend the Education Committee or the Board meeting.	24 September 2018 – 19 November 2018
Consultation with other affected Schools (8 weeks) Consultation Responses to be forwarded to the Education Authority Responses will be considered and a Case for Change document compiled before submission to the Education Authority’s Education Committee.	24 September 2018 – 19 November 2018
Education Committee to seek Approval To Publish Case for Change to be taken to the January 2019 Education Authority’s Education Committee for consideration. If approved to publish, a Development Proposal will be published in the local newspapers which begins the start of a two month statutory objection period.	10 January 2019
Statutory Objection Period (2 months) Objections/Comments to be forwarded to the Department of Education	Week commencing 14 January 2019 (2 months)
Await Ministerial/Department of Education Decision	April/May 2019
Implementation If approved, the Development Proposal would take effect from 31 August 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter.	

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The proposal is for the discontinuance of Erganagh PS. As there are currently unfilled places within the local schools, there may be a requirement for additional accommodation to facilitate the relocation of pupils (to be identified by parental preference resulting from the consultation process). There will be a cost saving in the recurrent costs of operating a school.

Finance The operation cost of Erganagh PS will be a cost saving from this proposal.

Staffing The teaching staff is afforded employment protection under the School Re-organisation Agreement 2013/2 for two years. The non-teaching staff will be afforded employment protection for one year. The EA will meet with staff to discuss options should the development proposal be approved and an action plan implemented for the discontinuance of the school.

Transport Around half of the pupils attending Erganagh PS live within close proximity to the school and do not receive home-to-school transport. The discontinuance of Erganagh PS would require the provision of home-to-school transport for larger number of pupils. Communication with the EA transport service is ongoing. Any transport arrangement will be in accordance with transport regulations and identified preference school.

Accommodation Some minor additional accommodation may be required. This will be identified, as the consultation process progress through parental choice in the location of a preferred local school.

Erganagh PS

The Providing Pathways Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-2020 Annual Action Plan for Primary, Post-Primary and Special Schools April 2017 – March 2018 identified a key issue for Erganagh PS as ‘address school provision where sustainability is an issue’ with the action ‘Managing authority to consult on options for future provision of Erganagh PS by March 2018’. As a result the EA engaged with the Board of Governors of Erganagh PS. Engagement discussions focused on the current position of the school and sustainable options for the school. Discussion focused on five options:

1 Do Nothing

This option would result in no change to the current provision. In consideration of the Annual Action Plan, the downturn in enrolment numbers and the school’s financial position, do nothing is not an option.

2 Shared Education

Erganagh PS is part of the Derg Valley cluster and Mournederg Partnership of schools and engages in shared educational experiences and in promoting cross-community links.

The sharing with schools is difficult as Erganagh PS is a two teacher school. However, the school continue to actively share within the cluster through the good management of the Principal and staff. On shared curriculum days with another school a substitute teacher is engaged.

As the EA has a duty to encourage, facilitate and promote shared education the EA discussed the potential for shared education within the area. However, given the close proximity of the school to other schools, a shared solution would not improve the sustainability of Erganagh PS.

3 Federation

A federation would involve local schools coming together either through a soft federation or hard federation. A soft federation would provide each school with its own governing body, own budget, with representatives on a joint committee. The schools would share a Principal, common goals, joint committee recommendations but it would be up to the individual governing bodies to authorise decisions/plans. A hard federation would provide for a single governing body with common goals and while each school would receive individual budgets, these could be used to pool budgets across the schools in the federation. In considering a federation, the sustainability of a federated school within the local area would not provide for a sustainable provision and would not improve the financial position of the school. It was felt that to have a shared principal would not meet the needs of the pupils at the school.

4 Amalgamation

As with the options above, sustainability is an issue. The area is served by four schools, Edwards PS, St Patrick’s PS, Castlederg, Killen PS and Ardstraw Jubilee PS.

5 Discontinue

In considering the future of Erganagh PS, all of the options for the school did not provide a sustainable provision for the school. In discussions with the Board of Governors, there was disappointment that the work of the governors could not provide a sustainable solution for the school. Governors put forward proposals to promote the school, however, September 2018

intake and current enrolment trends have not provided any upturn in numbers. The EA recognises the commitment of the governors but the current circumstances would not provide for the curricular provision of pupils currently attending Erganagh PS.

In consideration of the options above, the EA recommends that Erganagh PS discontinues with effect from 31 August 2019.

Primary School Annual Area Profile 2018

DE Ref No	School Name	Status	Council Area
2012617	Erganagh Primary School	Controlled	DERRY CITY AND STRABANE

Annual Census Information			
Year	Total pupils Y1-Y7	IMU	FSME %
2014/15	38	0	34.2
2015/16	47	0	38.3
2016/17	40	0	37.5%
2017/18	36	0	38.9%
Approved Reception-Year 7 enrolment number			107
Approved Reception-Year 7 admissions number			15
Year 1 Pupils 2017/18			5
First Preferences Applications 2017/18			5

Formal Intervention	
In formal intervention any period 1 April 2017-31 March 2018	

Budgets			
Year	Available Delegated Resources £	Surplus/Deficit £	Surplus/Deficit %
2014/15	259,839	57,173	22.00%
2015/16	244,477	29,191	11.94%
2016/17	240,896	14,226	5.91%

KEY TO SYMBOLS & TEXT USED IN DATA ABOVE	
Symbol/Text	Definition
*	Relates to fewer than 5 cases
#	Means that a figure greater than or equal to 5 had been treated to prevent disclosure of a small number elsewhere
-	School not open in the relevant academic year
n/a	No year 7 pupils

ETI Development Proposal Commentary Paper

DP 571

Date of last ETI report: October 2015

Web link: <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/primary-inspection-erganagh-primary-school-castledearg-county-tyrone.pdf>

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

The projected enrolment noted in the case for change for 2018/19 was 32 children; the actual enrolment for this year is 23 children. The enrolment for next year is likely to be around 17 children. The school operates at about one-fifth capacity.

There are 10 children on the SEN register, none at Stage 5.

A few children in key stage (KS) 1 are presenting with literacy difficulties and the school funds withdrawal support one-day per week. This is a short term measure.

There is an active PTA which funds currently a curriculum-based science programme with an external facilitator and the school also provides a six-week modern language programme.

KS 2 children access a four-week programme in a local high school consisting of post-primary curriculum 'tasters.' There are a number of after-school clubs.

The school collaborates through shared education with Langfield PS, St Joseph's PS Drumquin, St Caireall's PS, Killen PS, Ardstraw PS and Castledearg High School; currently, this involves training in the use of FRONTER.

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

The EA is due to speak to the parents in February 2019 about the transition of the children to local primary schools all of which have demonstrated capacity or high capacity for improvement. Langfield PS's and Killen PS's most recent inspection activity was impacted by industrial action.

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

Larger schools will provide potentially more opportunities for the children to develop and apply further their skills and dispositions through participation in a broader range of extra-curricular activities at a higher and more sustained level.

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

The proposed implementation date of August 31 2019 is appropriate.

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

Sustainable Schools Criterion	Indicator	Meets criterion		
		Yes	No (include reason(s))	Information not available
Quality Educational Experience	1.1 Attainment levels of pupils, Key Stage tests pending development of new indicators for Primary Schools, GCSE results for Post-Primary Schools.			✓
	1.2 In primary, a single classroom contains no more than <u>two</u> year-groups in a composite class; for example, years 1 and 2.		There are two classes with four and three year groups respectively.	
	1.3 A <u>minimum</u> of four teachers at a primary school. This recognises both the needs of pupils and the demands on teachers.		There are fewer than four teachers.	
	1.4 The ability of the school to cater for children with Special Educational Needs.		While there is a small number of children in the school overall (23), 43% of the children (10) are on the SEN register. Withdrawal support is available one day per week.	
	1.5 The ability at post-primary level to be able to provide suitable access to the entitlement framework including, where appropriate, linkages with other schools, the FE sector or other providers.	N/A		
	1.6 The standards and the quality of learning and teaching at the school.	✓		
	1.7 The range of curricular and extra-curricular activities available for children including career guidance, physical education, music, art, drama and science.		School strives to provide an extra-curriculum through collaboration.	✓
	1.8 The quality of the <u>physical</u> environment for learning and teaching i.e. the condition, energy and water efficiency and suitability of the buildings.	✓		
	1.9 The quality of, and arrangements for, pastoral care including the active promotion of the principles of social justice in all areas of the formal and informal curriculum.	✓		
Strong Leadership and	4.1 Governors' views on the school based on quantitative and qualitative evidence.	✓		

Management by Boards of Governors and Principals	4.8 There is a school development plan in place and progress is being made to achieve the plan's aims and objectives.	✓		
	4.9 Pupil behaviour, expulsions, suspensions and non-attendance as well as positive behaviours such as involvement in school management (e.g. buddying and mentoring schemes).	✓		
Strong links with the Community	6.1 Degree and quality of parental involvement (schools will be asked to provide evidence on this).	✓		
	6.3 Contribution of the school to the community (schools will be asked to provide evidence on this).			✓
	6.4 Presence of other features of provision, e.g. nursery or specialist unit.			

6. Overall conclusion of impact of the proposal

It is evident that the ever-decreasing enrolment will have a negative impact on the school's ability to be sustainable.

APPENDIX D

Statutory Two Month Objection Period

The Department received one response during the statutory two month objection period, reproduced below:



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

06 February 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

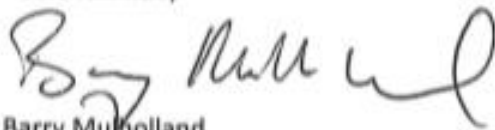
Re: Development proposal 571 Erganagh Primary School

The Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC) notes the Education Authority's proposal to discontinue provision at Erganagh Primary School. CSSC has consulted with Erganagh Primary School and other controlled schools in the area.

CSSC does not wish to raise an objection in respect of Development Proposal 571. In all aspects of the consultation CSSC would request that the educational experiences of pupils and the welfare of pupils and staff are paramount.

Should a decision be taken to approve this proposal CSSC would seek assurance that arrangements will be expedited to facilitate the enrolment of displaced pupils to minimise uncertainty and avoid disruption to their education. CSSC would also request that, if required, approvals are granted to enable siblings to attend the same school. CSSC would also wish to ensure that staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are supported in the process of redeployment and/or voluntary severance in keeping with the School Reorganisation Agreement.

Yours faithfully



Barry Mulholland
Chief Executive

Appendix E

DE (POLICY TEAM) COMMENTS

A: SCHOOL ADMISSIONS TEAM

Development Proposal (DP) 571 proposes that Erganagh PS will discontinue with effect from 31 August 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Rationale for the DP

The Case for Change (CfC) notes Erganagh PS is a controlled primary school situated in Erganagh, near the town of Castleterg. Almost all of the children attending the school come from the surrounding rural area. The enrolment has remained low over the last two years which has resulted in the school operating as a two teacher school from September 2017. The school was identified in the Annual Action Plan 2017/18 where sustainability is an issue. In the Western area, Bridgehill PS closed in August 2013 and it was considered that the effect of this closure may have resulted in increased numbers for Erganagh PS as shown on the table below for 2014/15.

Approved Admissions/Enrolment Numbers and Actual Admissions/Enrolment numbers

School Year	Approved Admissions Number	Approved Enrolment Number	Actual Admissions	Actual Enrolment
2014/15	15	107	█	38
2015/16	15	107	8	47
2016/17	15	107	█	40
2017/18	15	107	5	36
2018/19	15	107	█	25

*Actual admission and enrolment numbers include stated children (less than 4).

Erganagh PS has an admissions and enrolment number of 15 and 107 respectively. The school may exceed the admissions number in any one year provided the pupils admitted this way do not cause the school to exceed its enrolment number. In the case of Erganagh PS the maximum pupils the school may admit is 18.

School Admissions/Temporary Variations

If a school receives more applications for admission than it has places available it can request a Temporary Variation (TV) of its admissions and/or enrolment number 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. Erganagh PS has been consistently undersubscribed for several years in both its admissions and enrolment numbers and therefore TVs have not been requested or required.

In the event of Erganagh PS closing, the Department will consider granting TVs to facilitate the affected children transferring to other schools in the area. **However, no advance guarantee of approval can be provided as the Department will consider what other provision is available in an area at the point of application.** The Department will approve a TV to a school's numbers for children who otherwise do not have a primary school of the same type, with places, available to them within a reasonable travelling distance of the child's home address. For primary school TVs reasonable distance is defined as a distance of 2 miles. Any TV request made can only be considered from the requesting school (not from parent/s) and a TV is granted on the condition that no additional accommodation will be required.

Page 8 of the CfC shows the schools closest to Erganagh PS. Capacity is listed within the four local schools as below:

School	Approved Admissions	Approved Enrolment	2017/18 Enrolment	2018/19 Admissions	2018/19 Enrolment
Edwards PS	29-30	203	205	30	212
St Patrick's PS, Castledearg	37-41	259	267	35	263
Killen PS	21-23	145	107	17	105
Ardstraw Jubilee PS	15-18	108	83	12	87

Conclusion

Ultimately, the long term need for places in particular areas is for the Area Planning process to consider. SAT does not hold data on future demand for places and is unable to make a recommendation on whether the DP should be approved.

B: EDUCATION WORKFORCE DIRECTORATE

EWD has reviewed the Case for Change and noted the staffing implications for teaching and non-teaching staff as highlighted at Page 14 of the Case for Change.

Assurances should be sought from the Education Authority that any potential impact on terms and conditions of teaching and non-teaching staff are managed in accordance with the following policies:-

- **TNC 2013/2** – School Re-organisation Agreement and DE Circular 2013/7 – School Re-organisation Allowances: a teacher who suffers a reduction in pay as a result of staff re-organisation or re-deployment may be eligible to apply for a school re-organisation allowance.
- **TNC 2010/1** – Procedure for Handling Teacher Redundancy: will apply where a teacher is considered, or wishes to be considered for redundancy;
- **TNC 2011/8** – Workload Agreement: should the Case for Change result in an increase to enrolment in a school, or surrounding schools, assurance should be provided regarding how potential impact on teacher workload, as a result of the increased class size, will be managed.
- **JNC 224** – Collective Agreement for School Reorganisations – Employment protection for Support Staff will apply where the Case for Change may impact on the terms and conditions of non-teaching staff.

C: ACCESS & WELLBEING DIRECTORATE

It is noted from the case for change that:

“The pupils from Erganagh PS who have special educational requirements will continue to have these needs met within the local schools and supported through the EA’s Children and Young People’s Services.”

From a special educational needs (SEN) policy perspective, therefore, SET would have no objections to the DP, subject to the assurance that any impact on pupils with SEN will be considered and managed effectively, in particular:

- Continued support for SEN pupils following the closure, and assistance for pupils, as required, in managing the change to a new setting;
- Continued appropriate placement for SEN pupils with a statement of SEN; and assistance for these pupils in managing the change to a new setting;
- Consideration, as necessary, of the facilities and equipment required to support pupils with SEN within the new setting.

D: FINANCIAL MONITORING TEAM INPUT

201-2617 Erganagh Primary School

The school's Surplus position as at 31 March 2018 is £7,928, which is 4.12% of the school's 2017-18 ASB.

The Surplus position in the previous year, up to 31 March 2017 was £14,226, which is 6.91% of the school's 2016-17 ASB.

The school received a total delegated budget of £189,990 in the 2018-19 financial year for **36*** FTE pupils, which generates a per capita of £5,277. The average for all primary schools is £2,978.

The total Free School Meals Entitlement for the school is **14¹** pupils, which represents 38.89% of the total FTE, which places the school in Band 2 for funding purposes.

The school received £45,183 for Small Schools Support funding, which represents 100.00% of the maximum funding for this factor, within the Nursery & Primary funding stream.

The school also received £16,420 in respect of Primary Principals' Release Time, which represents 100.00% of the maximum funding for this factor.

¹ The school's funding allocation is based on the previous year's census data (e.g. the October 2017 census data was used to determine the 2018-19 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).

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

Factor	2018-19 £	2017-18 £	2016-17 £
Pupil AWPU	77,686	86,604	104,627
TSN - Social Deprivation	9,042	9,557	11,499
TSN – Additional Social Deprivation	1,689	1,739	2,018
Premises Area	6,338	6,338	6,338
Premises FTE	3,020	3,387	4,026
Primary Principals Release Time	16,420	16,420	16,420
Foundation Stage	12,000	12,000	12,350
Small Schools Support	45,183	45,190	43,822
Teachers Salary Protection	17,612	11,046	4,782
Service Personnel Pupils			
Traveller Children	999		
Looked After Children			
Newcomer Children			
IM – Curricular Support			
IM Units – Administrative Support			
Special Units			
Landlord Maintenance			
Administration Costs			
Transitional Funding			
Budget Addition Funding			
Total School Funding	189,990	192,282	205,884

Pupil FTE (no.)	36.00	40.00	47.00
Per Capita	£5,277	£4,807	£4,381

E: CHILDREN'S & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

The Case for Change does consider the need for transport provision as a result of the closure and that communication with the EA transport service is ongoing. Any transport arrangement will be in accordance with transport regulations and pupils identified school of preference.

Given the numbers involved the impact on the school transport budget would not be significant.

F: SHARED EDUCATION & COMMUNITY RELATIONS TEAM

The EA, in the Case for Change document, does give consideration to the nature and effectiveness of current Shared Education in the context of the Development Proposal, complying with its duty under Article 6 of the Shared Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Erganagh PS, in the pre-publication consultation, drew attention to the benefits to pupils of the school's participation in Shared Education.

However, Shared Education is well developed in local Primary schools with seven of the other eleven local Primary schools engaged in partnerships through either CASE or SESP.

The single response to the consultation made no reference to Shared Education.

Hence the evidence presented does not indicate that the proposal would be either beneficial or detrimental to progressing Shared Education.