

## COPY OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

### Cover Note

<b>DP No.</b>	DP 619	
<b>School(s)</b>	St Malachy's College	
<b>Proposal</b>	St Malachy's College will increase its admissions number from 150 to 170, with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 1,050 to 1,190, with effect from 1 September 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter.	
<b>Minister's Decision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Approve with modification (to the implementation date to 1 September 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter)</li> <li>ii. Agree that this submission (with appropriate redactions) be published on the Department's website once the EA and the school have been informed.</li> </ul>	
<b>Date of Decision</b>	27 March 2022	
<b>Minister's Comments</b>	<i>"Approve - the school is popular, consistently oversubscribed for Yr8 with TVs required in each of the last 4 years. 'The assessment has shown that there is some rationale for approval'. On balance, I am content that the DP is approved."</i>	
<b>Additional notes</b>		
<b>Information redacted</b>	<b>Key</b>	<b>Details</b>
	<b>X</b>	redaction
	*	refers to less than five cases where data is considered sensitive
	#	means figure has been suppressed to prevent disclosure of sensitive information under rules of disclosure

**From:** Bill Stevenson  
Area Planning Team (East Region)  
[Cleared by Janis Scallon - 21 March 2022]

**Date:** 21 March 2022

**To:** Michelle McIlveen MLA  
Minister for Education

*Copy distribution below:*

**DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL (DP) 619 – ST MALACHY’S COLLEGE**

<b>Issue:</b>	To decide on Development Proposal No 619 published by the Education Authority on 27 February 2020 - St. Malachy’s College will increase its admissions number from 150 to 170, with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 1,050 to 1,190, with effect from 1 September 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter.
<b>Timescale:</b>	Routine.
<b>Financial/Resource Implications:</b>	None.
<b>FOI Implications:</b>	The contents of this submission are likely to be fully disclosable.
<b>Statutory Duty Implications:</b>	None applicable.
<b>Presentational Issues:</b>	There is potential for this to attract media interest, as part of a number of DPs that seek to reconfigure post-primary provision across the Greater Belfast area. If approached, the Press Office can draw upon the content of this submission.
<b>Recommendation:</b>	It is recommended that you:  i. Do Not Approve DP 619 – St. Malachy’s College will increase its admissions number from 150 to 170, with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 1,050 to 1,190, with effect from 1 September 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter.

	<p>ii. Agree that this submission (with appropriate redactions) be published on the Department's website once the EA and the school have been informed.</p>
--	---

## CONTENTS

	Paragraph No
<b>MAPS</b>	
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>CASE FOR CHANGE</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>STATUTORY DP PROCESSES</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>OTHER CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>138</b>

## APPENDICES

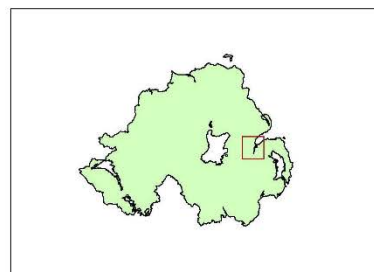
<b>APPENDIX A</b>	DP 619
<b>APPENDIX B</b>	Case for Change
<b>APPENDIX C</b>	DE (Policy Team) Comments
<b>APPENDIX D</b>	Education and Training Inspectorate Comments
<b>APPENDIX E</b>	Comments received during the two month statutory objection period

**Map 1: St Malachy's College and Alternative Post-Primary Provision within a five mile radius**

**St Malachy's College, Belfast - All provision (5 mile radius)**

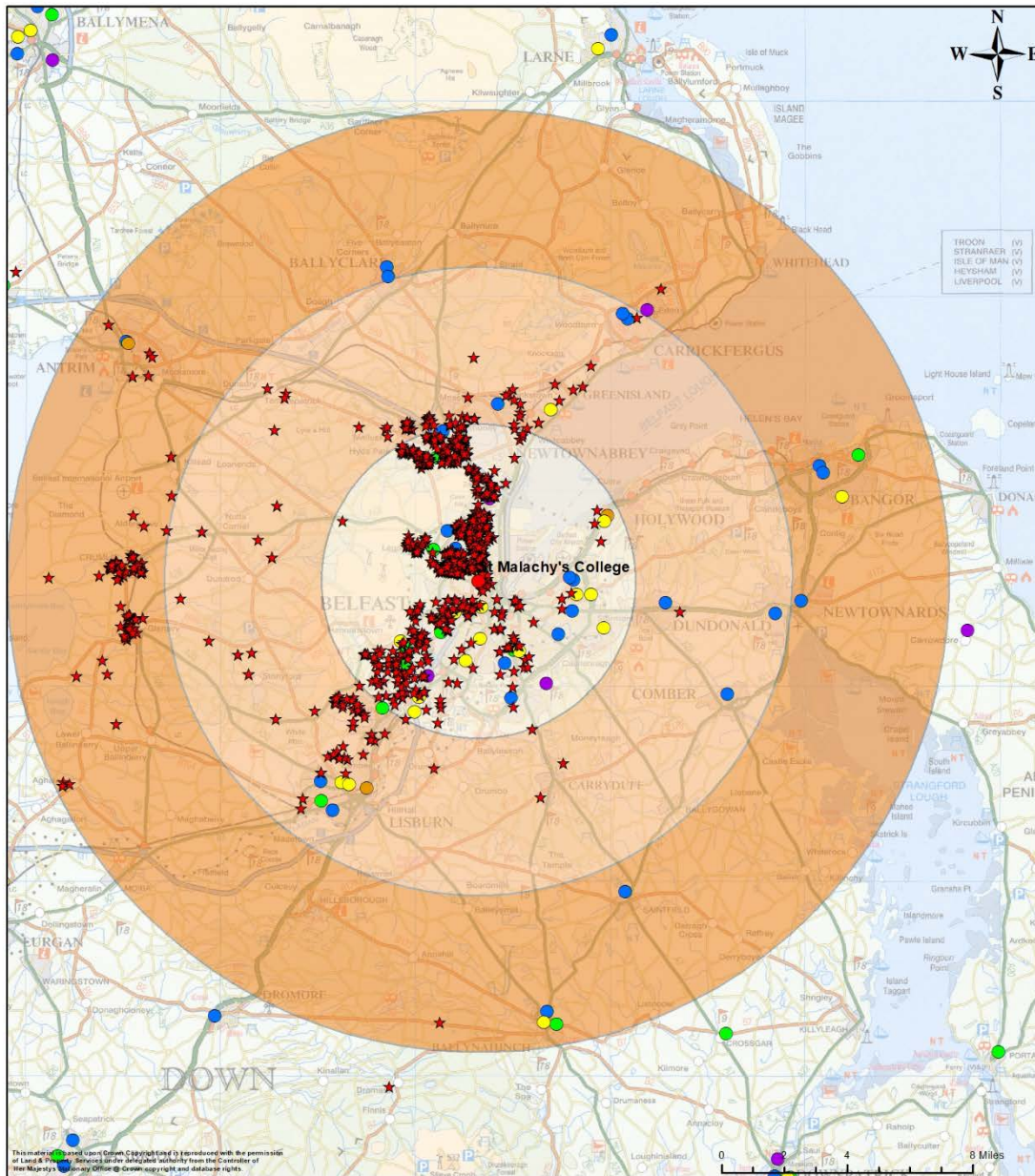


- St Malachy's College
- Voluntary
- RC Maintained
- Other Maintained
- GMI
- Controlled
- Controlled Integrated
- 3 mile buffer of St Malachy's College
- 5 mile buffer of St Malachy's College

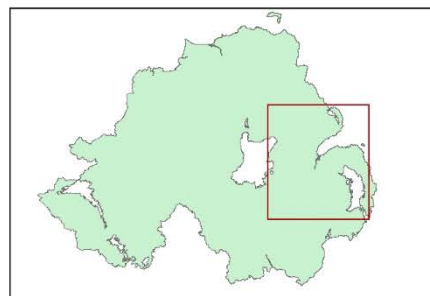


## Map 2: St. Malachy's College School Pupil Locations

### St Malachy's College - Pupil locations



- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| ● St Malachy's College        | 15 Mile Buffer of St Malachy's College |
| ★ St Malachy's College pupils | <b>Buffer Distance</b>                 |
| ● Voluntary                   | 0.00 - 5.00                            |
| ● RC Maintained               | 5.00 - 10.00                           |
| ● Other Maintained            | 10.00 - 15.00                          |
| ● GMI                         |  |
| ● Controlled Integrated       |  |
| ● Controlled                  |  |



## Introduction

1. On 27 February 2020 the Education Authority (EA) published Development Proposal (DP) 619 on behalf of the Board of Governors (BoG) of St. Malachy's College, proposing that "*St. Malachy's College will increase its admissions number from 150 to 170 in Year 8 (Y8) with a phased increase to enrolment from 1,050 to 1,190, with effect from 1 September 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter*".
2. A copy of the published DP and the proposer's supporting Case for Change (CfC) are attached at Appendices A and B respectively.

## Background

### Area Context

3. St Malachy's College is an all-boys, Voluntary Grammar School (VGS) situated in North Belfast in the Belfast Local Government District (LGD). The school's location, along with alternative post-primary provision is shown in **Map 1**.
4. On the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017, Water Works 1, where the school is located, is placed 15 out of 890 (1 being the most deprived and 890 being least deprived).
5. The '*Providing Pathways*' - *Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-20* and the *Annual Action Plan for School Provision April 2017–March 2018* were published by the EA on 28 April 2017. The Area Plan notes that in the Belfast LGD the population in the age range 0-15 years is projected to increase by 7.6% between 2014 and 2024. The population in Belfast LGD in the age range 16-19 years is projected to decrease by 1.4% between 2014 and 2024.
6. The EA's current extended Annual Action Plan (AAP) 2019/21, does not mention St Malachy's College specifically, however it does include a workstream for the Greater Belfast Area with the Action Plan noting the key issue as "*Ensure school places are located as required*" and the associated action listed as "*School managing authorities to develop options for future post-primary provision in the Greater Belfast area by January 2020*".

### Proposer

7. Article 14(2) of The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 sets out a requirement that a person (other than the Education Authority) bringing forward a Development Proposal must submit the proposal in the first instance to the Education Authority. Article 14(2) is informed by Article 14(9) which imposes a legal obligation of implementation upon the proposer, in the event of approval of any proposal by the Department. The ability of a proposer to implement a decision on a proposal is

therefore material to the Department's consideration of the proposal. Article 14(5) establishes that before a proposal concerning an existing school is submitted to the Education Authority under paragraph (2), the person making the proposal shall consult the Board of Governors of the school concerned.

8. The Department's Circular 2017/09 provides guidance on the DP process and at paragraph 7.2 establishes that for VGS in the Catholic sector, the school Trustees are to be viewed as proposer. The term 'Trustees' is interpreted in Article 2(2) of The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 as "the person or persons in whom the premises of the school or college of education are, or are to be, vested" and a key role for school trustees is therefore as the legal owner of the school premises. DP 619, having been brought forward by the BoG of St Malachy's College, is therefore inconsistent with the Department's guidance.
9. In parallel to the Department's consideration of DP 619, it was joined as Notice Party to proceedings in respect of an un-published (at the point of challenge) suite of proposals (since published on 27 January 2021 as DPs 604-607) seeking to shape Catholic maintained, post-primary provision in Downpatrick. That legal challenge, brought on behalf of the Board of Governors of St Patrick's Voluntary Grammar School, Downpatrick, contended that neither the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) nor the Trustees were empowered to make a proposal under Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 in relation to St Patrick's Grammar School. In particular, it was contended, that they could not make such a proposal without the agreement of the Board of Governors.
10. Written legal judgment was delivered in that case on 26 November 2020. In dismissing the case overall, the Judge made the following comments on the specific point of challenge regarding the role of CCMS and the Trustees:

***In my view, the applicant's application for judicial review on this ground must be refused. While the Departmental Guidance may not ultimately be determinative of the issue, the applicant has not sought to challenge the Departmental Guidance. More importantly however, the express identification of the Board of Governors as a consultee within the statutory scheme appears to me to fatally undermine any suggestion that the Board of Governors could exercise an effective veto over any proposal advanced under Article 14. I agree that the identification of the Board of Governors as a consultee suggests that they are not an appropriate proposer of a proposal covered by Article 14.***



11. During the two-month statutory objection period for DP 619, representation received from the Belfast Area Catholic Schools' Trustees, and the Catholic Schools' Trustees Service (CSTS) made clear that it was their position that DPs relating to Catholic Voluntary Grammar Schools (VGS) must be brought forward by Trustees and not the BoG of the school. A summary of the points raised by these parties can be found at paragraph 41 and both of these documents are reproduced in full at **Appendix E**.
12. With a view to establishing if notwithstanding the manner in which this proposal has been brought forward, there is nonetheless evidence of support of its intent by the Trustees, officials wrote to both the Trustees and the Chair of the BoG of St Malachy's College.
13. Responses received from both parties reference dialogue on the rationale for a proposal which took place in 2017. This appears to have culminated in correspondence dated 19 September 2017 to the Principal and Chair of the BoG, in which the Trustees agreed that "*the Board of Governors may give notice to the Area Planning Group of their desire to bring forward a Development Proposal.*" This correspondence continues "*The Trustees expect that in the drafting of a Development Proposal for their consideration and decision **there should be full engagement with CCMS, CSTS and the other (non-Diocesan) Trustees of Catholic Education to ensure that the proposal is congruent with the Trustees' vision for Catholic Education across the city and beyond**.*" No additional evidence has been provided to the Department by the BoG of St Malachy's College that further dialogue took place or that the consideration and decision of the Trustees was sought prior to publication of DP 619.
14. It has not been possible to establish a clear position of Trustee support for this proposal, with Trustee comments confirming the 2017 discussions and expressing concerns about the manner in which the proposal has been brought forward, having regard to the written judgment of Justice Quinlivan in relation to the Downpatrick legal challenge.
15. Notwithstanding these issues, it is the Department's position that a published DP should be assessed, particularly in the context of the priority within the EA's AAP referencing an area solution for the Greater Belfast Area, to ensure that the full impacts are determined.

### *Admissions and Enrolment Trends*

16. St. Malachy's College has approved admissions and enrolment of 150 and 1,050 respectively. In 2021/22 St Malachy's College had:
- 1,152 pupils enrolled of which 215 were in Year 8; 899 in Years 8-12 and 253 at Post-16;
  - 41 (3.6%) pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN);
  - 280 (24.3%) pupils with Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME); and
  - No available places.

### *Provision in the Area*

17. A snapshot of education provision in the area is provided in Table 2. Distances by road may vary from the mapping radius.

### *Alternative Grammar Provision*

18. Map 1 shows that there are 17 alternative grammar schools within a five mile (mapping) radius of St. Malachy's College.
19. For 2021/22 these grammar schools, when considered together, had approved admissions of 2,751 and approved enrolment of 18,721; in 2020/21 these schools had actual admissions of 2,864 an actual enrolment of 19,258 and 184 available places.
20. The most recent, completed Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) inspections provide no concerns for the majority of the alternative grammar schools within a five mile mapping radius, however, the ETI report of September 2015 concluded that Wellington College "*needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified*" and as a consequence the Department entered the school into the Formal Intervention Process in November 2015. The ETI inspection (2015) of Campbell College concluded that "*the school needs to address important areas for improvement*".

### *Alternative Controlled Secondary Provision*

21. Table 1 shows that there are six controlled secondary schools within a five mile radius of St. Malachy's College, two of these schools, Belfast Model School for Girls and Ashfield Girls' High School (HS) are not viable alternatives for pupils attending St. Malachy's College (being an all-boys school) and so the analysis of alternative controlled secondary provision will focus on the four remaining schools.

22. In 2021/22 these four schools, when considered together, had approved admissions and enrolment of 720 and 3,150 respectively; in 2020/21 the schools had actual admissions of 641, actual enrolment of 3,399 and 938 available places.
23. The most recent, completed ETI inspections of both Belfast Boys' Model School and Ashfield Boys' HS, both conducted in 2018, conclude that the schools *"demonstrate the capacity to identify and bring about improvement"*. No ETI inspections have been completed for Breda Academy in the time since it opened in September 2015. The most recent ETI inspection in respect of Glengormley HS<sup>1</sup> was conducted in January 2008, with subsequent inspections in March 2017 and February 2020 being affected by Action Short of Strike (ASOS), the 2008 report concludes that *"good progress has been made in most of the areas for improvement identified during the original inspections but some areas still require improvement"*.

#### *Alternative Catholic Maintained Secondary Provision*

24. Map 1 shows that there are eight Catholic Maintained secondary schools within a five mile mapping radius of St Malachy's College. In 2021/22 these schools, when considered together, had approved admissions and enrolment of 1,278 and 8,025 respectively; in 2020/21 the schools had actual admissions of 1,294; actual enrolment of 7,843; and 619 available places.
25. The most recent ETI inspections at seven of the eight schools have been impacted by ASOS, with the eighth school, All Saints College, not having a completed inspection since opening in September 2019. The most current ETI inspections of Mercy College; St Genevieve's College; and Edmund Rice College conclude that the quality of education is "Good" or "Very Good" and the latest complete inspection of St Joseph's College, carried out in 2007, concludes that *"good progress has been made in the areas for improvement identified during the original inspection"*. The most recent ETI inspection of De La Salle College concluded that the school *"needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement"*, as a result the Department entered the school into the Formal Intervention Process in December 2016. No complete ETI inspection report is available for St Louise's Comprehensive College.

---

<sup>1</sup> DP 660 was published by the EA on 22 April 2021 and the statutory objection period ended on 22 June 2021. The DP proposes that *"Glengormley High School will transform to Controlled Integrated Status, with effect from 1 September 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter"*. The proposal is currently being assessed by the Department.

### *Alternative Integrated Provision*

26. As shown in Map 1, there are four alternative integrated post-primary schools within a five mile mapping radius of St Malachy's College. In 2021/22 these schools collectively had approved admissions and enrolment of 590 and 3,710 respectively; in 2020/21 the schools had actual admissions of 667; actual enrolment of 3,830; and 234 available places.
27. The most recent, complete ETI inspections of Hazelwood College; Priory Integrated College (IC); and Malone IC conclude that the schools demonstrate "*the capacity to identify and bring about improvement*", and the most recent inspection of Lagan College concludes that the quality of education is "Good".

### *Alternative Other Maintained Provision*

28. As shown in Map 1, Colaiste Feirste is the only Irish Medium (IM) post-primary school within a five mile mapping radius of St Malachy's College. In 2021/22 the school had approved admissions and enrolment of 150 and 800 (following approval of DP 590), with actual admissions of 180; actual enrolment of 793; and no available places.
29. The most recent ETI inspection of the school carried out in October 2016 concluded that the school "*demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement*".

Table 1 - St Malachy's College - Neighbouring Provision

School Ref	School	Postcode	Distance in Miles - as per Google Maps	2020/21 & 2021/22 Approved Enrolment Number	2018/19 Actual Enrolment*			2019/20 Actual Enrolment*			2020/21 Total Actual Enrolment*			2020/21 Super numerary	2020/21 Available places	2020/21 Actual Y8 Admissions	2020/21 & 2021/22 Approved Admissions Number	2021/22 Yr 8 First Pref Applications	Over/Under subscribed at First Preference	ETI report assessment of overall quality of education provision
					Years 8 - 12	Post 16	Total	Years 8 - 12	Post 16	Total	Years 8 - 12	Post 16	Total							
Grammar Schools																				
1420030	St Malachy's College	BT15 2AE		1050	819	269	1088	831	279	1110	843	268	1111	57	0	181	170	207	O - 37	Jan 20 - ASOS. March 14 - Very good.
1420028	Belfast Royal Academy	BT14 6JL	0.7	1410	1059	384	1443	1059	389	1448	1052	386	1438	39	11	208	200	304	O - 104	Oct 19 - Continues to demonstrate the capacity to identify & bring about improvement.
1420027	Royal Belfast Academical Institution	BT1 6DL	1.1	1050	796	235	1031	785	237	1022	777	265	1042	17	25	152	150	118	U - 32	Feb 20 - ASOS. Feb 17 - Continues to demonstrate the capacity to identify and bring about improvement.
1420082	Dominican College	BT15 4AQ	1.7	1050	756	248	1004	775	270	1045	790	290	1080	9	0	160	160	178	O - 18	Jan 18 - ASOS. Oct 10 - Good.
1420029	St Dominic's High School	BT12 6AE	1.8	966	724	298	1022	757	286	1043	771	279	1050	21	0	168	141	220	O - 79	Oct 17 - ASOS. April 10 - SSB - No grade.
1420022	Methodist College	BT9 6BY	2.4	1810	1253	535	1788	1275	532	1807	1272	531	1803	36	43	251	240	261	O - 21	Jan 20 - ASOS. March 14 - Good.
1420277	Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School	BT6 0BY	3.3	770	592	241	833	614	233	847	631	232	863	50	0	137	2021 - 110 21/22 - 130	201	O - 71	May 18 - Continues to demonstrate a high level of capacity to identify and bring about improvement.
1420264	Victoria College	BT9 6JA	3.6	870	688	206	894	695	197	892	679	230	909	18	0	135	130	94	U - 36	Apr 19 - ASOS. Nov 15 - Demonstrates the capacity to identify & bring about improvement.
1420089	Strathearn School	BT4 2AU	3.7	770	568	196	764	591	197	788	590	213	803	15	0	120	120	115	U - 5	Nov 17 - ASOS. Sep 10 - Very good.
1410079	Grosvenor Grammar School	BT5 6BA	3.7	1075	816	271	1087	815	280	1095	832	278	1110	18	0	181	175	313	O - 138	Sep 17 - ASOS. Jan 10 - SSB - No grade.

1410315	Bloomfield Collegiate	BT5 6HW	3.8	710	529	167	696	543	166	709	535	186	721	11	0	104	100	80	U - 20	April 18 - ASOS. Jan 15 - Good.
1410270	Wellington College	BT7 3HE	3.8	770	582	173	755	586	187	773	588	182	770	34	34	116	110	128	O - 18	Oct 17 - ASOS. Sep 15 - Needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified.
1420021	St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School	BT11 8NR	4.2	1180	886	268	1154	889	270	1159	905	275	1180	39	39	182	175	171	U - 4	Nov 17 - ASOS. Sep 14 - Good.
1420020	Campbell College	BT4 2ND	4.2	950	728	185	913	755	199	954	756	230	986	35	0	137	130	105	U - 25	March 17 - ASOS. Oct 15 - The school needs to address important areas for improvement.
4420259	Our Lady and St Patrick's College	BT5 7DL	4.7	1260	931	348	1279	952	340	1292	967	362	1329	27	0	195	190	278	O - 88	Jun 17 - ASOS. April 10 - Very good.
1420265	Hunterhouse College	BT10 0LE	5.2	710	514	192	706	524	177	701	531	186	717	13	6	102	100	80	U - 20	Nov 18 - ASOS. March 15 - Good.
1420095	Rathmore Grammar School	BT10 0LF	5.4	1260	939	341	1280	937	341	1278	929	344	1273	38	25	183	180	274	O - 94	Oct 18 - ASOS. Oct 12 - Very good.
4420044	Sullivan Upper School	BT18 9EP	5.4	1060	775	293	1068	776	294	1070	776	297	1073	14	1	152	150	171	O - 21	Nov 18 - ASOS. Nov 15 - High level of capacity for sustained improvement.
<b>Sub-total</b>				<b>18721</b>	<b>13955</b>	<b>4850</b>	<b>18805</b>	<b>14159</b>	<b>4874</b>	<b>19033</b>	<b>14224</b>	<b>5034</b>	<b>19258</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>2864</b>	<b>20/21 - 2731</b> <b>21/22 - 2751</b>	<b>3298</b>		
<b>Catholic Maintained Secondary</b>																				
1230321	Blessed Trinity College	BT15 4DZ	1.8	1300	961	278	1239	1014	269	1283	986	302	1288	80	92	198	205	115	U - 90	Dec 18 - ASOS.
1230324	All Saints College (split over 2 sites)	BT12 7BP BT11 8BW	2.1 4	1000				756	120	876	721	156	877	90	213	138	150	62	U - 88	New school opened in 2019.
1230104	Mercy College Belfast	BT14 7QR	2.4	20/21 - 650 21/22 - 730	426	130	556	502	149	651	571	159	730	69	0	139	115	126	O - 11	Feb 18 - ASOS. Oct 11 - Good (previously Our Lady of Mercy Girls' School).
1230053	St Louise's Comprehensive College	BT12 6EN	2.8	1500	1139	338	1477	1175	369	1544	1206	312	1518	60	42	231	220	271	O - 51	Nov 18 - ASOS. Jan 10 - SSB - No grade.

1230275	St Joseph's College	BT6 0BY	3.4	20/21 - 720 21/22 - 760	613	63	676	660	77	737	700	91	791	77	6	164	150	92	U - 58	March 17 - ASOS. Sep 07 - Good progress has been made in the areas for improvement identified during the original inspection.
1230182	De La Salle College	BT11 8LT	4.5	1025	717	212	929	700	184	884	666	202	868	84	241	131	163	68	U - 95	Oct 18 - ASOS. Nov 16 - Needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement.
1230155	St Genevieve's High School	BT11 9JP	4.7	1000	788	259	1047	805	237	1042	811	231	1042	30	0	162	160	112	U - 48	Mar 18 - ASOS. Sep 14 - Very good.
3230203	Edmund Rice College	BT36 7AU	5.4	20/21 - 690 21/22 - 710	545	118	663	586	114	700	605	124	729	64	25	131	115	98	U - 17	Feb 18 - ASOS. Nov 10 - Very good.
<b>Sub total</b>				20/21 - 7885 21/22 - 8025	5189	1398	6587	6198	1519	7717	6266	1577	7843	554	619	1294	1278	944		
School Ref	School	Postcode	Distance in Miles - as per Google Maps	2020/21 & 2021/22 Approved Enrolment Number	2018/19 Actual Enrolment*			2019/20 Actual Enrolment*			2020/21 Total Actual Enrolment*			2020/21 Super numerary	2020/21 Available places	2020/21 Actual Y8 Admissions	2020/21 & 2021/22 Approved Admissions Number	2021/22 Yr 8 First Pref Applications	Over/Under subscribed at First Preference	ETI report assessment of overall quality of education provision
					Years 8 - 12	Post 16	Total	Years 8 - 12	Post 16	Total	Years 8 - 12	Post 16	Total							
1210021	Belfast Model School For Girls	BT14 6NQ	1.7	1050	794	189	983	836	175	1011	869	190	1059	30	21	199	200	166	U - 34	Jan 17 - ASOS. Dec 09 - SSB - No grade.
1210022	Belfast Boys' Model School	BT14 6RB	2.5	20/21 - 1040 21/22 - 1100	850	153	1003	923	125	1048	922	171	1093	118	65	184	200	113	U - 87	Dec 18 - Continues to demonstrate the capacity to identify & bring about improvement.
1210014	Ashfield Girls' High School	BT4 2LY	3.8	660	595	104	699	607	97	704	617	110	727	26	0	137	20/21 - 135 21/22 - 113	72	U - 41	Jan 17 - Ashfield Girls' has not demonstrated sufficiently the capacity to identify and bring about improvement.
1210015	Ashfield Boys' High School	BT4 2LY	3.9	700	622	143	765	655	127	782	703	148	851	100	0	170	140	106	U - 34	March 18 - Demonstrates the capacity to identify & bring about improvement.
4210316	Breda Academy	BT8 6PY	4.9	1000	616	122	738	542	152	694	539	168	707	31	324	109	170	61	U - 109	May 17 - ASOS

3210202	Glengormley High School	BT36 5HP	5.4	1250	557	108	665	561	135	696	639	109	748	47	549	178	210	96	U - 114	Feb 20 - ASOS. March 17 - ASOS
<b>Sub-total</b>				20/21 - 5700 21/22 - 5760	4034	819	4853	4124	811	4935	4289	896	5185	352	959	977	20/21 - 1055 21/22 - 1033	614		
<b>Integrated</b>																				
1260269	Hazelwood Integrated College	BT36 7ES	3.7	1010	838	163	1001	902	146	1048	929	151	1080	90	20	182	160	202	O - 42	Feb 19 - ASOS. Feb 16 - Demonstrates the capacity to identify & bring about improvement.
1260294	Malone Integrated College	BT10 OJB	4.3	800	414	94	508	488	67	555	552	76	628	38	210	138	130	61	U - 69	Apr 17 - Demonstrates the capacity to identify & bring about improvement.
4260255	Lagan College	BT8 6SA	4.9	1300	1079	283	1362	1100	286	1386	1121	303	1424	100	0	230	200	322	O - 122	Feb 19 - ASOS. Apr 13 - Good.
4250024	Priory Integrated College	BT18 9ER	5.8	600	587	68	655	617	82	699	614	84	698	102	4	117	100	78	U - 22	Nov 16 - Demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement
<b>Sub-total</b>				3710	2918	608	3526	3107	581	3688	3216	614	3830	330	234	667	590	663		
<b>Other Maintained</b>																				
1240291	Colaiste Feirste	BT12 7PY	2.7	20/21 - 600 21/22 - 800	533	145	678	572	149	721	644	149	793	50	0	180	20/21 - 100 21/22 - 150	138	U - 12	Oct 16 - Demonstrates the capacity to identify & bring about improvement.
<b>Sub-total</b>				20/21 - 600 21/22 - 800	533	145	678	572	149	721	644	149	793	50	0	180	20/21 - 100 21/22 - 150	138		
<b>Grand Total</b>				20/21 - 36616 21/22 - 37016	26629	7820	34449	28160	7934	36094	28639	8270	36909	1777	1996	5982	20/21 - 5754 21/22 - 5802	5657		

**Action Short of Strike - ASOS**

Actual enrolments and admissions include supernumerary pupils

2021/22 1st Pref. Info provided by the EA Post Primary Admissions Office at the conclusion of the Post Primary Admissions process 09.06.21. Campbell College 1st Pref Applications include 8 Boarders.

**Schools in Formal Intervention**

Wellington College - Entered the process on 6 Nov. 2015



De La Salle College - Entered the process in 21 December 2016

### **DPs approved in the last 5 years with changes still to be fully implemented**

DP 443 - Mercy College - Increase admissions number from 110 to 115 & enrolment number from 650 to 750 & become co-educational - approved in March 2016.

DP 444 - Edmund Rice College - Decrease admissions number from 120 to 115 & increase enrolment number from 600 to 750 & become co-educational - approved in March 2016.

DP 536 - St Joseph's College - Increase admissions number to 150 with annual phased increase in enrolment number from 664 to 850 - approved 30/04/18.

DP 546 - Belfast Model School for Girls - approved in May 2019 to increase its admissions number from 160 to 200 with an annual phased increase in the enrolment from 950 to 1250.

DP 545 - Belfast Boys Model School - approved in May 2019 to increase admissions number from 151 to 200 with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 905 to 1250.

DP 590 - Colaiste Feirste - Increase its admissions number from 100 to 150 with an annual phased increase in the enrolment from 600 to 910 - approved with modification 27/11/20 (modification to start date 01/09/21 not 2020).

### **DPs currently under consideration by DE Area Planning Team**

DP 620 - Our Lady & St Patrick's College - Increase its admissions number from 180 to 190 with an annual phased increase in the enrolment from 1260 to 1330.

DP 621 - Aquinas Grammar School - Increase its admissions number from 110 to 130 with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 770 to 910.

DP 608 - Strathearn School - increase its admissions number from 110 to 120 with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 770 to 840.

DP 642 - Wellington College - Increase its admissions number from 110 to 120, with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 770 to 800.

DP 641 - Grosvenor Grammar School - Increase its admissions number from 155 to 175, with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 1,075 to 1,225.

DP 643 - Bloomfield Collegiate - Increase its admissions number from 100 to 110, with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 710 to 770.

DP 638 - Ashfield Girls' High School - Increase its admissions number from 113 to 130, with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 660 to 790.

DP 639 - Ashfield Boys' High School - Increase its admissions number from 110 to 140, with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 700 to 900.

DP 640 - Breda Academy - Decrease its admissions number from 170 to 140, with an annual phased decrease in the enrolment number from 1,000 to 900.

DP 660 - Glengormley High School - Transform to Controlled Integrated Status

### **Post-Primary Pre-Approved Increases to Admissions Numbers for the 2020/21 & 2021/22 School Years - Approved by DE School Admissions Team**

Ashfield Girls HS increased from 113 to 135 for the 2020/21 School Year

Aquinas Diocesan GS increased from 110 to 130 for the 2021/22 School Year

Grosvenor GS increased from 155 to 175 for the 2020/21 & 2021/22 School Years

St Malachy's College increased from 150 to 170 for the 2020/21 & 2021/22 School Years

Strathearn School increased from 110 to 120 for the 2020/21 & 2021/22 School Years

Our Lady & St Patrick's College increased from 180 to 190 for the 2020/21 & 2021/22 School Years

Dominican College increased from 150 to 160 for the 2020/21 & 2021/22 School Years

Ashfield Boys HS increased from 110 to 140 for the 2020/21 & 2021/22 School Years

Blessed Trinity College increased from 195 to 205 for the 2020/21 & 2021/22 School Years

## **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### *Population Increase*

30. In the Belfast LGD, there has been a significant increase to the size of the cohort transferring to post-primary education since 2017/18. Population projections play a key factor in the consideration of these proposals as a means to identifying the need for additional places.

### *Pressure for post-primary places*

31. As a result of the increase in size of the population of post-primary aged pupils there has been increased pressure for places at many schools, including a number of schools with published DPs. The increased pressure for places has resulted in some schools exceeding their current approved numbers, and the pressure for places and impacts on schools is a key consideration in assessing these proposals.

## **CASE FOR CHANGE (CfC)**

32. The CfC in support of DP 619 is reproduced at Appendix B. The CfC asserts that the proposed change has been brought forward to address a rise in applications for admissions in recent years, while also providing accommodation for an anticipated increase to pupils transferring to Y8 from feeder primary schools (PS), specifically pupils seeking single-sex grammar provision.

## **STATUTORY DP PROCESSES**

### *Pre-publication consultation*

33. The CfC states that pre-publication consultation was undertaken by the St. Malachy's College BoG with all staff, teaching and non-teaching, in February and May 2019 and received unanimous support. The CfC further states that consultations with parents and pupils were carried out in May and June 2019 respectively and the proposal received overwhelming support. **The CfC does not however provide any detail regarding the nature of or detail of any consultation undertaken by the BoG with the Trustees.**
34. The EA conducted its pre-publication consultation with 294 local schools and received 13 responses; five responses supported the proposal while eight did not support the proposal, and a summary of comments received is listed below, full details of the pre-consultation are included in the Case for Change at **Appendix B.**

### *Comments in Support of the Proposal*

- Primary school enrolment in South and East Belfast indicate that there will be increased demand Catholic post-primary places from 2020 to 2026 and beyond;
- There is oversubscription in primary schools in areas served by the school and additional places provided at primary level now need to be matched at post-primary;
- Catholic post-primary schools have been oversubscribed for years with children having to travel excessively to access their allocated school.

### *Comment not in Support of the Proposal*

- The school ages population across Northern Ireland has been in a state of flux generally;
- Previously, there had been a precipitous decrease in the number of pupils transferring to Y8, as numbers decreased admissions and enrolment to Grammar schools remained the same, as did their social make-up (Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME));
- This proposal undermines attempts to create a Strategic Plan and the work of groups trying to achieve this;
- Grammar schools in the Greater Belfast area were allocated an additional 145 places for pupils transferring to Y8 while places were available at all-ability schools, equating to a transfer of £507,500 from secondary to grammar schools. This will lead to secondary schools becoming unsustainable and will lead to mass redundancies;
- Allowing over-subscribed schools to permanently expand this will “asset strip” from all-ability schools;
- Grammar schools have not previously requested a reduction in numbers in response to a reduction in the number of pupils transferring to Y8;
- This proposal should originate from the school’s Trustees, not Board of Governors;
- Oversubscription should not mean a school increases its admissions number given there is surplus provision in schools in North and West Belfast, this proposal is brought forward to improve St. Malachy’s financial position to the detriment of other schools;
- This proposal does not fit into the North Belfast area planning model;
- Support from parents seems to assume “B” grades will be accepted, this is unlikely and first preference applications have been decreasing;
- Approval would not be effective use of limited funds as St. Malachy’s would require investment while there are other schools with available places;
- The proposals can only be advanced at the expense of selective and non-selective schools negatively impacting their budgets;

- Increasing the curricular offer at St. Malachy's may lead to a reduction in offer at other schools;
- St. Mary's Christian Brothers Grammar School has been deliberately omitted from the submission invalidating much of the information regarding lack of places. Increasing admissions and enrolment at St. Malachy's will be detrimental to St Mary's, RBAI and BRA;
- How will the increase in provision better enable the school to deliver SEN provision – this is not explained;
- As part of Area Planning models pertaining to DP 444, a model for North Belfast and Glengormley schools was approved in October 2015 to ensure the viability and sustainability of all schools in this area. This proposal took effect from September 2017. This new proposal would fundamentally undermine this process and the parameters on which it was approved;
- There is a need for a joined up approach.

*Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) comments*

- The proposals brought forward (by the three Voluntary Grammar Schools) are individual institution solutions, not area solutions;
- The number of pupils transferring to Y8 is projected to reduce again in the long-term, the current increase in the cohort size should be met by way of Temporary Variation (TV) to avoid creating a surplus when numbers decline;
- Grammar schools draw pupils from a wide area, any increase has the potential to impact many other schools;
- An outworking of the NICCE report led to recent changes made to Catholic provision within Belfast, amalgamation of two schools and redistribution of places to four other schools. These changes were predicated on the admissions and enrolment within Catholic Selective schools remaining constant;
- Population growth is expected to peak and then fall in 2023/2024. Between 2002 and 2017 the population in post-primary reduced by 10% which affected non-selective schools disproportionately;
- Trustees own all Catholic schools, if DPs can be brought forward by proposers other than as set out in DE guidance this provides a threat to sectoral bodies working towards area based planning. In addition, it is unclear how Trustees have not been required to sign off on DPs that may require capital investment.

### *EA Comments*

35. The EA has acknowledged the increasing pressures on all schools by parents and communities to provide more places to Y8 pupils given the increasing demand. The EA have stated that through work of a sub-group of the Area Planning Local Group involving managing authorities and sectoral support bodies it was recognised that expansion is required in the greater Belfast area.
36. The EA assert that the plan was to bring forward a suite of proposals to provide a network of strong, sustainable schools in Belfast, however this proposal is being brought forward in advance of the full suite and would be best assessed in conjunction with the remainder of the suite.
37. Within its commentary the EA has addressed the idea of managing the increasing pupil numbers through TVs and has stated that this approach has led to significant problems in the recent past and that it is important to introduce stability back to post-primary provision.
38. The EA has given “*qualified support*” to this proposal with the caveat that it should be assessed as part of the full suite of proposals for the greater Belfast area in order to fully consider the implications of all adjustments being proposed.

### *Two month Statutory Objection Period*

39. The two month statutory objection period began on 27 February 2020. On 4 April 2020 all Area Planning activity was stood down as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and resumed on 17 September 2020, as a result and so as to ensure a full two-month consultation the objection period was extended to 18 October 2020.
40. During the objection period the Department received one response in support of the proposal and four responses in objection to the proposal. No reasoning was provided for support of the proposal, the emerging themes from the responses in objection are summarised below:
  - A DP such as this must come from the Trustees of the school and not the BoG;
  - The proposed increase is in direct contradiction to the outworking of the Area Planning process agreed by Catholic Trustees and all the Catholic managed schools in North Belfast;
  - This proposal directly challenges the Department’s strategy for Area Planning;
  - Over-subscription does not mean a school needs to increase its approved numbers, particularly when there are available places in North and West Belfast;
  - All schools strive to enhance the learning opportunity for those children within the local community;

- The GL transfer test is used as rationale for the proposal, however neither the Department of Education (DE) nor Trustees support this unregulated mechanism;
- A permanent increase will leave other schools with available places in contradiction of Area Based Planning and effective use of the public purse;
- The CfC references the need for additional staff, however approval may lead to redundancies in other Maintained schools in North and West Belfast;
- Approval may lead to reduced curricular offer at other schools;
- St Mary's Christian Brothers' GS is 4.7 miles away from St Malachy's College, any increase to the approved numbers at St Malachy's will have a detrimental impact;
- Grammar schools fill with A and B grade pupils and work downwards, in a year of lower demand admissions criteria will be adjusted to admit pupils with lower grades;
- The population growth which the proposal is predicated on is not permanent and will fall again;
- Between 2002 and 2017 the population of pupils in post-primary dropped by 10% with the decrease being absorbed by non-selective schools;
- When population previously fell enrolment at selective schools remained constant;
- Because of how schools are funded, this essentially led to a transfer of funds from all-ability schools to Grammar schools leading to mass redundancies and school closure in the non-selective sector;
- In 2019/20 an additional 145 additional places were granted to grammar schools, 119 of which could have been catered for at all-ability schools equating to a transfer of approximately £507,500 from the non-selective sector to the grammar sector;
- This proposal is a land grab by grammar schools using the pretence of temporary population increase to permanently increase their numbers.

41. In addition to the responses above, the Department also received representation from the Catholic Schools Trustees of Belfast; the Catholic Schools' Trustee Services (CSTS); and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS). A summary of the points made can be seen below and are reproduced in full at Appendix E.

*CSTS and Belfast Area Catholic Schools' Trustees Comments*

- CSTS has been working for a number of years with Trustees of Catholic post-primaries in Belfast and CCMS to review current provision and identify potential future need, this process is ongoing;
- Shortfalls in post-primary provision in parts of Greater Belfast are temporary;
- Population projections indicate a significant decline in post-primary admissions following a peak in 2023/24;

- CSTS are concerned regarding proposals seeking permanent increases to approved numbers which may lead to long-term surplus provision;
- As part of the Area Planning process CSTS have been engaged with all partner organisations in carrying out a review of provision in Greater Belfast;
- It is disappointing that individual schools have pre-empted a collective area solution in bringing forward individual school-based proposals;
- Trustees and CCMS have been working for a number of years to reduce surplus provision in the Maintained sector in Belfast;
- The changes are still bedding in and approval of these DPs may impact the sustainability of some schools and negate the work of Trustees;
- DE guidance clearly sets out that in the case of Catholic Voluntary Grammar Schools (VGS), DPs must be brought forward by the Trustees of the schools;
- This position is both an essential recognition of the role of the Trustees, but also ensures that Trustees take cognisance of the impact across the education sector;
- TVs should be used to manage temporary shortages of provision to avoid the creation of surplus provision when the population declines.

42. While the comments received from CSTS and the Belfast Area Catholic Schools' Trustees were largely identical, the following comment in reference to this DP being brought forward by the BoGs was unique to the CSTS correspondence:

- *“The Catholic Schools’ Trustee Service deem that these proposals are therefore not legally proposed and as such should not be considered by the Department of Education as bona fide proposals”.*

#### *CCMS comments*

- Recognise that the number of pupils transferring to post-primary will continue to rise for the next three to four years;
- However, as there is a long-term predicted decrease in the primary school population there is a need for caution;
- CCMS and the Trustees of Catholic grammar schools proceeded to implement the recommendations of the NICCE Report, leading to the closure of one school; removal of 1,955 places; management of location of places; and two amalgamations;
- These changes are still embedding at a number of schools;
- The process was progressed on the premise that the number of places in the selective sector would remain stable;
- Non-selective schools are at risk or negative impact if the proposal is approved;
- CCMS has been working with Trustees on planning for increased numbers in the Belfast area and is disappointed individual institutions have chosen to submit DPs while this work is ongoing;

- The population growth the proposal is predicated on is not permanent. Projections indicate that Year 8 population will reach a peak in 2023/24;
- Non-selective schools are impacted disproportionately during sustained population decline;
- CCMS are of the view that approval of this DP would impact non-selective schools in West Belfast the most;
- Between 2002 and 2017 the population of pupils in post-primary decreased by 10%, the drop in pupils was absorbed by non-selective schools and during that period 34 non-selective schools closed;
- The eventual increase of 140 pupils over seven years would equate to £599,760;
- A diversion of funds from the non-selective sector will massively destabilise the sector and potentially heighten the risk of redundancies in secondary schools;
- There is a fundamental problem when planning for school places on the basis of parental demand for a selective school predicated on unregulated tests;
- In a year of lower demand, a selective school will adjust its admissions criteria to admit pupils attaining lower grades to ensure their places are filled;
- A number of selective schools admit pupils with a wide range of grades indicating that high outcomes are not a required arbiter for admission;
- DE has been working with educational partners, schools and parents to emphasise that selecting schools is a process of parental preference, not parental choice;
- DE Circular 2017/09 outlines that it is the Trustees who must bring forward a DP;
- The involvement of Trustees ensures that an overview of challenges and issues is taken and ensures individual schools do not submit proposals which may negatively impact neighbouring schools;
- If the position is that a proposal can be submitted by proposers outside those names in DE DP guidance, this poses significant challenges for all sectoral bodies working towards area-based solutions;
- It is unclear how, as owners of Catholic VGS, the trustees have not been required to sign-off DPs that may require capital investment on their property.

## **SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

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



## Criterion 1: Quality Education Experience

### *Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) Assessment*

44. The most recent ETI inspection was carried out in January 2020. This was impacted due to Action Short of Strike (ASOS), and therefore the ETI reported that it was unable to assure parents/carers, the wider school community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the pupils.
45. The previous standard inspection was undertaken in March 2014 and inspection focused on: the quality of provision and the outcomes for pupils; the school's leadership and management; its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and standards; and the school's planning for improvement.
46. The 2014 ETI report concluded that in the areas inspected the quality of education provided by this school is *“very good and the pastoral care is outstanding. The school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained improvement.”*

### *Examination Achievements*

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

47. Table 2 shows that the proportion of St. Malachy's College pupils attaining five or more GCSEs at all evaluated thresholds has exceeded the NI average for Grammar schools in each of the years 2015/16 to 2018/19.

**Table 2 – St Malachy's College GCSE outcome trends**

Proportion of Pupils obtaining 5+ GCSEs grades A*-C				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
St Malachy's College	98	100	98	98
NI Grammar Average	97	97	96	96
Proportion of Pupils obtaining 5+ GCSEs grades A*-C (Including English and Maths)				
St Malachy's College	97	99	98	97
NI Grammar Average	94	94	94	94
Proportion of Pupils obtaining 7+ GCSEs grades A*-C				
St Malachy's College	95	93	93	92
NI Grammar Average	92	91	91	91

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

48. Table 3 shows that the proportion of Y14 pupils at St. Malachy's College obtaining two or more A-Levels at grade A\* to E has matched the NI Grammar Average of 100% in each of the four years 2015/16 to 2018/19. The table also shows that in the three years 2015/16 to 2017/18 the proportion of pupils attaining three or more A-levels or equivalent at grades A\* to C exceeded or equalled the NI average for grammar schools, however the proportion of pupils at this threshold was below the NI average in 2018/19.

**Table 3 – St Malachy's College A-Level outcome trends**

Proportion achieving 2+ A-Levels or equivalent A*-E				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
St Malachy's College	100	100	100	100
NI Grammar Average	100	100	100	100
Proportion achieving 3+ A-Levels or equivalent A*-C				
St. Malachy's College	82	78	82	76
NI Grammar Average	76	78	78	80

### *Curricular Offer*

49. The Entitlement Framework (EF) is a key component of the statutory curriculum. It has been instrumental in ensuring that all learners receive, through access to an appropriate curriculum, a high-quality education which both enriches their lives and enables them to contribute to the economy. The EF ensures that all young people, regardless of where they live, which school they attend or their gender, have equality of access to a broad and balanced range of economically relevant and individually engaging courses at Key Stage 4 and post-16.
50. In order to meet the statutory requirements of the EF, schools are required to provide access to a minimum of 21 courses at Key Stage 4 (KS4) and 21 at Post-16, of which at least one third must be general and one third applied.
51. Table 4 sets out the EF data for the 2020/21 academic year and shows that St Malachy's College is fully compliant, exceeding the statutory requirement of 21 qualifying courses at both KS4 and Post-16.

**Table 4 – St Malachy’s College Curricular Offer**

2020/21 Data	Key Stage 4 (Year 11)	Post-16 (Year 13)
Applied courses	11	10
General courses	15	15
Total	26	25

52. **At KS4** St Malachy’s College offered 26 qualifying courses. No courses were delivered in collaboration.
53. **At Post-16** St Malachy’s College offered and delivered 25 qualifying courses, with two applied courses being delivered in collaboration with Belfast Royal Academy. Five general courses were delivered in collaboration with Dominican College, Belfast Royal Academy, Belfast Model School for Girls and Belfast Boys’ Model School.

*Special Educational Needs*

54. The 2014 ETI report states that *“the boys identified with special educational needs and additional learning needs benefit from a wide range of support available to them in class, through mentoring, the learning resource centre, the pupil learning centre, homework and after-school clubs, and links with external agencies”*. The 2014 report further states the SEN team is proactive in creating specific programmes to meet personal needs of pupils and share this good practice throughout the school, classroom assistants work flexibly and effectively and provide high levels of care within and beyond the classroom.
55. The 2014 report also states that *“as a result of extensive professional development, the learning support staff and mentors use effectively a range of learning strategies to help the boys with their work and track the progress they make to inform future support”*.

*Pastoral Care*

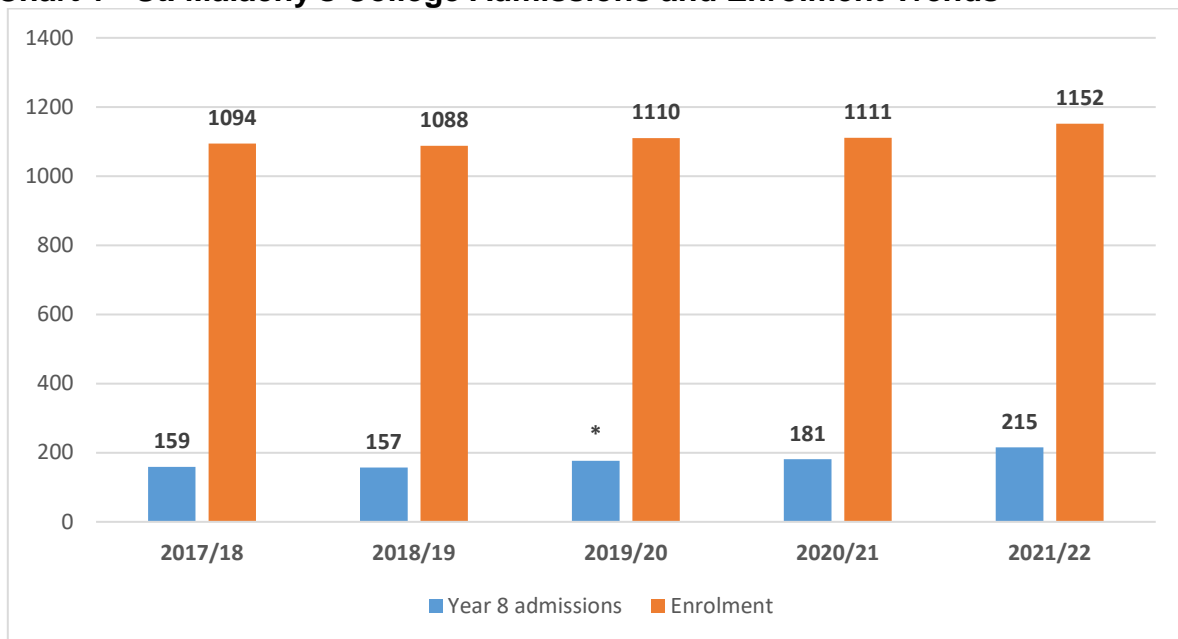
56. The 2014 ETI report commented that the pastoral care at the College is of a very high quality, through linking of the pastoral care with the curriculum the college achieves a holistic approach to support the boys in developing wider skills and dispositions in their learning. The 2014 report further states that the boys develop an appreciation for equality and diversity as well as good community relations through participation in numerous organisations locally and globally.

57. It is also stated in the 2014 ETI report that the pastoral care is kept under constant review through systematic monitoring including consultations with both pupils and parents, the college is also proactive in raising the pupils’ awareness of social and emotional challenges which they and other face through its taught pastoral provision.

**Criterion 2: Stable Enrolment Trends**

58. Chart 1 illustrates that over the past five years admissions and enrolments have steadily increased and have exceeded the school’s approved numbers year-on-year.

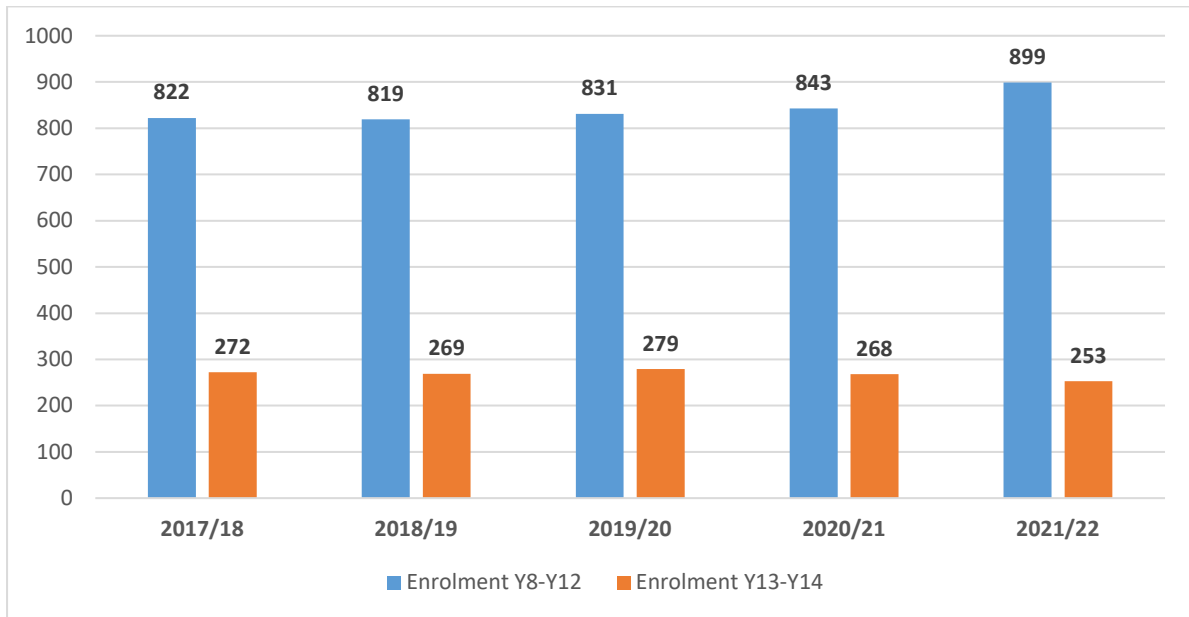
**Chart 1 - St. Malachy's College Admissions and Enrolment Trends**



Source: Annual Census Return  
 Figures include SEN pupils

59. “Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools” (SSP) recommends a minimum enrolment of 500 pupils for Y8-Y12 and 100 pupils in post-16 for a sustainable post-primary school. Chart 2 shows that the school has exceeded the recommended numbers at both Y8-Y12 and post-16 in each of the last five years.

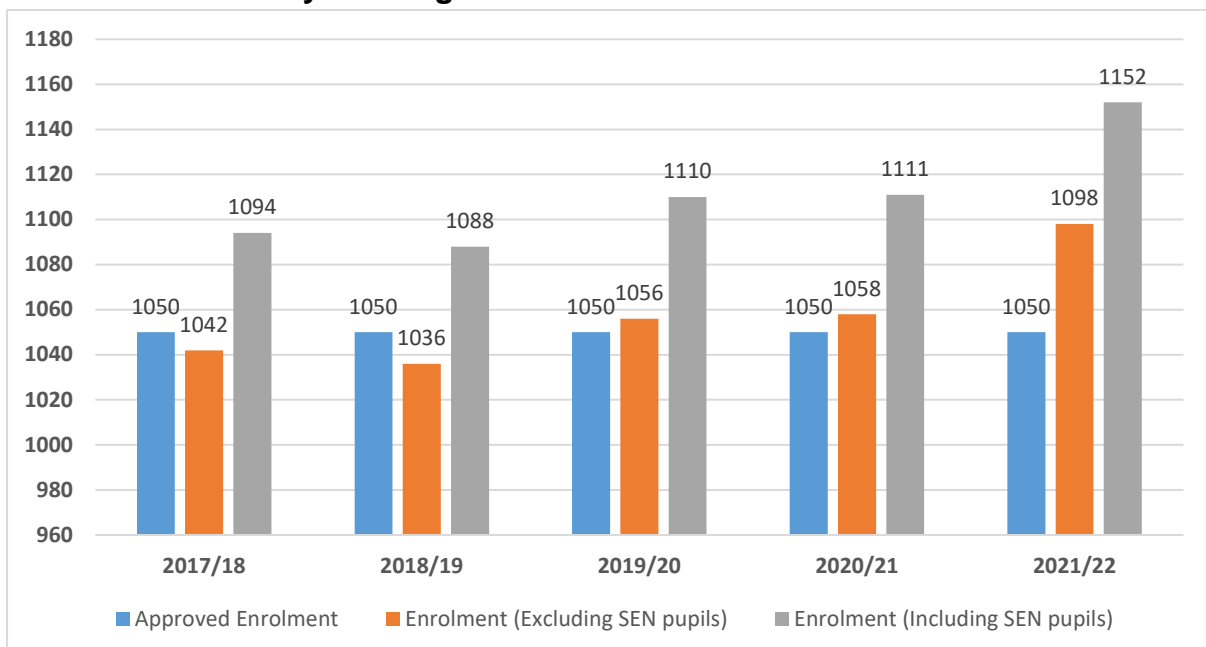
**Chart 2 - Y8-Y12 & Post-16 enrolment trends**



Source: Annual Census Return  
 Figures include SEN pupils

60. Stated pupils (SEN Stage 5) are supernumerary to the admissions and enrolment under the open enrolment procedures. Chart 3 below shows that excluding SEN pupils from the school's total enrolment, the College has exceeded its approved enrolment in each of the last three years.

**Chart 3 – St Malachy's College Enrolment trends**



Source: Annual Census Return

61. Table 5 shows that the College has been oversubscribed with first preference applications in each of the years 2017/18 to 2021/22.

**Table 5 – St Malachy’s College Application Trends**

Year	Approved	1 <sup>st</sup> Preference	Total Preferences
2017/18	150	200	239
2018/19	150	229	260
2019/20	150	197	239
2020/21	170	229	248
2021/22	170	207	295

Figures provided by the Education Authority

*Temporary Variations (TVs)*

62. If a school receives more applications than it has places available it can request a TV to its admissions and/or enrolment number from the Department’s School Admissions Team. Table 6 shows that St Malachy’s College was granted a TV to its admissions in 2019/20 as well as 2021/22 as well as a TV for its enrolment in 2020/21.
63. Due to anticipated oversubscription for Y8 places in both 2020/21 and 2021/22, the Department wrote to schools in December 2019 to invite applications from any school wishing to be considered for additional places for these years. Following an application, St Malachy’s College has been awarded an additional 20 Y8 places for both 2020/21 and 2021/22.

**Table 6 – St Malachy’s College Temporary Variations**

School Year	Approved Admissions Number	Approved Enrolment Number	Temporary Variations	
			Approved	
			(To total of)*	
			Admissions	Enrolment
<b>2021/22</b>	170*	1050	198	1092
<b>2020/21</b>	170*	1050	-	1055
<b>2019/20</b>	150	1050	173	-
<b>2018/19</b>	150	1050	-	-
<b>2017/18</b>	150	1050	-	-
<b>2016/17</b>	150	1050	-	-

\* Temporary increase in admissions number

\*\* Excludes supernumerary pupils i.e. Statemented pupils, Year 8 Appeals or pupils admitted by the Exceptional Circumstances Body

### Criterion 3: Sound Financial Position

64. The school received a total delegated budget of £5,613,407 in the 2021-22 financial year for 1,111<sup>1</sup> FTE pupils, which generates a per capita of £5,053. The average for all Grammar schools is £4,876.
65. The total FSME for the school is 257<sup>2</sup> pupils, which represents 23.13% of the total FTE, which places the school in Band 1 for funding purposes.
66. Increased enrolments for an individual school typically has limited impact on the ASB for schools – as these pupils would be educated and funded elsewhere.
67. All other financial considerations (including any in-year costs for pupil growth, in the context of a school with an approved DP to increase its enrolment) would be for the EA to consider as Funding Authority for the school.
68. As a Voluntary Grammar school, the accounting arrangements differ from those of controlled or maintained schools and there is no available data on the school's carry-forward.
69. The school's delegated budget includes a total of £324,886 for Landlord Maintenance and Administrative costs factor funding, not applicable for controlled or maintained schools.
70. The CfC asserts that the school *“has managed the resources entrusted to it for the education of its students. The school accounts are audited externally each year and all financial reports are shared with DE. There are sound financial practices within the school with a Board of Governors' Finance and Audit Committee. Despite reductions in the value of the AWPU and increases in employers' costs over the past five years, the school has continued to operate within the financial limits set by the Department of Education”*.

### Criterion 4: Strong Leadership and Management

71. The 2014 ETI report assesses the leadership and management at the college as “very good”. A summary of the assessment within the report is set out below:

---

<sup>2</sup> The school's funding allocation is based on the previous year's census data (e.g. the October 2020 census data was used to determine the 2021-22 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).

### *School Development Plan (SDP)*

- The SDP sets a clear and focused direction for the work of the school, the key priorities and targets are appropriate and informed fully by analysis of pastoral and performance data and widespread consultation while *“first-hand evidence informs self-evaluation leading to improvement by leadership at all levels”*.

### *Principal and Senior Management Team*

- *“The principal and senior management team (SMT) together provide diligent strategic leadership by promoting very effective strategies to raise standards and improve provision through the development of a whole-school culture of quality assurance and self-evaluation”*. The work of the SMT is focused on achieving high quality learning and teaching and providing continuous development for staff, while playing a leading role in enabling improvement by monitoring and mentoring the work of individual departments within a collegial culture;
- *“The principal provides outstanding strategic leadership”* and inspires confidence from staff, pupils and parents to continuing improvement with an understanding of the current and future needs of the pupils, and the local and wider community.

### *Middle Managers*

- *“The capacity of middle managers to monitor and evaluate the impact of their work is developing well”*, noting that the future work for middle managers would be to disseminate the very good and better planning throughout the school and further raise standards.

### *Board of Governors*

- *“The parents, staff and school community can have a high degree of confidence in all the aspects of governance evaluated”*;
- *“They are well informed about the work of the school and provide high levels of leadership, support and challenge to enable ongoing development and improvement”*.

72. The CfC asserts that the College is characterised by its strong leadership and management, and further states that in the Kirkland Rowell Survey parents deemed all aspects of leadership and management as excellent.



### **Criterion 5: Accessibility**

73. The CfC states that the school has good transport routes to Belfast and its hinterlands and that the distance pupils travel to school is reasonable.
74. The SSP recommends a maximum home to school travel time of 45 minutes for post-primary pupils. Map 2 illustrates the locations of pupils attending the school and shows that the majority of pupils live within five miles of the school with all pupils living within 20 miles.

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

75. The CfC asserts that the college has strong links with parents, the local community and local schools, as well as permitting local sporting organisations and community groups use of the facilities. The CfC further asserts that the College is an active member of the North Belfast Area Learning Community and has a vibrant parent-teacher organisation, close links are enjoyed with contributory primary schools.

### **Sustainability Assessment Summary**

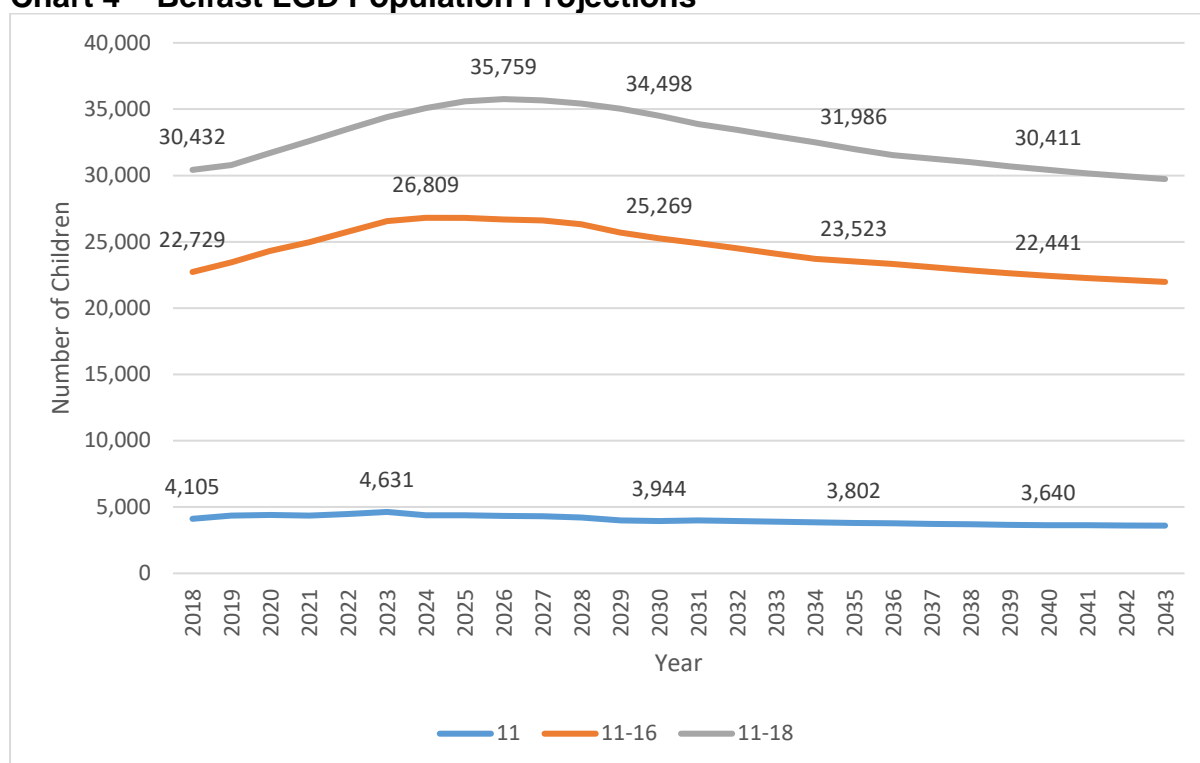
76. The ETI report (2014) concluded that the quality of education provision at St. Malachy's College is very good and pastoral care is outstanding. The school is fully compliant with its curricular offer, and examination results at both GCSE and A-Level have either met or surpassed the NI Average for Grammar schools.
77. The College has experienced increasing enrolment over the past five years and excluding SEN pupils, has exceeded its approved enrolment in the past two years. The College has been oversubscribed at first preference in all but one of the past six years.
78. The CfC asserts that the College manages its finances in line with DE limits and that its accounts are audited annually and shared with the Department.
79. The 2014 ETI report provided positive feedback for all aspects of leadership and management at the College, the CfC asserts that it is characterised by strong leadership.
80. The CfC asserts that the College has good transport routes to Belfast and its hinterlands while Map 1 illustrates that home to school travel times for pupils should be within the SSP guidance.
81. The CfC states that the College has good links with parents and the local and wider community as well as local primary schools and being an active member of the North Belfast Area Learning Community.

## Assessment of Special Considerations

### Population Projections

82. As shown in Map 2, St Malachy’s College draws the majority of its pupils from the Belfast LGD, however the map also shows pupils travelling to the school from both the Antrim and Newtownabbey LGD and the Lisburn and Castlereagh LGD.
83. Chart 4 shows NISRA population projections for post-primary aged pupils in the Belfast LGD. The Chart illustrates that the number of pupils seeking Y8 places is predicted to continue to increase until 2024, however after this point the population of 11 year olds is predicted to reduce gradually. The number of children aged 11-16 and 11-18 are projected to peak in 2024 and 2026 respectively before reducing, however it is projected that the number of pupils at these thresholds will continue to exceed 2018 levels until 2039.

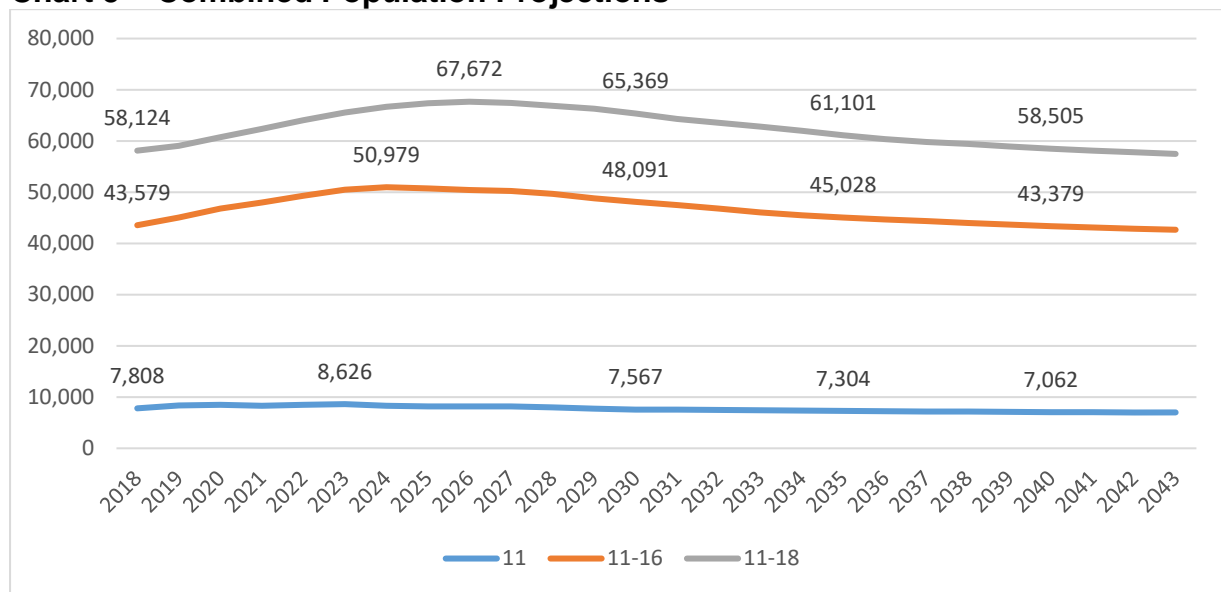
**Chart 4 – Belfast LGD Population Projections**



Source: NISRA

84. In the Lisburn and Castlereagh LGD the number of 11 year olds is also projected to peak in 2022, with the number of 11-16 and 11-18 year olds expected to peak in 2024 and 2026 respectively before gradually reducing. In the Antrim and Newtownabbey LGD the number of 11 year olds is expected to peak in 2023, the number of 11-16 year olds are expected to peak in 2024 and the number of 11-18 year olds is projected to peak in 2025 before gradually reducing. Chart 5 provides a combined view of the population projections in the three LGDs.

**Chart 5 – Combined Population Projections**



Source: NISRA

85. Chart 5 illustrates that population at each threshold is projected to peak and then begin to gradually reduce, however the chart again reflects that it will take a number of years before population falls below 2018 levels. Both charts show that the number of 11 year olds is expected to persist at a level higher than 2018 until 2029, while the number of 11-16 year olds and 11-18 year olds are not projected to reduce to 2018 levels until after 2040. These trends indicate that there will be sustained pressure for post-primary places.
86. Population projections provide an indication as to future demand, however they are not a perfect measure; the projections made by NISRA are revised periodically and are therefore subject to change. As a means to further identifying demand in the medium-term, Table 7 below shows the admissions by sector of all primary schools within the Belfast LGD since 2010/11 and provides the year in which these pupils are expected to enter post-primary school.

**Table 7 – Belfast LGD Primary School Admissions Trends**

Year of Entry to P1	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Year of Entry to Y8	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Catholic Maintained	1929	2083	2213	2165	2163	2177	2277	2186	2070	2064	2070
Controlled	1594	1677	1788	1755	1776	1843	1892	1789	1785	1770	1712
Controlled Integrated	71	80	89	90	111	116	113	115	107	118	118
GMI	146	148	149	150	147	149	149	140	147	144	147
Other Maintained	145	151	167	199	185	189	219	206	196	227	218
<b>Total</b>	<b>3885</b>	<b>4139</b>	<b>4406</b>	<b>4359</b>	<b>4382</b>	<b>4474</b>	<b>4650</b>	<b>4436</b>	<b>4305</b>	<b>4323</b>	<b>4265</b>

Source: Annual Census Return  
Inclusive of SEN pupils

87. The table shows that primary school admissions reached a peak in 2016/17 supporting the NISRA population projections, the table also reflects that even by 2027/28 the number of pupils expected to transfer to post-primary will be considerably higher than in 2017/18.
88. Table 8 below provides the combined primary school admissions for the Belfast, Antrim & Newtownabbey and Lisburn & Castlereagh LGDs, the LGDs from which St Malachy's College draws the majority of its pupils. The table again shows that the number of pupils transferring to post-primary in 2027/28 remains significantly higher than in 2017/18, again reflecting sustained medium-term pressure for places.

**Table 8 – Combined Primary School Admissions Trends**

Year of Entry to P1	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Year of Entry to Y8	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Catholic Maintained	2756	2934	3127	3093	3079	3125	3221	3078	2917	2958	2936
Controlled	3711	3891	4130	4102	4089	4146	4183	3987	4001	3962	3918
Controlled Integrated	204	228	253	258	276	265	290	281	291	279	296
GMI	250	254	264	271	279	295	302	288	295	300	294
Other Maintained	170	188	216	246	223	227	251	248	235	268	270
<b>Total</b>	<b>7091</b>	<b>7495</b>	<b>7990</b>	<b>7970</b>	<b>7946</b>	<b>8058</b>	<b>8247</b>	<b>7882</b>	<b>7739</b>	<b>7767</b>	<b>7714</b>

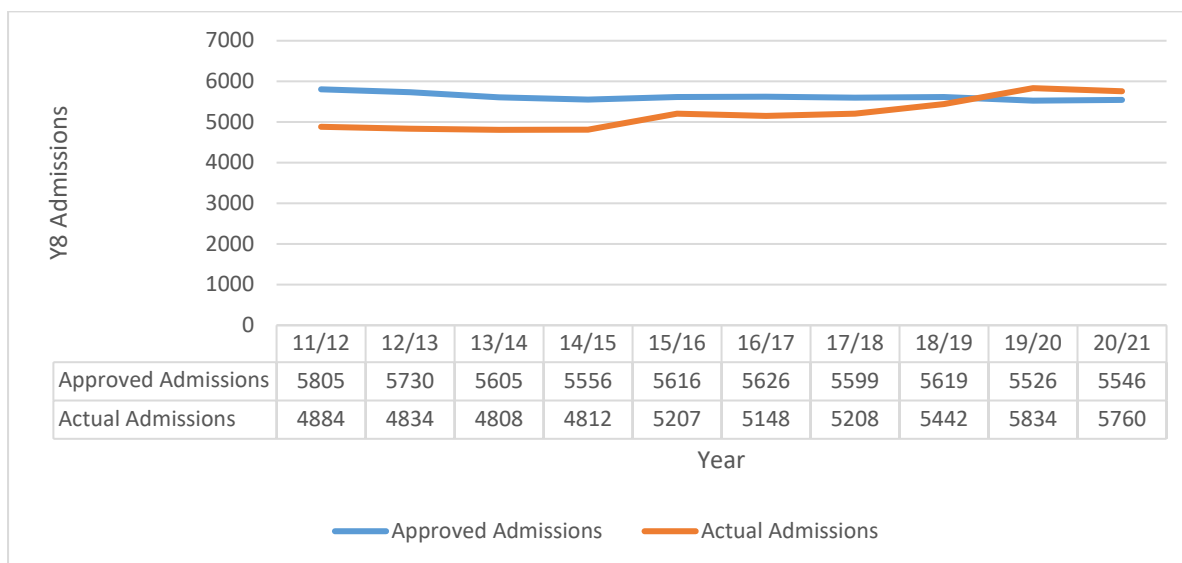
Source: Annual Census Return  
Inclusive of SEN pupils

89. The analysis of both population projections and primary school admissions indicates that demand for places at post-primary schools will continue to rise until 2023/24 before beginning to reduce. In assessing this proposal the Department must consider the ongoing pressure for places but must also be cognisant of the long-term impact that a decision to approve may have in contributing to surplus provision and any impact this may have on the wider school network.

**Pressure for post-primary places**

90. Over the past 10 years the number of pupils transferring to post-primary education has been gradually increasing, leading to heightened pressure for places in many areas. Chart 4 below shows the approved and actual admissions across all schools in the Belfast LGD, the total approved admissions is derived from schools’ published admissions number and is inclusive of any temporary uplifts granted by the Department in advance of both Transfer 2019/20 and 2020/21, actual admissions are inclusive of SEN pupils.

**Chart 4 – Greater Belfast Area Admissions Trends**

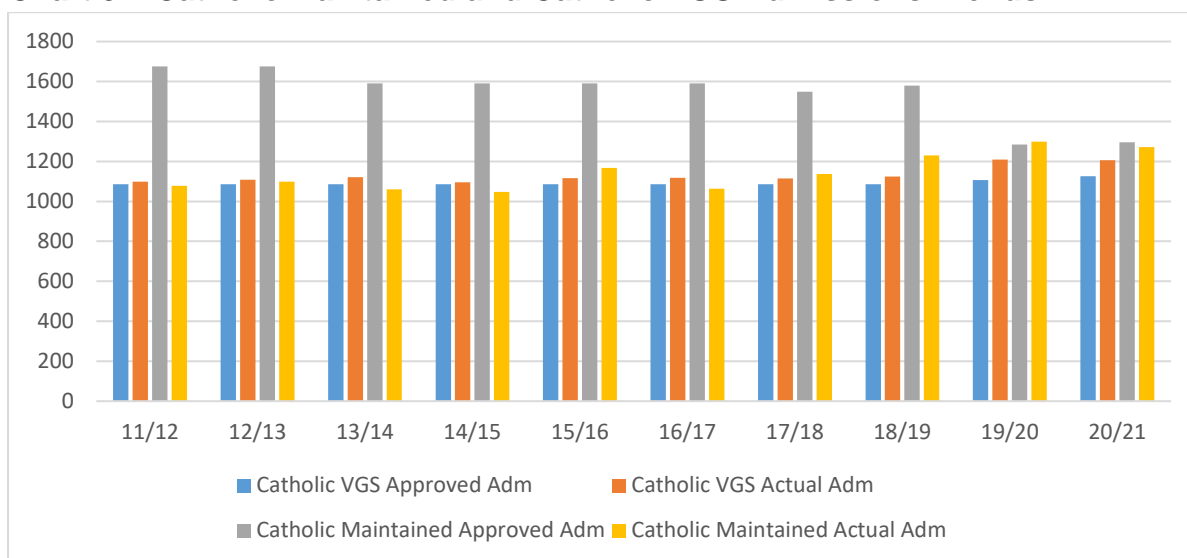


Source: Annual School Census  
Inclusive of SEN pupils

91. The Chart shows that over the 10 year period, approved admissions across the network of schools has decreased, this is largely due to the rationalisation of Catholic Maintained non-selective schools in Belfast, but also indicates a generally increasing number of pupils being admitted to Y8, with the number of actual admissions exceeding the approved admissions in both 2019/20 and 2020/21.

92. As this proposal pertains to a Catholic VGS, Chart 5 below analyses the admissions trends in both Catholic Maintained non-selective schools and Catholic VGS in the Belfast LGD, approved admissions again include any temporary uplifts to approved admissions number granted by the Department in advance of Transfer 2019/20 and 2020/21.

**Chart 5 – Catholic Maintained and Catholic VGS Admissions Trends**



Source: Annual School Census  
Inclusive of SEN pupils

93. The chart shows that over a 10 year period actual admissions at Catholic VGS have exceeded approved admissions annually, the chart also illustrates that over the same period, actual admissions to Catholic Maintained non-selective schools has only exceeded approved admissions in 2019/20.

*Transfer Exercise and Temporary Variations*

94. In recognition of an increased number of children transferring to post-primary education in recent years the Department decided to allocate additional Year 8 places to schools in advance of the admissions process commencing. The Department wrote to all post-primary schools on 11 December 2019 to invite applications from any school that wished to be considered for additional places in both 2020 and 2021. This two-year approach was designed to ensure any capital works (where necessary) are future proofed while providing certainty for schools in relation to their admissions number. A similar approach has also been taken for 2022.

95. The Department has so far dealt with the increased pressure for post-primary places by way of allocating temporary increases to approved numbers and TVs; however TVs are designed to cater for *temporary* (i.e. one year) pressure. Use of temporary increases to approved admissions to deal with pressure across 2019/20, 2020/21 and

2021/22 has led to some schools exceeding not only their approved admissions, but also their approved enrolment; with the increased demand expected to persist, continued use of TVs and temporary increases to approved numbers may cause some schools difficulties in terms of staffing, planning and accommodation.

96. The pattern of TVs at St Malachy's College is illustrated at Table 6; the table shows that the College was granted a temporary increase to approved numbers in 2020/21 and 2021/22 and TVs to its admissions in 2019/20 and 2021/22 (above the temporary increase to admissions), the College also received a temporary variation to its enrolment in both 2020/21 and 2021/22.
97. The granting of TVs is a tightly controlled power and the Department takes account of its responsibility to all schools (i.e. those with available places) in the interests of fairness and maintaining a viable schools estate. In considering a TV the Department establishes if there is another school with available places within reasonable travelling distance of a child's home and within the same chosen sector, whereby sector is defined as denominational; non-denominational; integrated; and Irish-medium. As the same curriculum is delivered at all grant-aided schools, no distinction is drawn between grammar and non-grammar schools.
98. It is important to recognise that much of Belfast is densely populated and subject to heavy congestion at peak times, additionally, public transport routes may not always be available to allow for direct travel across the area, particularly on the periphery of the city.

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### *Impact on Neighbouring Provision*

99. It is asserted in the CfC that approval of this DP will not have a detrimental impact on any other post-primary provision as the other schools likely to be affected are constantly over-subscribed for admissions.

### *Grammar Schools*

100. Table 1 shows that there are 17 alternative Grammar schools within a five mile mapping radius of St Malachy's College. In each of the last five years, each of these grammar schools have admitted to, or in excess of their approved admissions number with only two exceptions: Strathearn School with an approved admissions number of 110, admitted 109 pupils in 2018/19; and Dominican College with an approved admissions number of 150, admitted 148 pupils in 2016/17.
101. Table 9 below shows first and all preference data for alternative grammar schools within a five mile radius of St Malachy's College.

**Table 9 – Alternative Grammar Schools Preference Trends**

	17/18		18/19		19/20		20/21		21/22	
	1st	All	1st	All	1st	All	1st	All	1st	All
Grosvenor Grammar School	205	246	191	225	195	231	192	234	313	434
Wellington College	89	155	103	240	120	234	106	231	128	353
Bloomfield Collegiate	106	162	92	190	104	192	99	187	80	189
Campbell College	127	167	119	163	118	150	119	153	97	177
Methodist College	221	279	243	321	256	355	253	367	261	599
The Royal Belfast Academical Institution	105	188	139	227	122	211	126	227	118	344
Belfast Royal Academy	241	268	260	300	255	292	246	275	304	473
Strathearn School	116	124	126	160	130	149	138	149	115	213
Victoria College	99	150	163	260	138	255	116	213	94	250
Hunterhouse College	95	159	82	205	107	224	64	174	80	201
<b>Catholic VGS</b>										
St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School	177	225	211	285	187	233	180	241	171	235
St Dominic's High School	184	202	189	207	214	238	201	221	220	306
St Malachy's College	200	239	229	260	197	239	229	248	207	295
Dominican College	158	186	167	193	178	221	165	199	178	253
Rathmore Grammar School	262	274	234	246	276	300	234	251	274	457
Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School	164	203	153	178	195	237	173	206	201	357
Our Lady And St Patrick's College	200	225	208	231	196	237	211	247	278	375

Source: EA Admissions Office

102. Table 9 illustrates that each of the Catholic VGS have been oversubscribed with first preference applications in each of the last four years, with all but St Mary's Christian Brothers' GS being oversubscribed with first preferences for 2021/22.
103. Each of the alternative grammar schools have been oversubscribed with total preferences in each of the past four years and at the close of the admissions process for 2021/22 are oversubscribed with total preferences once again.
104. Given the demand for places at these schools, it is reasonable to conclude that approval of this DP would not significantly impact upon alternative grammar provision.

*Controlled Secondary*

105. Table 1 shows that in 2020/21 there were a combined 959 available places in controlled non-selective schools within a five mile mapping radius of St Malachy's College, with 324 of these available places at Breda Academy and 549 at Glengormley HS.
106. While controlled schools are non-denominational in nature, analysis of enrolments at these schools show that the proportion of pupils from a Roman Catholic background is typically lower than two percent, with exceptions in Ashfield Boys' HS, Ashfield Girls'



HS and Breda Academy where in 2020/21 the proportions of pupils from a Roman Catholic background were 2.7%, 5.4% and 8.6% respectively. Conversely, in the past five years, no fewer than 97% of St Malachy's College pupils are from a Roman Catholic background.

107. Map 2 shows that a number of pupils attending St Malachy's College live in and around Breda Academy, as this school has the highest proportion of pupils from the Roman Catholic tradition among Controlled non-selective schools, approval of this DP may marginally impact on this school.
108. With the low proportion of pupils from the Roman Catholic tradition in the remaining alternative controlled secondary schools, it is reasonable to determine that they are unlikely to be negatively impacted in the event of approval of this DP.

*Catholic Maintained Secondary*

109. Map 1 illustrates that there are eight Catholic Maintained secondary schools within a five mile mapping radius of St Malachy's College and St Colm's HS situated just outside of this radius. Table 10 below, shows that in 2020/21 these schools had a combined 817 available places, with 652 of these split across three schools: De La Salle College; All Saints College; and St Colm's HS.

**Table 10 – Alternative Catholic Maintained Secondary Available Places**

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
St Louise's Comprehensive College*	894	883	846	15	42
Mercy College Belfast	214	221	119	51	0
St Genevieve's High School	0	7	0	0	0
De La Salle College	13	147	178	228	241
St Joseph's College	101	83	64	48	6
Blessed Trinity College		116	139	100	92
All Saints College				208	213
St Colm's High School	323	333	299	247	198
Edmund Rice College	71	97	54	23	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>1616</b>	<b>1887</b>	<b>1699</b>	<b>920</b>	<b>817</b>

Source: Annual Census Return

\*DP 570 – approved 18 July 2017 – approved enrolment from 2,280 to 1,500 – came into effect 1 September 2019

110. Table 11 below shows the Y8 admissions of these schools across each of the past five years, figures in red denote instances where admissions are lower than a school's published admissions number. The table shows that in 2020/21 three schools did not admit to their approved number, however Blessed Trinity College did exceed its normal admissions number (195). The table also shows that in both 2019/20 and 2020/21 the total number of Y8 pupils at these schools exceeded total approved admissions.

**Table 11 – Alternative Catholic Maintained Secondary Admissions trends**

	16/17		17/18		18/19		19/20		20/21	
	PAN	Y8	PAN	Y8	PAN	Y8	PAN	Y8	PAN	Y8
St Louise's Comprehensive College	356	194	356	236	356	243	220	238	220	231
Mercy College Belfast	110	67	115	76	115	118	115	146	115	139
St Genevieve's High School	160	162	160	164	160	161	160	171	160	162
De La Salle College	163	174	163	109	163	127	163	137	163	131
St Joseph's College	120	112	120	123	150	154	150	154	150	164
Blessed Trinity College	N/A	N/A	195	204	195	165	195	208	205*	198
All Saints College	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	150	142	150	138
St Colm's High School	132	46	132	78	132	95	132	103	132	108
Edmund Rice College	120	85	115	120	115	128	115	143	115	131
<b>Total</b>	<b>1161</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>1356</b>	<b>1110</b>	<b>1386</b>	<b>1191</b>	<b>1400</b>	<b>1442</b>	<b>1410</b>	<b>1402</b>

Source: Annual Census Return

Inclusive of SEN pupils

\*Temporary increase of approved admissions number

111. Table 12 below shows first preference and total preferences for these schools across each of the past five years.

**Table 12 – Alternative Catholic Maintained Secondary Preference trends**

	17/18		18/19		19/20		20/21		21/22	
	1st	All	1st	All	1st	All	1st	All	1st	All
St Louise's Comprehensive College	188	224	200	241	219	275	263	309	271	343
Mercy College Belfast	63	66	82	106	112	146	114	149	126	162
St Genevieve's High School	158	179	139	162	158	206	131	173	112	170
De La Salle College	76	103	72	125	105	126	85	124	68	98
St Joseph's College	59	100	92	141	74	145	84	146	92	170
Blessed Trinity College	154	187	116	158	130	182	119	188	115	194
All Saints College	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	102	125	80	122	62	110
St Colm's High School	57	61	70	75	85	96	79	89	81	91
Edmund Rice College	94	121	120	151	138	169	145	180	98	149

Source: EA Admissions Office

112. Figures in Table 12 in red indicate undersubscription, where the number of preferences is less than the published admissions number in a given year. The Table illustrates the level of undersubscription among alternative Catholic Maintained

Secondary schools over the past five years and when considered with Table 11 indicates that many of these schools admit pupils for whom they were not first preference.

113. Two of the four schools undersubscribed with total preferences, Blessed Trinity College and All Saints College, are relatively new schools having opened in 2017/18 and 2019/20 respectively. The two remaining schools, St Colms' HS and De La Salle College have been undersubscribed with total applications in each of the past five years. St Colm's HS, De La Salle College and All Saints College are located in West Belfast, Map 2 shows that St Malachy's College attracts a large number of its pupils from these areas; Blessed Trinity College is situated in North Belfast.
114. Table 13 shows the enrolment of four of the alternative Catholic Maintained Secondary schools excluding SEN pupils. These four schools have each failed to meet one or both of the SSP minimum enrolment thresholds in at least one of the past five years.

**Table 13 – Alternative Catholic Maintained Secondary Enrolments**

		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Mercy College Belfast	Y8-Y12	333	343	402	460	509
	Post-16	103	86	129	146	152
St Colm's High School	Y8-Y12	269	288	321	370	418
	Post-16	88	59	60	63	64
Edmund Rice College	Y8-Y12	426	465	510	541	551
	Post-16	103	88	113	106	116
St Joseph's College	Y8-Y12	471	507	547	589	627
	Post-16	92	74	53	73	87

Source: Annual Census Return

\*\*Excluding SEN pupils

115. The table shows that in each of the past five years, each of the four schools has seen an annual increase to their enrolment in Y8-Y12 to the extent that the only school not meeting the SSP enrolment threshold at this level in 2020/21 is St Colm's HS; this gradual increase to Y8-Y12 enrolment is largely reflective of the increasing demand for post-primary places as illustrated in Chart 4.
116. Table 13 also shows that sixth form enrolments at both St Colm's HS and St Joseph's College have not met the SSP minimum in any of the past five years, while Edmund Rice College has been marginally above the threshold in four of the analysed years.
117. The evidence presented shows that there are currently available places within Catholic Maintained non-selective schools, while current levels of demand indicate that it is unlikely that approval of this DP will have a significant impact on most alternative Catholic Maintained schools in the medium-term. Longer term impacts may however be more pronounced should the population projections be accurate, particularly in schools close to St Malachy's College such as Blessed Trinity College.

### Alternative Integrated Provision

118. As shown in Table 1, there are four alternative integrated post-primary schools within a five mile mapping radius of St Malachy's College. In 2020/21 these four schools had a combined 234 available places, with 210 of these at Malone Integrated College.
119. Table 14 shows the preference trends at the alternative integrated post-primaries. Figures in red indicate that a school has received fewer applications than its approved admissions number. The table shows that both Lagan College and Hazelwood College have been significantly oversubscribed with first preferences in each of the years 2017/18 to 2021/22, that Priory IC has been oversubscribed with total applications in each of these years, and that Malone IC has been consistently undersubscribed over the same five year period

**Table 14 – Alternative integrated provision preference trends**

	17/18		18/19		19/20		20/21		21/22	
	1st	All	1st	All	1st	All	1st	All	1st	All
Lagan College	365	456	362	468	423	537	449	516	322	438
Hazelwood College	165	186	195	213	236	264	256	294	202	234
Malone Integrated College	50	65	69	105	85	125	83	126	61	103
Priory College	78	135	79	230	84	212	72	180	78	143

Source: EA Admissions Office

120. Table 15 provides the enrolments of alternative integrated schools excluding SEN pupils over the past five years, figures in red indicate enrolments below the SSP minimum enrolment threshold. The table shows that both Lagan College and Hazelwood College have consistently exceeded the SSP minimum enrolment thresholds at both Y8-Y12 and post-16.

**Table 15 – Alternative integrated provision enrolment trends**

		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Lagan College	Y8-Y12	984	990	1005	1029	1034
	Post-16	199	222	271	272	292
Hazelwood College	Y8-Y12	706	731	780	835	848
	Post-16	166	160	152	138	144
Malone Integrated College	Y8-Y12	370	347	385	456	519
	Post-16	132	107	92	64	71
Priory College	Y8-Y12	453	466	504	523	521
	Post-16	74	45	63	77	78

Source: Annual Census Return  
Excluding SEN pupils

121. Table 15 also shows that Priory IC has exceeded the minimum enrolment threshold at Y8-Y12 in each of the last three years but remains below the threshold for a sustainable sixth form. The table also illustrates that the number of pupils enrolled in Y8-Y12 at Malone IC has only exceeded 500 in 2020/21 and the school has not met the SSP minimum enrolment for a sustainable sixth form in the past three years.
122. Priory IC is situated in Holywood; Map 2 shows that while there are pupils of St Malachy's College residing in proximity to the school, the number is not significant. The Map also shows that St Malachy's College draws a large number of pupils from South Belfast and when viewed alongside Map 2 shows that there is a large concentration of pupils of St Malachy's College travelling from the areas surrounding Malone IC.
123. Given the evidenced oversubscription of first preference applications at both Lagan College and Hazelwood College it is not likely that approval of this DP will impact these schools. Priory IC has been consistently oversubscribed with total applications and given its location and the low numbers of pupils attending St Malachy's College from the area it is unlikely that approval of this DP would significantly impact on the school. In the medium-term it is unlikely that approval of this proposal will significantly impact alternative integrated provision, however Malone IC's undersubscription and location indicate that there is potential for some long-term impact should this proposal be approved.

#### *Other Maintained*

124. The only Irish-Medium post-primary currently in Belfast is Colaiste Feirste, the school has seen increasing demand and has had a DP approved to increase its approved numbers. The demand for the school and access to an Irish-medium education is such that approval of this proposal is not likely to significantly impact upon the school.

#### *Educational Impact*

125. The CfC states that in increasing approved numbers, the school "*will be able to offer greater opportunities for more students to fulfil their full and true potential. Furthermore, by expanding the pupil population with 20 pupils per year over the next seven years, the College will be able to develop and invest in a curriculum which is even more fit for purpose, skilling pupils from North Belfast to meet the current and future needs of the Northern Ireland and global economies. North Belfast post primary students would be able to avail of a Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Maths (STEAM) educational provision, learning through the latest digital technology, working in partnership with local industries and linking directly with external agencies and third level institutions*".

### Links to Other DPs

126. As previously summarised in this submission, EA commentary in respect of this proposal asserts that in response to an identified increased demand for post-primary places in the Greater Belfast Area, the APLG established a sub-group which recognised the need for expansion in the Greater Belfast Area. All proposals pertaining to the work of the sub-group have now been published, each DP proposes an increase to approved numbers with the exception of DP 640 in respect of Breda Academy, which proposes a decrease to approved admissions and enrolment. The proposals, date of publication by the EA and current and proposed numbers can be viewed in Table 16.

**Table 16 – Greater Belfast Area Development Proposals**

DP	School	Date Published	Current Adm	Proposed Adm	Current enrolment	Proposed Enrolment	Change to Adm	Change to Enrolment
608	Strathearn School	21/11/2019	110	120	770	840	<b>10</b>	<b>70</b>
619	St. Malachy's College	27/02/2020	150	170	1050	1190	<b>20</b>	<b>140</b>
620	Our Lady And St Patrick's College	27/02/2020	180	190	1260	1330	<b>10</b>	<b>70</b>
621	Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School	27/02/2020	110	130	770	910	<b>20</b>	<b>140</b>
638	Ashfield Girls' High School	25/03/2021	113	130	660	790	<b>17</b>	<b>130</b>
639	Ashfield Boys' High School	25/03/2021	110	140	700	900	<b>30</b>	<b>200</b>
640	Breda Academy	25/03/2021	170	140	1000	900	<b>-30</b>	<b>-100</b>
641	Grosvenor Grammar School	25/03/2021	155	175	1075	1225	<b>20</b>	<b>150</b>
642	Wellington College	25/03/2021	110	120	770	800	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>
643	Bloomfield Collegiate	25/03/2021	100	110	710	770	<b>10</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>1308</b>	<b>1425</b>	<b>8765</b>	<b>9655</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>890</b>

127. As Table 16 shows, the linked DPs include: three Controlled Secondary schools; three Controlled Grammar schools; one non-denominational VGS; and, inclusive of St Malachy’s College, three Catholic VGS. Table 17 shows the total variance in approved numbers by management type should all 10 proposals be approved.

**Table 17 – Variance of proposals**

Management Type	Y8	Y8-Y12	Post-16	Enrolment
Controlled Secondary	17	85	145	230
Controlled Grammar	40	200	40	240
Non-denominational VGS	10	50	20	70
Catholic VGS	50	250	150	350

128. In addition to the DPs listed above, the Department is aware of two further proposals for Colaiste Feirste (DP 590) and Assumption GS, Ballynahinch (DP 618) that have been brought forward as a result of the work of the APLG sub-group. DP 590 and DP 618 were published by the EA on 23 January 2020 and 26 February 2020 respectively. As DP 590 related to Irish Medium provision, it was determined that there would not be significant impact on alternate sectors and therefore a decision was taken by the former Minister, Peter Weir MLA, to approve the proposal on 27 November 2020.

129. Although Assumption GS draws pupils from South and East Belfast, analysis shows that the school draws a significant number of pupils from the Newry, Mourne & Down and Ards & North Down LGDs; specifically the lower Ards Peninsula, Downpatrick and Newcastle. On 27 January 2021 the EA published four linked DPs (DP 604-607) proposing the effective amalgamation of three schools in Downpatrick: St Mary’s HS; De La Salle HS; and St Patrick’s GS. Due to Assumption GS’ location and the significant overlap of the school’s catchment area with the catchment areas of the three Downpatrick schools, it has been excluded from the assessment of impacts within the greater-Belfast suite of proposals. The assessment of any area impacts will be determined by considering DP 618 concurrently with DPs 604-607; submissions regarding these proposals will be brought to you separately.

*Resources*

130. The CfC states that aside from work already proceeding “*the proposed increase in admission and enrolment numbers will not require any additional accommodation or capital injection from DE*”.

131. Additionally, the College may still apply for TVs over and above its new approved numbers; as evidenced in Table 6, the College applied for and was granted a TV to its admissions in 2019/20 and a TV to its enrolment in 2020/21, as well as temporary uplifts to its admissions in advance of both the 2020/21 and 2021/22 transfer process

meaning that it has already seen a substantial increase in its overall numbers before consideration of this DP. Given the numbers involved in this DP the need for future additional accommodation may therefore yet prove necessary as the full impacts of these additional places emerge.

132. While this is the case with any proposed increase to approved numbers, the pertinence in this instance is that it is the Trustees, and not the BoG that own the land and buildings of the school, therefore any capital requirements must be agreed with the Trustees. As the Trustees have not provided any clear support for this proposal, it would therefore be unsafe to presume that support would follow for any future capital works resulting from an approval of this DP.

## **CONCLUSION**

133. It is evident that St Malachy's College is a popular school, with applications to the school consistently resulting in oversubscription for Y8 places and an enrolment comfortably in excess of the SSP minimum enrolment thresholds for a sustainable post-primary school.
134. The issue of increased demand for post-primary places, particularly in the Belfast LGD is also of importance. Evidence presented within this submission has demonstrated that the current level of demand will begin to decrease in 2024/25 however there will remain a period of sustained pressure for admissions until 2029/30 and for enrolment beyond this point should population projections be accurate.
135. The College has also been granted temporary uplifts to its admissions and TVs to its admissions and enrolment over the past four years which is suggestive of pressure in the area.
136. Also of consideration is the recent reconfiguration of Catholic Maintained provision in the Belfast area is settling in with some DPs only now fully phasing in new approved enrolments. In spite of the overall reduction to approved enrolments across Catholic Maintained non-selective schools as a consequence of previous area planning activity, evidence in this submission shows that there are still available places and capacity to admit more pupils.
137. Overall, the case for this DP is finely balanced, with clear evidence of sustained demand for places in the area along with the College's sustainability in favour of a decision to approve. However, St Malachy's College is placed in close proximity to alternative Catholic Maintained provision; the recent nature of the amalgamation of two of these schools also suggests that they are continuing to develop.



## RECOMMENDATION

138. It is the Department's position that a published DP should be assessed, and that assessment of this DP is important in the context of the delivery of an area solution for the Greater Belfast Area. That assessment has shown that there is some rationale for approval. However the manner in which this proposal has been brought forward, with an absence of compelling evidence of engagement with the Trustees prior to its publication, or otherwise of their support, means that even if you are minded to approve the proposal, no assurances can be provided to you that the DP decision can be implemented in line with the legal requirement set out in Article 14(9) of The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986.

- i. Accordingly my recommendation is that you do not approve DP 619 – St. Malachy's College will increase its admissions number from 150 to 170, with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 1,050 to 1,190, with effect from 1 September 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter, and that you.
- ii. Agree that this submission (with appropriate redactions) be published on the Department's website once the EA and the school have been informed.



**Bill Stevenson** ☎ 59310  
**Area Planning Team (East Region)**  
[Bill.Stevenson@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Bill.Stevenson@education-ni.gov.uk)

CC  
*Mark Browne*  
*Lianne Patterson*  
*Linsey Farrell*  
*John Smith*  
*Faustina Graham*  
*Janis Scallon*  
*Lorraine Finlay*  
*Eamonn Broderick*  
*Bill Stevenson*  
*Sharon Taylor*  
*Scott Harbinson*  
*APPT Correspondence*  
*Press Office*

Development Proposal

EDUCATION AUTHORITY

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 619

ST MALACHY'S COLLEGE

Notice is hereby given that a Proposal under Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 has been submitted to the Education Authority by the Board of Governors of St Malachy's College, to the effect that:

**St Malachy's College will increase its admissions number from 150 to 170, with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 1,050 to 1,190, with effect from 1 September 2020, 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, Grahamsbridge Road, Dundonald, BT16 1HS, between the hours of 9.00 am and 4.30 pm and [www.eani.org.uk/school-management/area-planning](http://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/area-planning).

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](mailto: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).

**Sara Long**  
**Chief Executive**

**Case for Change**  
**CASE for CHANGE – Supporting Information**

**SUMMARY/OVERVIEW**

AREA PLANNING DISTRICT	Belfast
DP NUMBER	DP 619
PROPOSER	The Board of Governors, St Malachy's College 36 Antrim Road, Belfast, BT15 2AE  Contact: Paul McBride Tel: 02890 748285
SCHOOL(S) NAME	St Malachy's College
SCHOOL REFERENCE	142-0030
TYPE	Voluntary Grammar School, All Boys, 11-19
MANAGEMENT	Catholic Voluntary Grammar School
DP PUBLICATION DATE	Week commencing 24 February 2020
PROPOSAL	St Malachy's College will increase its admissions number from 150 to 170, with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 1,050 to 1,190, with effect from 1 September 2020, 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><b>PROPOSER</b></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>St Malachy's College's Case for Change is set out in pages 7 to 53.</p> <p><i>Governors</i></p> <p>The Case for Change/Development Proposal was first placed on the Board of Governors agenda for discussion in April 2019. The Board of Governors were consulted and were regularly updated on progress at Board of Governors meetings. At their meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019 the Board of Governors unanimously agreed to approve St Malachy's College Case for Change and agreed that it should be forwarded to Area Planning.</p> <p><i>All staff</i></p> <p>Teaching and support staff were consulted on the Case for Change on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019 through presentations and question and answer sessions. Staff were given the opportunity to complete a consultation questionnaire. 97 staff returned completed questionnaires. All 97 unanimously confirmed that they agreed that the College should seek to permanently increase its admissions number from 150 to 170. The staff are very supportive of the plan. Some of the comments received include:</p> <p>“As a member of staff who had the pleasure to have his two children educated at the College, I believe that an extension in the numbers as proposed would enable further students to benefit from an excellent educational offering and I would strongly support this proposal.”</p> <p>“I feel this increase would have a positive impact on the educational experience of students.”</p>
--	---

“I believe it is vitally important to increase numbers for admission to enhance the learning opportunity for those children within the local community who miss out.”

***Parents***

Parents were consulted in May 2019, through meetings with representative groups including the “Friends of St Malachy’s” Parents Association and other focus groups. Parents freely expressed their views and completed a feedback questionnaire. They were very supportive and felt passionately regarding the plan to request an increase in the College’s admissions number. Evidence from the consultation showed overwhelming support from the parental body on the need for increased enrolment numbers as set out in the ‘Case for Change’.

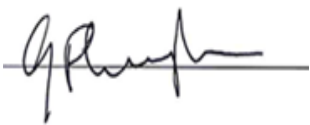
Some of the comments received include:

“I feel that it is vitally important to offer the additional places in order to accommodate children from the local area. Those applicants who attain a B grade are as able and deserve the chance to attend the Catholic Grammar school of their preferred choice.”

“I feel it is important that St Malachy’s is able to provide boys with a B1 the opportunity to continue their education in a grammar school environment. I also strongly feel that it is a shame that in the local area there are boys with a B1 who cannot continue their education in a Catholic based school whereas girls with a C2 are accepted into the female equivalent.”

***Pupils***

The Student Body, Student Council and Senior Prefect Team were consulted on the Case for Change through a series of presentations at Year Group assemblies and to the Student Council at the beginning of June 2019. Pupils were then issued a consultation survey seeking their views. The overwhelming response was very supportive for the Case for Change. 73% of 455 pupils surveyed agreed that the College should seek to increase its admissions number from 150 to


	<p>170, with 86% agreeing that the College should offer as many places as possible for pupils with A or B grades.</p> <p>Pupils showed overwhelming support in favour of increasing the College's admissions number as set out in the College Development Proposal. Pupils cited that the proposal, if successful, would enable a wider curriculum provision, allowing more young people the opportunity to avail of the opportunities afforded by St Malachy's College.</p>
<p>CONFIRMATION BY THE PROPOSER</p>	<p>I confirm that the school's BOGs, Staff and Parents of pupils were consulted on and Equality Screening of the proposal has been carried out and the statutory requirements of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 (where appropriate) have been considered.</p> <p>NAME: Sir Gerry Loughran</p> <p>OFFICE HELD: Chair of BOG</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>SIGNED: DATE: 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019</p>

#### ASSOCIATED PROPOSALS

<p>DP XXX</p> <p>Published DD/MM/YY</p>	<p><b>Proposed to ... with effect from ... or as soon as possible thereafter</b></p>
---	--

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

## EDUCATION AUTHORITY COMMENTARY ON PRE-PUBLICATION STATUTORY CONSULTATION

<p><b>THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY</b></p>	<p>I confirm that the schools which the EA consider might be impacted by this proposal were consulted on 13 November 2019.</p> <p><b>NAME:</b> Kim Scott</p> <p><b>OFFICE HELD:</b> Acting Director of Education</p> <p><b>SIGNED:</b> </p> <p><b>DATE:</b> 20 February 2020</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.</p> <p>Summary of views received (number of responses, recurring themes, petitions, community support or opposition).</p>	<p>In accordance with Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (In accordance with Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, a copy of the proposal were sent on 13 November 2019, to schools which, in the opinion of the Authority, might be affected by the proposal. A total of 294 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 11 December 2019.</p> <p>13 responses from local schools were received.</p>																																										
<p>Responses/Assurances in respect of issues raised during consultation.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Respondent</th> <th>Supports the Proposal</th> <th>Does Not Support the Proposal</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School</td> <td>1</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Assumption Grammar School</td> <td>1</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Blessed Trinity College</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>De La Salle College , Belfast</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Edmund Rice College</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Our Lady and St Patrick's College</td> <td>1</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Royal Belfast Academical Institution</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St Joseph's PS, Carryduff</td> <td>1</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>St Malachy's College</td> <td>1</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School, Belfast</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St Patrick's Academy, Lisburn</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other - Edmund Rice School Trust</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other – Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Respondent	Supports the Proposal	Does Not Support the Proposal	Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School	1		Assumption Grammar School	1		Blessed Trinity College		1	De La Salle College , Belfast		1	Edmund Rice College		1	Our Lady and St Patrick's College	1		The Royal Belfast Academical Institution		1	St Joseph's PS, Carryduff	1		St Malachy's College	1		St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School, Belfast		1	St Patrick's Academy, Lisburn		1	Other - Edmund Rice School Trust		1	Other – Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)		1
Respondent	Supports the Proposal	Does Not Support the Proposal																																									
Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School	1																																										
Assumption Grammar School	1																																										
Blessed Trinity College		1																																									
De La Salle College , Belfast		1																																									
Edmund Rice College		1																																									
Our Lady and St Patrick's College	1																																										
The Royal Belfast Academical Institution		1																																									
St Joseph's PS, Carryduff	1																																										
St Malachy's College	1																																										
St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School, Belfast		1																																									
St Patrick's Academy, Lisburn		1																																									
Other - Edmund Rice School Trust		1																																									
Other – Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)		1																																									
<p>Dates of EA meetings e.g. Education Committee/ Board etc.</p>	<p>The main themes of those supporting the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examination of primary school enrolment in South and East Belfast shows that there will be further increasing</li> </ul>																																										
<p><u>Details of issues raised by members of EA Board</u></p>																																											

	<p>demand for Catholic post-primary places from 2020-2026 and beyond.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The oversubscription in primary schools in East Belfast, South East Belfast, Lisburn and Castlereagh and North Down and Ards is well documented and appears in the Action Plan for three local Government Districts: Belfast and Lisburn and Castlereagh, North Down and Ards, all of which are served by St Malachy's College.</li> <li>• It is clear that the additional places allocated to primary schools now need to be matched at post-primary level to ensure that there is '<i>capacity within the sector to meet the increase in pupil numbers</i>' (Annual Action Plan for Primary, Post-Primary and Special Schools April 2019 - March 2021).</li> <li>• Oversubscription in Catholic post-primary schools has been evident for years with many children travelling excessively to access their allocated school.</li> <li>• The respondent did not object but wanted it noted the need for more integrated post-primary places in the area.</li> </ul> <p>The main themes of those not in support of the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school aged population across Northern Ireland generally, and the Greater Belfast (and Lisburn) area specifically, has been in a state of flux.</li> <li>• The area sub-group set up by the EA to determine a strategic solution for the Greater Belfast Region has not completed its work at this time and has further strategic work to complete.</li> <li>• Over a number of years there was a precipitous decrease in the number of children transferring from primary to post-primary schools.</li> <li>• Any long term solution to any increased demand should be agreed at Area Planning level and be applied on a fair and equitable basis across the whole area. This must serve the interests of all, not just a few.</li> </ul>
--	--




	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of Catholic grammar schools do not fill with A and B grades. In reality, each grammar fills their admissions number by accepting pupils of all grades, starting with A's and working downwards.</li> <li>• While the overall pupil population decreased, the enrolment into grammar schools remained more or less constant, as did their social make up (as indicated by FSM entitlement).</li> <li>• The proposals fly in the face of any attempt to formulate a Strategic Plan and undermine a variety of strategic working groups charged with proposing solutions for the future of educational provision in Northern Ireland.</li> <li>• This year (2019) in the Greater Belfast area alone grammar schools were permitted to admit 145 extra pupils through temporary variations to their enrolment. Of these 119 children could have been catered for in all ability schools. This decision alone equates to the transfer of approximately £507,500 from the secondary to the grammar sector. At a time of huge financial pressure such an officially sanctioned hemorrhage of funds from the secondary to the grammar sector is unsustainable and will lead, once more, to mass redundancies in secondary schools.</li> <li>• If permission is given for over-subscribed schools to permanently expand this would represent, from the development proposals own figures, grammar schools "asset stripping" £1,890,000 per year from the secondary sector. In addition, as grammar schools are permitted to levy a so-called "voluntary contribution", even a £100 contribution will yield an additional £54,000 for such schools.</li> <li>• The transfer of funds from all ability schools to the selective sector will exacerbate the pressures placed on secondary schools once the number of transferring pupils fall. Grammar schools have not, as yet requested a</li> </ul>
--	--

	<p>decrease in their enrolment in response to a population decrease.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This proposal, as with similar proposals, should originate from the school's Trustees not the Board of Governors.</li> <li>• Oversubscription should not mean a school increases its admission number given there are surplus provision in schools in north and West Belfast. The sole reason for the proposed increase is to improve St Malachy's College financial position to the detriment of other schools.</li> <li>• There is no lack of grammar places - the proposal does not take account that other grammar schools, with places, in the area are best placed to meet the needs of pupils unable to gain admittance to St Malachy's College. Both in year 8 and 6<sup>th</sup> form.</li> <li>• The proposal does not fit into the North Belfast area planning model that schools in the area fit into.</li> <li>• Support from parents seems to be based on the assumption that "B" grades will gain admittance – this is unlikely given that "A" grades have mainly been admitted in the recent past. The level of first preferences applications to the school would appear to be decreasing.</li> <li>• Investment in St Malachy's College will be required while there is places available in other schools which will not require investment – is this an effective use of limited resources?</li> <li>• The proposals to increase the grammar schools can only be advanced at the expense of non-selective and selective schools. There will be a direct impact on schools' budgets.</li> <li>• The proposal refers to the enhanced curriculum it will allow St Malachy's to provide – this could lead to reduction in offer at other schools.</li> <li>• St Mary's CBGS has been deliberately omitted from the submission by the St Malachy's – not providing this schools' data invalidates much of the information on lack of places in the area. Any increase to St Malachy's will</li> </ul>
--	---

	<p>have a detrimental on St Mary's CBGS. In addition RBAI and BRA are now part of the NBALC and have capacity to accommodate pupils in North Belfast who want grammar education (RBAI now admit pupils via the GL assessment).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is not possible to separate North and West Belfast – these areas are linked.</li> <li>• How will the increase in provision better enable the school to deliver SEN provision – this is not fully explained.</li> <li>• As part of Area Planning proposals pertaining to DP 444, a model for North Belfast and Glengormley schools was approved in October 2015 to ensure the viability and sustainability of all schools in this area. This proposal took effect from September 2017. This new proposal would fundamentally undermine this process</li> <li>• There is a need for a joint up approach and unfilled places at existing post-primary schools must be taken into consideration.</li> </ul> <p>The CCMS response - main themes of the submission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In line with educational policy any proposed action has to be on the needs of an area and not the needs of any individual educational institution. The proposals submitted by grammar schools represent individual institution solutions, as opposed to the area solutions required by the area planning process.</li> <li>• Given the longer-term predicted decrease in the primary school population, we are of the view that the current temporary increase in numbers should be met by way of temporary variation across all schools in an area so as to avoid creating surplus places once the population starts to decline.</li> <li>• Grammar schools draw pupils from a very wide catchment area, hence any increase to their admission number has the potential to impact admissions to a significant number of schools.</li> </ul>
--	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCMS and the Trustees of the Catholic grammar schools have implemented the recommendations of the NICCE Report. This reorganisation is still in the process of embedding in a number of schools. Two schools (All Saints College and Blessed Trinity College) are seeking to establish themselves as newly amalgamated schools. Four others are absorbing the small increments that address the re-distribution and removal of places in the city. This process was progressed on the premise that the number of places in the selective sector in Belfast would remain stable whilst these changes embedded. The maintained schools in the city may be at greatest risk if the proposals for change in the selective sector are accepted.</li> <li>• The population growth, which the proposals are predicated on, is not permanent and is set to reach a peak in 2023/24, after which it will fall again. Between 2002 and 2017 the population of pupils in post-primary schools dropped by 10%, 15,202 pupils.</li> <li>• Non-selective schools are impacted disproportionately, during any period of sustained population drop, as grammar schools reduce their requirements in terms of academic selection so as to continue to fill their quota.</li> <li>• Catholic School Trustees play a significant role in regards as owners of all Catholic schools. Their role is recognised in the DE Circular 2017/09 - Guidance on the publication of a Development Proposal. If the position is that a proposal can be submitted by proposers outside those named in the Department of Education's DP guidance, this poses significant challenges for all sectoral bodies working towards area-based solutions. Furthermore it is unclear how, as the owners of Catholic Voluntary Grammar schools, the trustees have not been required to sign-off development proposals which may require capital investment on their property.</li> </ul>
--	--

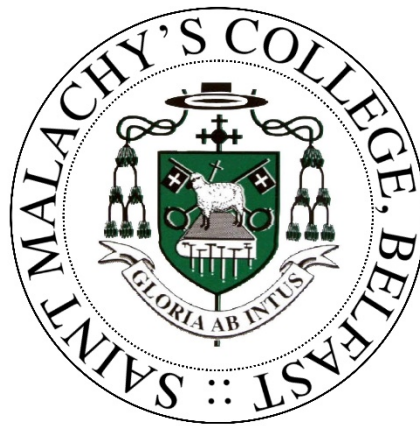
	<p>This development proposal was discussed by the EA's Education Committee at its meeting on 20 February 2020.</p>
<p><b>EDUCATION AUTHORITY COMMENTS</b></p> <p>In the context of planning on an area basis - what is the EA's view of the proposal, taking into account any pre-publication consultation. Does the EA support the proposal?</p> <p>SIGNATURE </p> <p>PRINT NAME: Kim Scott</p> <p>POSITION: Acting Director of Education</p> <p>DATE: 20 February 2020</p>	<p>Due to a growing demand for post-primary places in Belfast many schools, non-selective and selective, are experiencing increasing pressure from parents and the local community to make more places available.</p> <p>The Area Planning Local Group established a sub-group, with representatives from the managing authorities and sectoral support bodies, to analyse the demographic trends and school populations within the post-primary sector in the Greater Belfast Area. The sub-group recognised the need for expansion within greater Belfast area.</p> <p>It is planned to bring forward a suite of proposals for the Belfast area to make adjustments to selective and non-selective schools – these adjustments will be within the controlled and voluntary sectors (the maintained sector has already made substantial changes to its provision over recent years). As a strategic area solution the proposals would be best placed to be brought forward as a suite of proposals to provide an overview of provision within all sectors.</p> <p>The suite of proposals will result in a network of strong sustainable schools capable of meeting the needs of the Greater Belfast area. It is envisaged these proposals will be brought forward, where possible, together to give a full picture of the planned post-primary provision for the Belfast area.</p> <p>The proposal from St Malachy's College is being brought forward in advance of the full suite of proposals. However, it is in accordance with the work of the sub-group.</p> <p><i>Emerging Theme from consultation with affected schools: Concern has been voiced that this proposal, along with the other proposed increases to a number of selective schools, will have a detrimental impact on the non-selective providers in the area and they do not form an area planning solution.</i></p> <p><i>The Education Authority acknowledges that making adjustments to the selective provision carries an inherent risk to the non-selective providers. However, it has to be recognised that a number of schools, selective and non-selective, have been experiencing significant demand due to demographics within the post-primary sector. It has been suggested that continued use of the temporary variation process would continue to meet the needs of the local community until such times this demand decreases. This</i></p>

*ad hoc approach to meeting the needs of community has created significant problems in the recent past and it is important that there is a degree of stability put back into the post-primary provision in the area.*

The Education Authority gives qualified support to the proposal to increase the admission and enrolment number, on a phased basis, for St Malachy's College, on the understanding it is one of a number of proposals being brought forward for consideration and that all the proposals should be assessed at the same time in order to give an overview of the implications of the overall adjustments being brought forward.

# ST MALACHY'S COLLEGE

## CASE FOR CHANGE



## CONTENTS

### Page

<b>Section 1:</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Section 2:</b>	<b>Sustainability Assessment</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Section 3:</b>	<b>Area Planning Impact</b>	<b>39</b>

<b>Section 4:</b>	<b>Rationale for Proposal</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Section 5:</b>	<b>Educational Impact</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Section 6:</b>	<b>Implementation Plan</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Section 7:</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Section 8:</b>	<b>Appendix</b>	<b>53</b>

## **BACKGROUND**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

St Malachy's College is a Catholic, all-boys, selective grammar school for students aged 11-19 years under the trusteeship of the Down and Connor Diocese. The College is steeped in over 185 years of tradition which continues to be strong through a living of our motto "Gloria Ab Intus" – "Glory from Within". The College also maintains its reputation as a flagship for Catholic education, sending out young and good men ready to embrace the challenges



and opportunities of adult life in this rapidly changing world. We celebrate the fact that a vast number of our boys become great leaders in their chosen careers, both on a local and global scale. In St Malachy's College, there is an unrelenting pursuit of excellence by all in our community, and we model the highest standards in our work and endeavours.

The College is established as a successful grammar school in Northern Ireland, educating students mainly but not exclusively from North Belfast and the surrounding area. The high quality academic and pastoral provision of the school has ensured that it has become a popular choice for the parents of pupils transferring to post-primary education. The Trustees, Board of Governors and senior leadership of the College are committed to ensuring that it continues to provide the best possible education for the local and wider communities. The College makes this proposal to permanently increase the admissions and enrolment numbers of the College after close analysis of application trends and in collaboration with our sister Diocesan Colleges, Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School and Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock. We understand these schools will be submitting separate Development Proposals.

## **1.1 Case for Change Summary**

Over the past ten years the College has been over-subscribed at the point of entry into Year 8 and has witnessed the disappointment of parents and young pupils with Grades B in the GL Transfer Assessment who would usually gain admission to the grammar school sector. St Malachy's College wishes to respond positively to enable more Year 8 pupils the opportunity to avail of a Catholic grammar school education if that is their parent's choice. This forms the rationale for the Board of Governors' proposal.

For admissions to the College in September 2019, due to the high demand for places, the College has received permission to accept an additional 22 places in year 8 through a successful Temporary Variation application increasing its admissions number from 150 to 172. Admissions to Year 8 in September 2019 comprised 169 A grades and 3 B1 grades. 31 B1 and 20 B2 grade pupils failed to gain admission to the College.

In September 2018, St Malachy's College had an all Grade A intake of 150 pupils. 41 B1 and 30 B2 grade pupils failed to gain admission to the College. In September 2017, 8 B1 and 34 B2 pupils failed to gain admission and in 2015, 15 B1 and 32 B2 pupils failed to gain admission.

Based on the recognised standard of a grammar school admitting all A grades and 80% of B grades, in 2019 the College should have places for 212 pupils. In 2018 this would have been 207 pupils, in 2017 180 pupils, 2016, 134 pupils and in 2015, 188 pupils. An average for the last five years would calculate a need for 184 places in Year 8. Currently the College is limited to an approved admissions number of 150 Year 8 places.

## **1.2 Proposal**

Given the shortage of Year 8 places in Catholic grammar schools for boys in North Belfast and the number of first preference applicants turned away from St Malachy's College, the Board of Governors propose:

“St Malachy’s College will increase its admissions number from 150 to 170, with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 1,050 to 1,190, with effect from 1 September 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter.”

### **1.3 Background Details**

St Malachy’s College is located on an 11 acre site at 36 Antrim Road, Belfast, BT15 2AE. The campus comprises an original listed building dating back to the 1860’s together with a number of separate teaching blocks added in the 1950s, 1960s and 1980s, a Canteen/HE building, Gym, Sports hall and 3G pitch. The campus has undergone significant investment in recent years including replacement of roofs and windows, refurbishment of Science, Drama and toilet/changing rooms accommodation, a new Art/MIA extension and expansion and refurbishment of our Technology Department accommodation together with a new drainage system and resurfacing of the entire site. A further £4m of works under the School Enhancement Programme is planned to renew heating and electrical systems, further window and roof works and an extension to our Sports Hall entrance and staff accommodation. Future plans will include the redevelopment of a former Seminary building on site as a Creative and Expressive Centre specialising in the use of digital technologies through Music and Moving Image Art. The College is well placed to meet the needs of delivering a 21<sup>st</sup> century education for the young people of North Belfast and its hinterland.



Pupils enrolled in the College come from a wide catchment area as seen in the table 1 below. Currently we have 1,110 pupils enrolled coming from 76 different primary schools ranging from the local North Belfast area as far as Carrickfergus, Crumlin and Portglenone.

**TABLE 1 – Contributory Primary Schools**

<b>Feeder Primary Schools</b>	<b>Post Code</b>	<b>Number of Pupils currently enrolled 2019</b>
Antrim Primary School	BT41 4AB	1
Ashgrove Primary School	BT36 6LJ	1
Ballymacrocket Primary School, Glenavy	BT29 4NE	29
Ballymacward Primary School, Lisburn	BT28 3SU	3
Bunscoil an tSleibhe Dhuibh, Belfast	BT12 7JL	1
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain, Belfast	BT14 6HQ	4
Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain, Belfast	BT15 1EZ	2
Bunscoil Phobal Feirste, Belfast	BT11 9QS	10
Carrick Primary School, Craigavon	BT66 8NY	1
Cavehill Primary School, Belfast	BT15 5FG	3
Christ the Redeemer Primary School, Belfast	BT17 0TG	13

Cliftonville Integrated Primary School, Belfast	BT14 6JQ	2
Crumlin Integrated Primary School	BT29 4XL	2
Drumlins Integrated Primary School, Ballynahinch	BT24 8EU	1
Dundonald Primary School	BT16 2LP	1
Forge Integrated Primary School	BT7 3HE	1
Gaelscoil an Lonnain, Belfast	BT12 4PD	1
Gaelscoil Éanna, Newtownabbey	BT36 7AU	12
Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach, Crumlin	BT29 4LD	6
Gaelscoil na bhFal, Belfast	BT12 6AW	4
Gaelscoil na Mona, Belfast	BT11 8QB	1
Glengormley Integrated Primary School, Newtownabbey	BT36 6HJ	2
Hazelwood Integrated Primary School, Belfast	BT36 7EN	8
Holy Child Primary School, Belfast	BT11 8JG	8
Holy Cross Boys Primary School, Belfast	BT14 7EX	135
Holy Evangelists' Primary School, Belfast	BT17 0DB	2
Holy Family Primary School, Belfast	BT15 2HP	41
Holy Family PS Teconnaught, Downpatrick	BT30 9AN	1
Holy Rosary Primary, School, Belfast	BT7 3DB	1
Holy Trinity Primary School, Belfast	BT11 8EG	18
Loughview Integrated Primary School, Belfast	BT6 9SA	2
Our Lady of Lourdes Park Lodge, Belfast	BT15 5GQ	168
Our Lady Queen of Peace, Dunmurry	BT17 0RW	17
Pond Park Primary School, Lisburn	BT28 3BF	2
Sacred Heart Boys Primary School, Belfast	BT7 2EP	13
Scoil an Droichid, Belfast	BT7 2EP	2
St James Primary School, Newtownabbey	BT37 0AS	10
St Joseph`s Primary School, Carryduff	BT8 8EX	1
St Aloysius Primary School, Lisburn	BT28 1TB	1
St Anne's Primary School, Belfast	BT10 0NE	20
St Bernard's Primary School, Newtownabbey	BT36 6DW	106
St Bride's Primary School, Belfast	BT9 6FP	6
St Clare's Primary School, Belfast	BT13 2SE	10
St Colman's Primary School, Lisburn	BT27 4QS	11
St Colman's Primary School, Dromore	BT25 1BD	1
St Colmcille's Primary School, Crossgar	BT30 6PZ	1
St Comgall's Primary School, Antrim	BT41 4JG	2
St Ita's Primary School, Belfast	BT8 6YY	1
St John the Baptist Primary School, Belfast	BT11 9EH	23
St Joseph's Primary School - Antrim	BT41 1JZ	1
St Joseph's Primary School - Carryduff	BT8 8EX	1
St Joseph's Primary School - Holland Drive BT5	BT5 6EH	5
St Joseph's Primary School - Slate Street, Belfast	BT12 4LD	7
St Joseph's Primary School, Crumlin	BT8 8EX	57
St Kieran's Primary School, Dunmurry	BT17 0PB	1

St Kevin's Primary School, Belfast	BT12 6EN	19
St MacNissi's Primary School, Newtownabbey	BT36 6UE	25
St Malachy's Primary School, Belfast	BT7 2BJ	12
St Mary's Primary School, Aghlisnafin	BT31 9JP	1
St Mary's Primary School, Portglenone	BT44 8BL	1
St Mary's on the Hill Primary School, Newtownabbey	BT36 6JU	68
St Mary's Star of the Sea Primary School, Belfast	BT15 4HL	7
St Matthew's Primary School, Belfast	BT5 4EN	4
St Michael's Primary School, Belfast	BT6 0BW	11
ST Oliver Plunkett Primary School, Belfast	BT11 9AY	4
St Patrick's Primary School, Belfast	BT15 2BN	20
St Peter's Primary School, Belfast	BT12 4JF	13
St Teresa's Primary School, Belfast	BT11 8BL	16
St Therese of Lisieux Primary School, Belfast	BT15 5FGF	90
St Vincent de Paul Primary School, Belfast	BT14 8DP	9
St Nicholas' Primary School, Carrickfergus	BT38 8AU	5
St Paul's Primary School, Belfast	BT12 7NN	12
Syria (Refugee)		1
Templepatrick Primary School, Ballyclare	BT39 0AQ	2
The Good Shepherd Primary School, Dunmurry	BT17 0PJ	4
Kings Meadow PS Haddington, East Lothian	EH41 3DT	2

Total

1,110

Source: School Census Data Oct '19

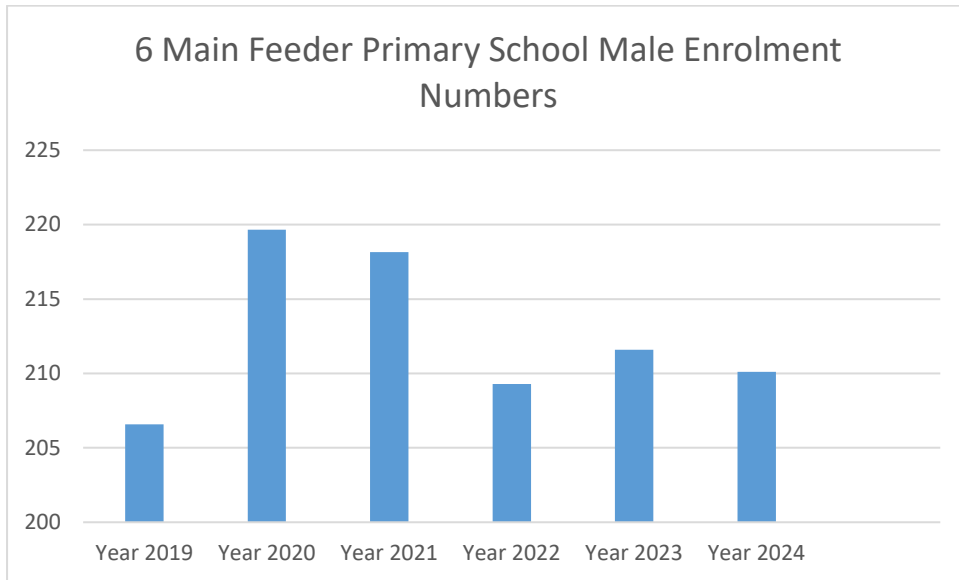
### **TABLE 2: Main Contributory schools**

The following six schools are large contributors to our enrolment:

Our Lady of Lourdes, Park Lodge, Belfast	168
Holy Cross Boys Primary School, Belfast	135
St Bernard's Primary School, Newtownabbey	106
St Therese of Lisieux Primary School, Belfast	90
St Mary's on the Hill Primary School, Newtownabbey	68
St Joseph's Primary School, Crumlin	57
Total	624

Table 3 below shows the number of boys enrolled in these six main feeder Primary Schools over the next seven years.

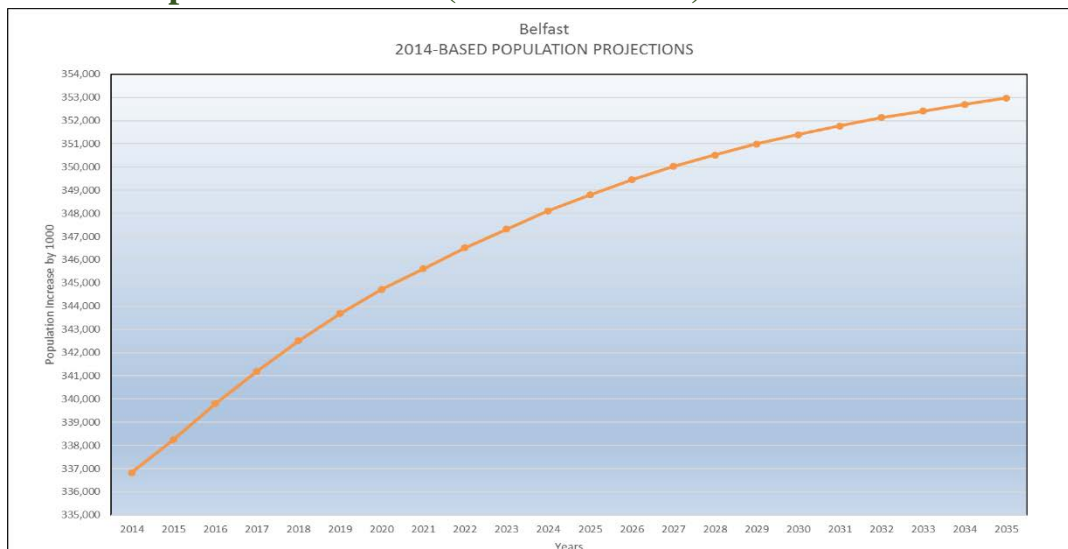
**TABLE 3: Male Enrolment numbers at 6 Main Feeder Primary Schools**



Source: DE website (Number of Boys estimated based on overall male/female percentages)

**Figure 1**

**Belfast Population Growth (Source NISRA)**



*Constant and sustainable growth from 2014 -2035 (336,500 -353,000)*

Figure 1 shows that the population in Belfast will continue to grow consistently until at least 2035.

## 1.4 Catchment Map

The College is currently heavily oversubscribed for places and has had a strong enrolment over the past number of years. The maximum approved enrolment is 1,050 pupils but we admit a large number of stated pupils each year taking our overall numbers for 2019-20 to 1,110. Figures 2 and 3 indicate on maps the feeder primary school catchment area for the College and a 15-mile radius from the College indicating reasonable travelling distance (one hour or less, no further than 15 miles). [Antrim is 17 miles; Ballynahinch 18 miles.]

**Figure 2: Catchment area of Feeder Primary Schools**





**Figure 3: Reasonable travelling distance to the College**



**TABLE 4 – Enrolment Figures 2014 -2019**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Enrolment</b>
2019/20	1,110
2018/19	1,088
2017/18	1,094
2016/17	1,078
2015/16	1,057
2014/15	1,071

Source: School Census Data

Table 4 above shows the enrolment numbers for the last five years, 2014-2019

**TABLE 5 - Summary of Applications and Admissions to Year 8**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Approved Admission No.</b>	<b>Total Applications</b>	<b>Total Admissions (excluding Statemented Pupils)</b>	<b>Additional Statemented Pupils</b>	<b>Total Admissions (including Statemented Pupils)</b>
2019/20	172	240	171	6	177
2018/19	150	260	151	6	157
2017/18	150	238	150	9	159
2016/17	150	161	150	8	158
2015/16	150	228	150	6	156
2014/15	150	227	150	5	155

**TABLE 6 – First Preference Applications**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Approved Admission No.</b>	<b>Number of First Preference Applications</b>
2019/20	172	198
2018/19	150	193
2017/18	150	149
2016/17	150	200
2015/16	150	194

Tables 5 and 6 above indicate how heavily oversubscribed the College is for intake places in year 8 in terms of first preference applications and total applications.

The College has a vibrant sixth form provision with currently 280 pupils, 151 in Year 13 and 128 in Year 14. The sixth form curriculum aims to build upon the foundations laid at Key Stage 4. The College tries to accommodate any combination of its available subjects. Pupils normally study three subjects for AS and those with a strong GCSE performance are encouraged to study a fourth subject at AS level. Most pupils take three subjects to A2 level but some may continue to study four. Some subjects are offered through collaboration with other schools from within the North Belfast Area Learning Community. All pupils are required to supplement their A level studies by taking additional courses in Religious Studies and Careers Education. Pupils are encouraged to include time for PE and there is a full and varied Enrichment Programme which includes accredited courses in areas such as Financial Management, Sports' Leadership, Aspire Leadership and Mental Health and Resilience as well as courses promoting life skills.

### **1.5 Educational Achievement**

St. Malachy's College, Belfast can demonstrate that recent school development planning and robust self-evaluation practices have ensured that it is on a path of sustained improvement. An increased enrolment at Sixth Form, coupled with significant advances academically and an extended post-16 curriculum offer have contributed towards this improvement reflecting the increased confidence of parents and the local community. This proposal to increase enrolment, beginning at Key Stage 3, will enable the College to further enhance the quality of provision and identify and further meet the needs of the pupils and other young people from the area of North Belfast.

### **1.6 Achievements and Standards 2013-2019.**

In March 2014, ETI rated the College's overall status as 'Very Good' and in the most recent Sustaining Improvement Inspection (SII) in December 2016 the ETI concluded that the College "continues to demonstrate a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all learners."

Tables 7(i) and 7(ii) below are a report of the headline figures for the last 7 years, comparing the College outcomes with grammar schools of a similar Free School Meal (FSM) category. The College has sustained its academic progress and outcomes and is now established in the Upper quartile or 95<sup>th</sup> percentile of the FSM categories for each of the headline figures both at GCSE and A2.

**TABLE 7(i) – GCSE and GCE outcomes 2013-2019**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
% Students in receipt of FSM	<b>9.0</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>22.4</b>
% Students achieving 5 GCSE passes A*-C	<b>98.1</b>	<b>96.8</b>	<b>94.4</b>	<b>98.0</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>98.2</b>	<b>98.2</b>
% Students achieving 5 GCSE passes A*-C <small>(including English &amp; Maths)</small>	<b>96.2</b>	<b>95.5</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>97.3</b>	<b>99.4</b>	<b>98.2</b>	<b>97.0</b>
<b>Benchmarking Data</b> 5 GCSE passes A*-C <small>(including English &amp; Maths)</small>	Upper:97.9 <b>Median:95.5</b> Lower:91.7	Upper:97.9 <b>Median:95.5</b> Lower:91.7	Upper:97.0 Median:94.5 <b>Lower 91.0</b>	<b>Upper:97.0</b> Median 94.5 Lower:91.0	<b>95<sup>th</sup>: 97.6</b> Upper:94.9 Median:92.2	<b>95<sup>th</sup>:97.6</b> Upper:94.9 Median:92.2	<b>95<sup>th</sup>:97.6</b> Upper:94.9 Median:92.2
% Students achieving 7 GCSE passes A*-C <small>(including English &amp; Maths)</small>	<b>90.4</b>	<b>91.6</b>	<b>83.8</b>	<b>94.6</b>	<b>92.9</b>	<b>93.3</b>	<b>91.6</b>
<b>Benchmarking Data</b> 7 GCSE passes A*-C <small>(including English &amp; Maths)</small>	Upper:96.7 <b>Median:90.5</b> Lower:82.8	Upper:96.7 <b>Median:90.5</b> Lower:82.8	Upper:94.5 Median:91.0 <b>Lower 87.6</b>	<b>Upper:94.5</b> Median 91.0 Lower:87.6	<b>Upper: 93.9</b> Median 87.5 Lower:66.7	<b>Upper:93.9</b> Median 87.5 Lower: 66.7	<b>Upper:93.9</b> Median 87.5 Lower: 66.7

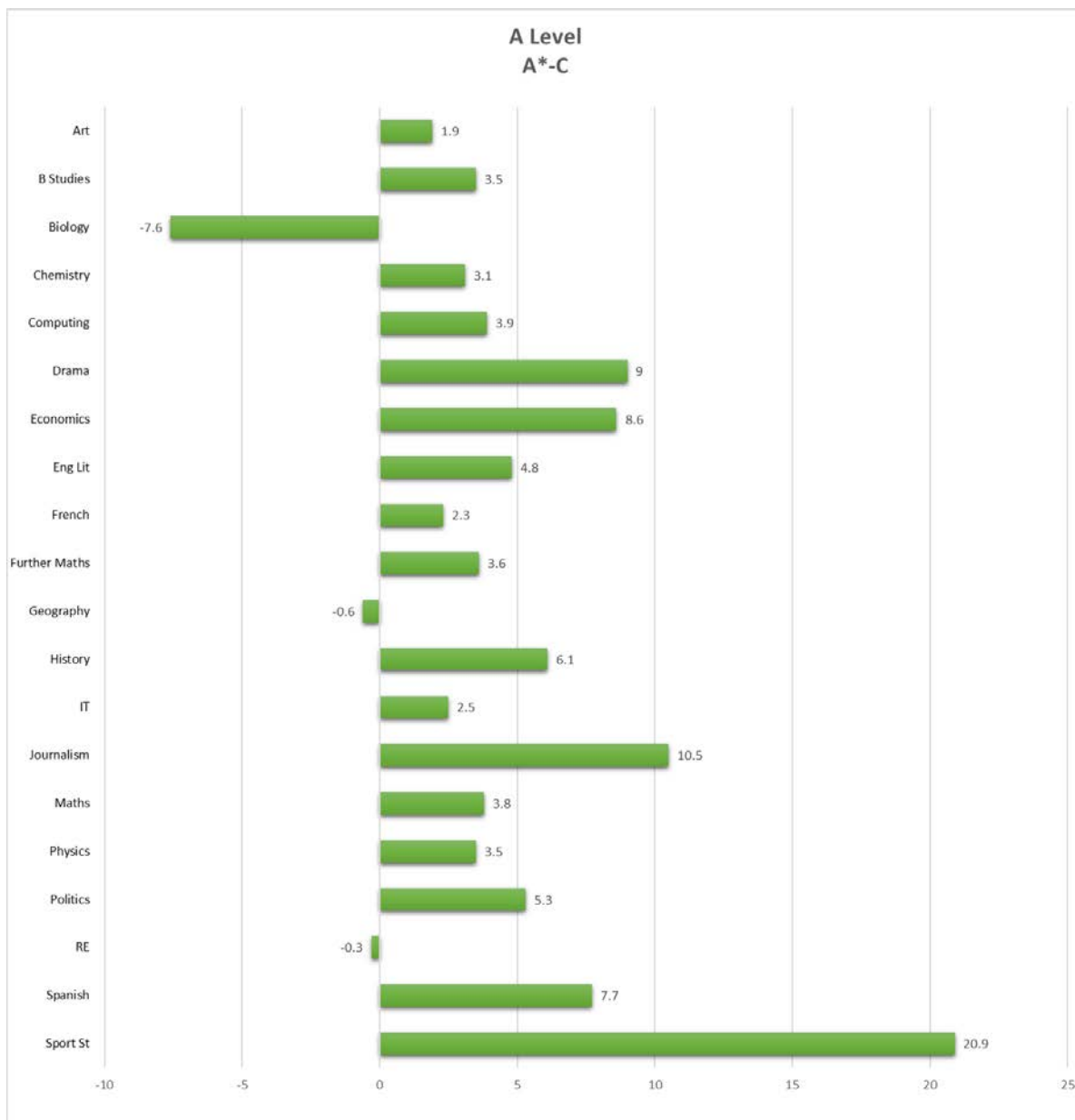
**TABLE 7(ii) – GCE outcomes 2013-2019**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>% Students achieving 3 A2 passes A*-C</b>	<b>72.9</b>	<b>65.7</b>	<b>78.3</b>	<b>82.0</b>	<b>78.1</b>	<b>82.4</b>	<b>75.5</b>
<b>Benchmarking Data</b> <b>3 A2 passes A*-C</b>	Upper:79.8 <b>Median:74.3</b> Lower:66.3	Upper:79.8 Median:74.3 <b>Lower:66.3</b>	Upper:82.7 <b>Median:75.8</b> Lower:68.5	<b>Upper:82.7</b> Median:75.8 Lower:68.5	<b>Upper:80.4</b> Median:70.9 Lower:65.8	<b>Upper:80.4</b> Median:70.9 Lower:65.8	<b>Upper:80.4</b> Median:70.9 Lower:65.8
<b>% Students achieving 3 A2 passes A*-E</b>	<b>96.7</b>	<b>97.2</b>	<b>98.4</b>	<b>98.2</b>	<b>98.1</b>	<b>99.1</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 1.7 A2 Analysis by Individual Subject

Individual A Level subject outcomes, comparing the College results with the NI Boys' Grammar School Average for A\*- C Grades over the three-year period 2017-2019.

**TABLE 8: A2 (2017-19) 3 Year Outcome vs NI Boys' Grammar Average (A\*- C)**



This graph (Table 8) shows how the College has performed within each subject area in comparison to the NI Boys' Grammar School Average. The data used has

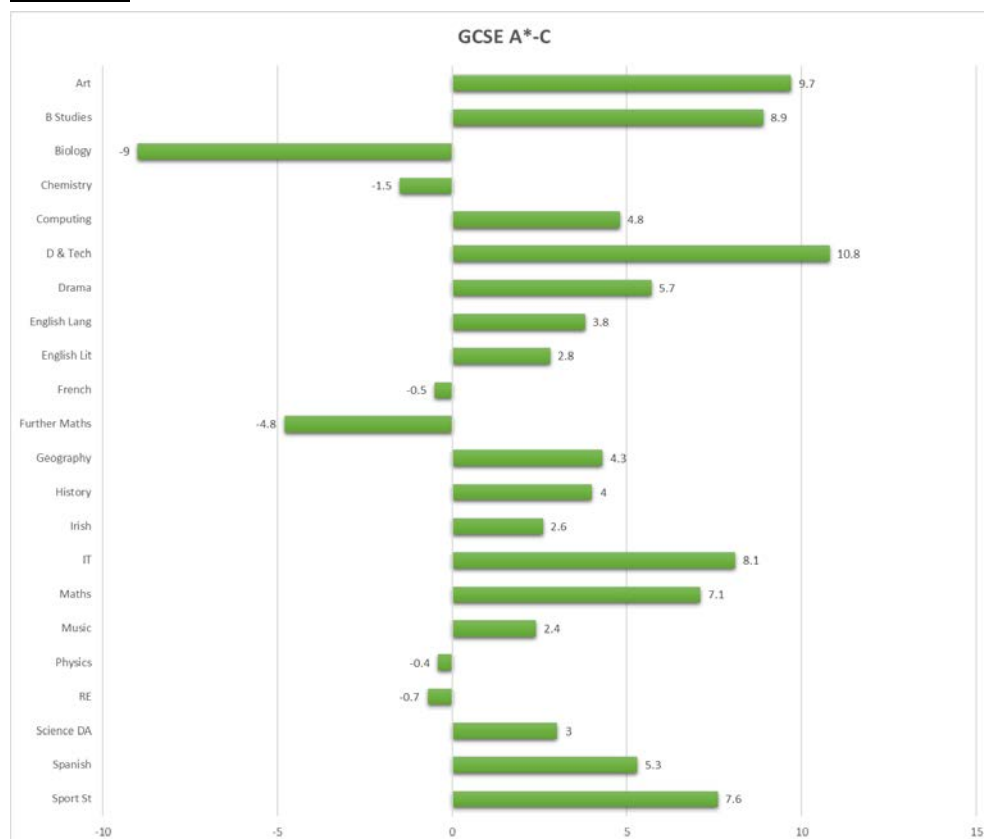
been provided by the Fischer Family Trust (FFT). Some subjects, such as Irish, Music, Moving Image Arts, Technology and Design and Health and Social Care, are not represented in this graph as NI averages are not provided due to a small cohort of entries across NI and in keeping with GDPR so that individual pupil results are not identifiable.

The College is in a very strong position at Key Stage 5. Considering the outcomes from the past three years, the graph (Table 8) above shows that all but one subject for which benchmarking data is available, were in line with (+/- 5%) or above the NI Boys' Grammar School Average for grades A\*- C; 7 subjects were 5% or greater above this average and 4 subjects were approximately 10% or greater above this average.

## GCSE Analysis by Individual Subject

Individual GCSE subject outcomes, comparing the College results with the NI Boys' Grammar School Average for A\*- C Grades over the three-year period 2017-2019.

**TABLE 9 GCSE (2017-19) 3 Year Outcome vs NI Boys' Grammar Average (A\*- C)**



The College has successfully maintained a strong academic profile at GCSE. On examination of the GCSE grades awarded A\*- C (Table 9 above), for the three-year period 2017-19, it is evident that almost all subjects were above or in line (+/- 5%) with the NI Boys Average; 10 subjects exceeding the average by approximately 5% and 2 subjects exceeding the average by approximately 10%.

The College also offers additional subjects at KS4 not included within the graph above. Subjects such as Learning for Life and Work (LLW), Leisure and Tourism, Journalism, Moving Image Art and Gaelige are excluded from the data due to a small cohort across NI and comparative data currently not being available.



Using 2016 – 18 data, at GCSE grades A\*- B – 17/24 subjects (71%) were in line with or above the NI Average; 8 subjects exceeded the average by 5% and 5 subjects exceeded the average by 10%. With the introduction of the new C\* grade and the new categorisation of B grades, the analysis of A\* - B is not comparable in 2019.

**TABLE 10 - A Level Grades awarded 2013-2019 (Cumulative Data)**

<b><u>College Data</u></b>	<b>A*</b>	<b>A*/A</b>	<b>A*/B</b>	<b>A*/C</b>
<b>2018/19</b>	7.1	29.8	69.2	<b><u>89.7</u></b>
<b>2017/18</b>	12.2	41.5	72.9	<b><u>92.4</u></b>
<b>2016/17</b>	8.5	34.5	67.1	<b><u>90.5</u></b>
<b>2015/16</b>	11.0	36.9	71.8	<b><u>94.2</u></b>
<b>2014/15</b>	7.0	28.2	64.4	<b><u>89.6</u></b>
<b>2013/14</b>	8.3	28.9	60.5	<b><u>84.4</u></b>
<b>2012/13</b>	7.1	33.0	63.0	<b><u>87.0</u></b>

The number of A\*- C grades attained by students of the College further highlights the high standards achieved over the past 7 years (Table 10).

During the three-year period 2017-19 the College has maintained a strong academic position, with approximately 90% of GCE grades awarded being pass grades A\*- C. In this period the College witnessed record outcomes within the higher grades. In 2018, 72.9% of grades awarded were A\*- B and 41.5% A\*- A. These figures exceeded the statistics provided by CCEA and JCQ, representing all A2 examinations from a range of examination boards accessed by all NI students.

Consistent performance throughout 2017-19 at A level is evidenced through the average cumulative data shown below in table 11. Over the past three years 90.9% of grades awarded were A\*- C and 69.7% of grades awarded were A\*- B. The data clearly evidences that the College performance at A2 has exceeded both the CCEA and JCQ three year average in each category (Table 12). As a result, more students were placed in higher education and successfully pursued their chosen career path.

**TABLE 11 – A Level Averages Cumulative Outcomes for 3 years 2017-19**

<b><u>Average</u></b>	<b>A*</b>	<b>A*/A</b>	<b>A*/B</b>	<b>A*/C</b>
<b>2017-19</b>	9.3%	35.3%	69.7%	90.9%

**TABLE 12 – CCEA & JCQ 2017-19 A Level NI 3 Year Average (all students)**

<b>2017 - 19</b>	<b>A*</b>	<b>A*-A</b>	<b>A*-B</b>	<b>A*-C</b>
<b>CCEA</b>	9.2%	32.8%	64.2%	86.2%
<b>All Students</b>				
<b>JCQ</b>	8.4%	30.6%	61.7%	84.4%
<b>All Exam Boards</b>				

Source: CCEA & JCQ website

**TABLE 13 – GCSE Grades awarded 2013-19 (Cumulative Data)**

<b>College Data</b>	<b>A*</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>2018/19</b>	9.1	38.6	66.1*	<b><u>94.7</u></b>
<b>2017/18</b>	9.3	35.7	71.7	<b><u>94.9</u></b>
<b>2016/17</b>	6.1	30.7	69.8	<b><u>94.4</u></b>
<b>2015/16</b>	10.7	35.8	66.9	<b><u>95.1</u></b>
<b>2014/15</b>	7.0	31.1	66.8	<b><u>91.6</u></b>
<b>2013/14</b>	11.7	39.2	72.8	<b><u>95.0</u></b>
<b>2012/13</b>	10.4	36.5	74.4	<b><u>96.2</u></b>

\* - Note: GCSE grade allocation changed in 2019 to reflect a C\* grade and therefore impacted B grade boundaries, as it did nationally.

The number of A\*- C grades awarded to the College further highlights the high standards achieved over the past 7 years (Table 13).

This cumulative GCSE data highlights the strong academic profile which has been maintained. The College has been consistently awarded approximately 95% of GCSE grades within the A\*- C category.

On further comparison of the three-year cumulative data with CCEA and JCQ statistics for 2019 (Table 14), the figures clearly show that the College exceeds the NI performance in all categories, from A\* through to C which is 14% higher for A\* to C and 15% higher in A\* to B, despite the new categorisation of the new B grade.

**TABLE 14 – CCEA & JCQ 2018 GCSE NI Average**

<b>2019</b>	<b>A*</b>	<b>A*/A</b>	<b>A*/B</b>	<b>A*/C</b>
<b>CCEA</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	<b>31.4%</b>	<b>51.4%</b>	<b>81.7%</b>
<b>JCQ</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>30.5%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>82.2%</b>

Source: CCEA & JCQ websites

This is further outlined in Table 15 below, showing the average cumulative data for the College throughout the most recent years.

**TABLE 15 – GCSE Average Cumulative Outcomes**

<b><u>Average</u></b>	<b>A*</b>	<b>A*/A</b>	<b>A*/B</b>	<b>A*/C</b>
<b>2017-19</b>	<b>8.2%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>94.7%</b>

\* New grade system – 2019 statistics not comparable

These figures clearly confirm that St Malachy’s College, Belfast is meeting the individual needs of its student population, enabling all students to meet their potential and gain excellent results at GCSE and A Level leading to enhanced life opportunities.

## **1.8 Collaboration**

The College has built up strong links over the past few years with Belfast Royal Academy through the Shared Education Signature Project. The project involves 1,354 pupils from across both schools in various shared activities. During year 2018/19 the project included the following objectives:

- To sustain a shared curriculum and embed collaboration as a post 16 opportunity
- To further promote existing Oxbridge collaboration and maintain entrants to medicine, nursing and teaching
- Increased co-ordination between Careers departments

- Deliver a joint Citizenship programme for Years 8, 9 and 10 groups
- Facilitate a joint Physics trip to CERN, Switzerland
- Facilitate a joint English Literature trip to Seamus Heaney's home place
- Have joint Senior Leadership team meetings to share good practice and discuss issues of common interest
- Raising awareness of SEP in both schools and with parents
- Opportunities for staff to meet and share good practice
- Canvas pupils' and parents' views of Shared Education
- Facilitate sixth form mental health awareness programme
- Involvement of parents in Autism Support Group

The College is part of the North Belfast Area Learning Community (ALC). This is made up of 11 very diverse schools including Voluntary Grammar, Controlled, Maintained, Special and Integrated Post Primary schools. Over the years strong supportive and transparent relationships have been established among the Senior Leaders within the ALC. Senior staff are in regular contact to offer advice and direction to others, sharing best practice where possible. The College is an active member of the ALC, represented at all groups including meetings for Principals, Vice Principals, CEIAG Teachers and events coordinators, as well as participating regularly in shared events.

To assist with delivery of the curriculum which adheres to the Entitlement Framework, the schools have an agreed timetable block for Key Stage 5, involving both Year 13 and 14. Collaboration among all schools is facilitated through this common timetable and the Curriculum Vice Principals ensure that as many students from North Belfast can access a range of subjects across the entire area. Each of the sub-groups make valuable contributions to the pupil experience within this local area, assisting with shared opportunities to take part in - University Interviews, Mental Health Training, PSNI Road Show, Art Exhibitions and much more.

The College has established strong links with the local primary schools. There are 74 feeder schools, as well as many other schools located close by. Much work has been done building contacts in relation to Numeracy and Literacy, looking at ways to improve the pupil experiences in these subject areas as pupils transfer into KS3. Primary school contacts also include links with a variety of departments: Drama, Science, PE and Languages.

## **2.0 SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

The College fulfils all six criteria set out within The Sustainable Schools' Policy of the Department of Education:

### **2.1 Quality Educational Experience –**

The College provides a balanced educational experience and has sustained high standards of educational attainment, along with enabling students to have a full set of option choices well beyond the requirements of the Entitlement Framework, to pursue their chosen subjects to the highest level.

In the March 2014 Inspection Report ETI concluded, that, *“the quality of the education provided by this school is very good and the quality of pastoral care is outstanding. The school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.”*

#### **Provision for Learning**

- Provision for Learning was rated as Very Good.
- Most of the teaching observed during the inspection ranged from good to outstanding with one-half of the lessons being very good or better
- Most effective practice teachers plan effectively and set the learning in meaningful and engaging contexts to engage and challenge the boys, and useful exposition made effective questioning to develop and deepen understanding.
- Teachers used ICT innovatively to enhance, support and encourage participative approaches to learning

- There is a well-structured, effective cycle of assessment and the teachers use the information well to track the progress made by all boys and plan personalised interventions, action and support.
- The teachers' adept analysis of performance data helps them to effect significant improvement in the quality of teaching and in the outcomes achieved, through the setting of precise individual targets to raise the boys' expectations, and by identifying specific aspects of their subjects to address.
- The boys are highly motivated with high levels of maturity and self-confidence. They participate, in large numbers, in an extensive range of extra-curricular and curricular enrichment activities, taking on roles and responsibilities maturely, which contributes significantly to their physical, spiritual, social and cultural development, preparing them well as contributors to society.
- Across all key stages there is a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs and abilities of the boys, characterised by a strong ambition for each boy to fulfil his potential.

**Source: ETI Report March 2014**

This was followed up by ETI in their Sustaining Improvement Inspection of December 2016 whereby they stated they have *“a high degree of confidence that the school continues to demonstrate a high degree of capacity for sustaining improvement”*.

### **ETI Sustaining Improvement Inspection December 2016**

The purpose of the SII was to evaluate the extent to which the College is capable of demonstrating its capacity to effect improvement through self-evaluation and effective school development planning.

The two areas under focus were;



- **Raising Academic Standards**
- **Build Leadership Capacity and Capability at all levels across the school.**

The findings confirmed that the College has made “very good progress” both at A2 and GCSE, demonstrating improved attainment at all levels exceeding the corresponding Northern Ireland Average for similar schools.

Within the second area, *“the school has made significant and important progress. The teachers, supported by senior leaders, parents and governors have worked in a highly effective collegial manner to embed and sustain whole school improvement. Led by the senior leadership team, the staff are committed fully to meeting the individual needs and aspirations of all the pupils and to sustaining the increasingly high standards they achieve.”*

### **Entitlement Framework (EF)**

The College is fully compliant with the Entitlement Framework (21:21). Table 16 below is an overview of the curriculum analysis for the past four years. The College continues to exceed the provision required by EF while maintaining a suitable balance of Applied and General subjects on offer.

**TABLE 16 - Number of Subjects Offered**

Academic Year	Key Stage 4			Key Stage 5		
	Applied Subjects	General Subjects	Total	Applied Subjects	General Subjects	Total
2016 - 17	12	16	28	13	19	32
2017 - 18	11	15	26	13	17	30
2018 - 19	9	18	27	9	16	25
2019 - 20	9	16	25	10	20	30

## 2.2 Stable Enrolment Trends –

The College has been significantly oversubscribed each year for admission to Year 8. This is evidenced by the schools’ applications and admissions data. Table 17 below provides evidence of significant oversubscription in Year 8 applications.

**TABLE 17 – Admissions to St Malachy’s College**

St Malachy’s	Ad No	A	B1	B2	C1	C2	D	A +80%B	APPS
2019	172	169	34	20	5	2	8	212	238 plus 2 no grades
2018	150	150	41	30	19	12	8	207	260
2017	150	129	29	34	26	16	4	179.4	238
2016	150	107	24	11	10	5	3	134	161
2015	150	135	35	31	20	0	6	187.8	227

Based only on having places for all A grades and 80% of B grades table 18 shows the under capacity to meet the demand for A and B grade applications:

**TABLE 18 – Lack of Grammar School places/capacity**

St Malachy's	Places available	All A plus 80% B	+/-'
<b>2019</b>	172	212	-40
<b>2018</b>	150	207	-57
<b>2017</b>	150	179	-29
<b>2016</b>	150	134	+16
<b>2015</b>	150	188	-38

## 2.3 Sound Financial Position

**TABLE 19(i) – College Finances**

Year	Income £	Expenditure £	Surplus/ (Deficit) £	% of Surplus/(Deficit) to Income	Accumulated Surplus £
<b>2018/19</b>	5,815,193	5,940,165	(124,972)	(2.15%)	122,494
<b>2017/18</b>	5,766,690	5,658,089	108,601	1.88%	247,466
<b>2016/17</b>	5,802,456	5,844,477	(42,021)	(0.72)%	138,865
<b>2015/16</b>	5,829,422	5,768,187	61,235	1.05%	180,886
<b>2014/15</b>	5,498,749	5,348,483	150,266	2.73%	148,970

St Malachy's College has robust financial structures in place and remains in a strong financial position with an accumulated surplus of £122,494 at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 (Table 19(i)). Planned deficits over the next few years will reduce accumulated reserves to a break even position.

At present the school is operating with an overall surplus as indicated below however the school's 3-year plan shows that the school will be in a break-even position by the end of the plan (Table 19(ii)).

**TABLE 19(ii) – College Finances**

<b>Year ended</b>	<b>March 2019</b>	<b>March 2020</b>	<b>March 2021</b>
Accumulated Surplus	£122,000	Break-even	Break-even

The College is expected to continue to be financially secure, particularly on the evidence of high enrolment numbers and oversubscription for admission places.

## **2.4 Accessibility –**

The College is situated in North Belfast with good transport routes to its hinterlands. The distance that pupils travel to school is reasonable and takes into account and complies with the ‘ages of the pupils and the needs of the area.’ (Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools, Jan 2009 p35).

Figure 3 on page 17 indicates the area of reasonable travelling distance to the College (one hour or less, no further than 15 miles).

The College has excellent transport links and is serviced by the following bus routes:

1A – Monkstown	1F – Hightown	107 – Crumlin
1B – New Mossley	1G – Glengormley	120 – Antrim
1E – Glengormley	12A – Cliftonville	153 - Ballyclare

The College also offers its own bus service operating two buses to South and West Belfast daily.

## **2.5 Strong Leadership and Management by the Boards of Governors and Principal –**

The College is characterised by its strong leadership and effective management. This directly influences the standards of attainment, the quality of teaching, academic achievement, attendance rates, behaviour and motivation of the students in their care.

ETI's inspection report of March 2014 rated Leadership and Management as Very Good and states:

- ***“The School Development Plan (SDP) sets a clear and focused direction for the work of the school. The key priorities and associated targets are appropriate and are informed fully by a rigorous and regular analysis of pastoral and performance data and widespread consultation. First-hand evidence informs self-evaluation leading to improvement by leadership at all levels and by individual teachers, and is central to the school’s improvement process.”***
- “The Principal and Senior Management Team together provide diligent strategic leadership by promoting very effective strategies to raise standards and improve provision through the development of the whole school culture of quality assurance and self-evaluation. The work of SMT is focused appropriately on achieving high quality teaching and learning, and providing well-conceived continuing professional development of all staff. The SMT play a leading role in enabling improvement by monitoring and mentoring the work of individual departments, within a collegial culture of support and challenge.”
- “The parents, staff and school community can have a high degree of confidence in all the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors carry out their duties professionally; they have a shared vision for the developing role of the school within the local and wider community. They are well informed about the work of the school and provide high levels of

leadership, support and challenge to enable ongoing development and improvement.”

In our Kirkland Rowell Survey, parents deemed all aspects of Leadership and Management excellent.

“Senior Management, Leadership and the Governing Body provide excellent strategic leadership and clear direction to effectively enable the College to deliver a high quality education for all students.”

## **2.6 Strong Links with the Community –**

St Malachy’s College has strong links and relationships with parents, the local community and local schools. The College opens its facilities to local sporting organisations and community groups. The College is an active member of the North Belfast Area Learning Community and has a vibrant parent-teacher association. Close links and relations are fostered with contributory and local primary schools, holding a range of activities each year for primary schools, including science workshops, sports events, mental health and ICT activities.

A large number of community and sporting groups use our facilities including:

- Belfast Star, Basketball Club
- St Enda’s GAC
- St Malachy’s Old Boys Youth
- Malachians FC
- St Mary’s FC
- NI Soccer Leagues
- Mater Hospital Staff
- St Pat’s Young Men
- Football NI
- IFA
- St Malachy’s College Staff

- Ulster Orchestra Learning Community Engagement Committee
- North Belfast Heritage Cluster

The Board of Governors is confident that the College meets the requirements of the Sustainable Schools Policy.

### **3.0 AREA PLANNING IMPACT**

Within the current Area Planning Action Plan for 2017/18 the EA has identified a need to ensure that there is sufficient post-primary provision in the Greater Belfast area. There is significant demand for post-primary grammar education in North Belfast, Crumlin and Newtownabbey as evidenced by the increasing numbers. The demand for places has been steadily increasing as evidenced by the school's enrolment and application history.

In November 2015 the EA, on behalf of CCMS, published five development proposals to reshape Catholic non-selective post primary provision in North Belfast and Glengormley. The intended level of education in this area aimed to provide 725 Year 8 places and a total of 4,900 post-primary places within this

cluster. It agreed that 2,100 places would continue to be provided in two existing (single gender) grammar schools (St Malachy’s College and Dominican College). These Development Proposals Refs: DP 440/441/442/443/444 were approved in March 2016 and the reorganisation of provision has now been implemented.

Increasing the approved enrolment at St Malachy’s College will not have a detrimental impact on any other school. St Malachy’s College is a single sex Grammar School. St Mary’s CBGS is the closest alternative provision and it is constantly oversubscribed both in Year 8 admission and for places within its sixth form. Other catholic co-educational Grammar schools such as Aquinas Grammar School, Rathmore Grammar School and Our Lady and St Patrick’s College are heavily oversubscribed. Our nearest non-denominational, co-educational grammar school, Belfast Royal Academy is heavily oversubscribed.

St Malachy’s College remains an integral member of the North Belfast Area Learning Community with a successful and vibrant collaboration programme with many other local schools.

In addition, the post-16 element of St Malachy’s has been expanding and enrolment has been growing over the years and the Board of Governors is bringing forward this development proposal to formally recognise the demand for places at the College. Transition levels are high between Years 12 to Year 14.

#### 4.0 RATIONALE FOR PROPOSAL

The Board of Governors believe that the current admissions number of 150 does not cater for the demand for Catholic boys’ grammar school places in the North Belfast and wider area. Table 20 below shows the high demand for Belfast schools admission places to Catholic Grammar Schools that admit boys.

**TABLE 20 - School Intake Statistics**

(2019 statistics not yet published)

		2018							
	<b>Ad No</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B1</b>	<b>B2</b>	<b>C1</b>	<b>C2</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>APPS</b>
								<b>+80%B</b>	



St Malachy's	150	150	41	30	19	12	8	206.8	260
Rathmore	180	216	13	9	2	3	2	233.6	245
Aquinas	110	154	10	4	2	6	2	165.2	178
OLSPCK	180	204	10	8	6	2	1	218.4	231
	<b>620</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>914</b>

2017									
	Ad No	A	B1	B2	C1	C2	D	A +80%B	APPS
St Malachy's	150	129	29	34	26	16	4	179.4	238
Rathmore	180	224	13	3	6	1	3	236.8	250
Aquinas	110	167	14	6	13	2	7	183	209
OLSPCK	180	206	10	4	3	0	1	217.2	224
	<b>620</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>816</b>	<b>921</b>

2016									
	Ad No	A	B1	B2	C1	C2	D	A +80%B	APPS
St Malachy's	150	107	24	11	10	5	3	134	161
Rathmore	180	200	13	2	3	2	0	212	220
Aquinas	110	112	9	5	6	2	1	123.2	135
OLSPCK	180	189	11	4	1	1	6	201	212
	<b>620</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>728</b>

		2015							
	Ad No	A	B1	B2	C1	C2	D	A +80%B	APPS
St Malachy's	150	135	35	31	20	0	6	187.8	227
Rathmore	180	197	19	13	0	1	0	222.6	235
Aquinas	110	130	23	8	7	3	2	154.8	173
OLSPCK	180	206	18	6	5	1	2	225.2	240
	<b>620</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>875</b>

Source: Data collected from each school

Based only on having places for all A grades and 80% of B grades you can see the following trends (Table 21):

**TABLE 21 – Belfast Catholic Grammar Schools That Admit Boys Trends**

In 4 Schools	Places available	All A + 80% B	+/-
2018	620	824	-204
2017	620	816	-196
2016	620	670	-50
2015	620	790	-170

These statistics in Table 21 clearly indicate that in Belfast as a whole there are insufficient places in Catholic Grammar schools.

Due to the high demand for places, for September 2019, the College received permission to accept an additional 22 places in Year 8 through a successful Temporary Variation application increasing its admissions number from 150 to 172. Admissions to Year 8 in September 2019 comprised 169 A grades and 3 B1 grades. 31 B1 and 20 B2 grade pupils failed to gain admission to the College.

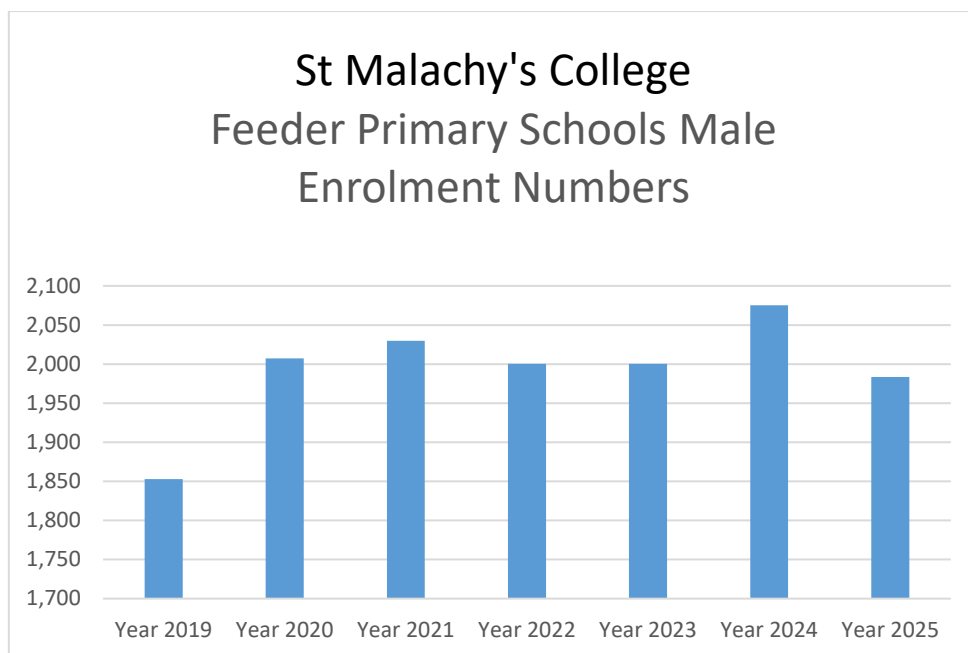
In September 2018, St Malachy's College had an all A intake. 41 B1 and 30 B2 grade pupils failed to gain admission to the College. In 2017, 8 B1 and 34 B2

pupils failed to gain admission and in 2015, 15 B1 and 32 B2 pupils failed to gain admission.

Based on the recognised standard of a grammar school admitting all A and 80% of B grades, in 2019 the College should have places for 212 pupils. In 2018 this would have been 207 pupils, in 2017 - 180 pupils, 2016 - 134 pupils and in 2015 - 188 pupils. An average for the last five years would calculate a need for 184 places in Year 8. Currently the College is limited to an approved admissions number of 150 Year 8 places.

It can be seen from tables 22(i) & 22(ii) below that the number of male pupils seeking post-primary places from our feeder primary schools will increase from 1,853 in 2019 to 2,075 by the year 2024. This projection is based on significant growth in the primary school population (data provided by DENI website).

**TABLE 22(i) – Primary School Male Enrolments**



Source: DE website (Number of Boys estimated based on overall male/female percentages)

**TABLE 22(ii) – Primary School Male Enrolments**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Feeder Primary Schools Male Enrolments</b>
<b>2019</b>	<b>1,853</b>
<b>2020</b>	<b>2,007</b>
<b>2021</b>	<b>2,030</b>
<b>2022</b>	<b>2,000</b>
<b>2023</b>	<b>2,000</b>
<b>2024</b>	<b>2,075</b>
<b>2025</b>	<b>1,984</b>

Source: DE website (Number of Boys estimated based on overall male/female percentages)

It is our view that the increased numbers attending our feeder schools, and the acknowledged population growth in areas such as Newtownabbey and South

and East Belfast clearly indicate an increased need for places in post primary Catholic managed schools in the area.

Table 23 below indicates the total number of applicants to St Malachy’s College for 150 places in the last year:

In 2019, St Malachy’s College was oversubscribed by 90 applications, 48 of which were first preference applications. In 2018, the College was oversubscribed by 110 applications, 80 of which were first preference applications. In 2017, the College was oversubscribed by 87 applications, 50 of which were first preference applications, as indicated in table 23 below:

**TABLE 23 – First Preference Applications**

	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Preference</b>	198	147	230	138	200	128
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Preference</b>	32	20	22	10	26	13
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Preference</b>	8	4	5	1	8	7
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Preference</b>	2	1	3	1	2	2
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Preference</b>				-	1	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>150</b>

We note the existing shortage of places in 2019 in Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School and Rathmore Grammar School in South and East Belfast. The impact of second preference application transfers to St Malachy’s College from these two schools had the effect of displacing 20 A/B1 grade pupils from the North Belfast area and hinterland.

## **5.0 EDUCATIONAL IMPACT**

**5.1** This proposal to facilitate 20 additional places per year at St Malachy's College will positively impact the educational experience of students. This will enable a more effective and efficient use of the current resources, accommodation and people, which are already in place and available for access.

St Malachy's plays a central role within the North Belfast Area Learning Community (NBALC). This ALC comprises 11 post primary schools, including Voluntary Grammar, Controlled, Maintained, Integrated and Special Schools. In North Belfast all post primary schools work together to provide a high quality education and the best possible outcomes for the student population. A major collaborative strength of the ALC is the common timetabled blocks across Key Stage 5, ensuring the Entitlement, and more, is available to all pupils in the area. St Malachy's College is now a campus, providing for pupils in many different uniforms and from a range of backgrounds, offering a comprehensive range of applied and general subjects to pupils from many schools, ensuring that the young people of this area can access courses, achieve top grades and gain entry into higher education. This also includes many opportunities for shared classrooms through the Shared Education scheme.

The profile and demographics within Belfast show that these additional 20 places per year will not impact negatively on the other schools within the locality. The College has now established an historic record of excellent outcomes at GCSE and A2, and will be able to offer greater opportunities for more students to fulfil their full and true potential. Furthermore, by expanding the pupil population with 20 pupils per year over the next seven years, the College will be able to develop and invest in a curriculum which is even more fit for purpose, skilling pupils from North Belfast to meet the current and future needs of the Northern Ireland and global economies. North Belfast post primary students would be able to avail of a STEAM educational provision, learning through the latest digital technology, working in partnership with local industries and linking directly with external agencies and third level institutions.

## **5.2 PASTORAL CARE**

The ETI Inspection in 2014 rated the quality of pastoral care as outstanding and the Sustaining Improvement Inspection in December 2016 confirmed that the pastoral care continues to be outstanding. In the April 2018 Kirkland Rowell survey, parents rated Pastoral Care as outstanding and pupils rated Control of

Bullying as outstanding. We are confident that this exceptional quality of pastoral care can continue to be delivered within the Development Proposal. The Proposal plans for an additional Tutor Group in Year 8 and this would be staffed by the additional member of staff employed. As part of the SDP 2015-18, an aim was to increase the Child Protection Team to enhance our ability to manage safeguarding needs. The current SDP 2018-21, targets another member of SLT to be trained in Child Protection. The team consists of the VP Pastoral Care, the three Heads of School, the Drugs Officer, a KS4 HOY and a SEN teacher. The recently appointed Senior Pastoral Leader who is also the Learning Support Co-ordinator will be trained in 2019. We have in place, a robust and well-staffed system to cope with the proposed additional numbers. In addition to the Year 14 Anti-Bullying Team, a Resilience Team has been introduced. To promote a sense of self-worth and confidence in KS5 a new resilience programme was introduced within Year 13 Enrichment to include accreditation in OCN Mental Health Awareness Level 2 and OCN Peer Mentoring Skills in Practice Level 2. The students who participated acted as Resilience Mentors in 2017-18 and this will be an ongoing initiative in the SDP 2018-21. This peer initiative will continue and be enhanced through the Development proposal.

Staff training has included Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), Working with Young People and Substance Misuse – ASCERT, Hidden Harm Protocol – ASCERT, OCN Level 2 Community Drugs Awareness Training and Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP) – Hope for Life and Mental Health First Aid–Department of Health and Lighthouse. We are well prepared to manage additional numbers of pupils and deliver an age appropriate preventative curriculum across all year groups.

### **5.3 SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (SEN)**

Regarding SEN, we have experienced staff and the numbers of students at Stage 5 have continued to grow (Table 24). The provision of an additional class in Year 8 would in fact better enable us to deliver SEN provision.

**TABLE 24 – SEN Pupil Enrolment Data**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Statements</b>	<b>Stage 1-4</b>	<b>ALN</b>	<b>Medical</b>
2015/ 16	44	56	197	272
2016/ 17	48	67	52	310
2017/ 18	51	63	36	206
2018/19	54	93	23	286

The Kirkland Rowell Survey conducted with students and parents in April 2018 rated teaching of students with special needs, the outcomes in terms of standards attained for SEN students and the impact of the strategic leadership for SEN students as outstanding. Within the 2015-18 SDP, there was an increased focus on the development of Social Skills and strong links were formed with relevant groups such as PEAT (Parents’ Education as Autism Therapists). This work will enable us to deliver SEN provision even more effectively within the Development Proposal.

The GCSE results for students with Stage 5 Statements have been excellent with all students progressing into Sixth Form. At KS5, the key aim is to equip SEN students with the skills required for life outside the College and entry into third level education. Flexible and innovative curricular options are available through collaboration with a range of educational providers within the ALC and further education including voluntary and community organisations for work and training placements. Details of the three-year average results for GCSE and A Level are summarised in table 25 below.

**TABLE 25 – SEN: A Level & GCSE Outcomes**



<b>KS4 Analysis by Student Group: 2017-2019</b>				
<b>3 Years</b>	<b>Average Score</b>	<b>A*-A (%)</b>	<b>A*-B (%)</b>	<b>A*-C (%)</b>
<b>All Students</b>	<b>46.8</b>	<b>38.1%</b>	<b>69.4%</b>	<b>94.3%</b>
<b>SEN</b>	<b>46.1</b>	<b>33.7%</b>	<b>66.9%</b>	<b>92.9%</b>

<b>KS5 Analysis by Student Group: 2017-2019</b>				
<b>3 Years</b>	<b>Average Score</b>	<b>A*-A (%)</b>	<b>A*-B (%)</b>	<b>A*-C (%)</b>
<b>All Students</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>36.7%</b>	<b>65.4%</b>	<b>91.9%</b>
<b>SEN</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>33.7%</b>	<b>67.0%</b>	<b>92.4%</b>

The appointment of a Senior Leader with responsibility for SEN means that we are fully equipped in terms of Management and Leadership to cope with SEN students if overall numbers increase. Staff development and training continue as a focus in the SDP 2018-21. The development of programmes to focus on Mental Health and Anxiety have been a particular focal point. Training has included Barnardos Collective Impact training, Mental Health First Aid, Self-Harm Training (Belfast HSCT) and Resilience and Trauma Training (Barnardos). Staff are therefore trained and able to cope with managing SEN students within increased overall school population.

The SEN Department has enhanced links with parents. A parent support group for ASD has been introduced, taking place monthly on Saturday mornings. In addition to providing support for parents, this group has offered an opportunity for real and effective Parent Voice. 100% of parents feel supported by the SEN Department.

## **6.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

## **6.1 Approval of Development Proposal**

If the development proposal is approved, St Malachy's College would be in a position to implement the increased admissions number from 150 to 170, with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 1,050 to 1,190 with effect from September 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Updated admission criteria incorporating an increased intake figure would be submitted to EA in advance of being published. The timetable would be reconfigured to incorporate an extra form class in Year 8 and practical class sizes would be structured into 9 groups. An additional teacher would be recruited to commence in September 2020.

## **7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

## **7.1 Staffing Costs**

An initial increase in intake by 20 pupils to 170 pupils in Year 8 will facilitate a move from 5 to 6 class groups. This will require the employment of an additional teacher. We currently have capacity in terms of accommodation and flexibility in our timetable to accommodate a restructuring of our practical classes to meet the needs of these additional pupils.

The initial increase in budget share for an extra 20 pupils will more than cover the additional salary costs involved (average teacher's salary cost is £52,964). In the medium to longer term as an additional 20 pupils each year filters through the school population, based on current funding levels, the College budget share income will eventually increase by £548,580. During this period additional teaching and support staff will be employed dependent on the staffing needs each year.

Currently we employ 67 teaching staff (60.63 FTE) and 97 support staff (filling 52 full-time and 69 part-time posts). The Senior Leadership Team is comprised of the Principal, two Vice-Principals, Bursar and five Senior Teachers. Three of the senior teachers fulfil Head of School roles over Key Stage 3, 4 and 5. Each year group has a Head of Year and each class an individual Class Tutor. Teaching allowance points are awarded to Heads of Department and Co-ordinators of specific areas of responsibility.

## **7.2 Accommodation**

The College campus comprises a listed building at the front of the site incorporating administration, office and teaching accommodation together with a sixth form centre and a number of separate teaching blocks, Canteen building, Sports Hall and Gym. A 3G pitch occupies the rear of the site. Currently we have 14,582 square meters of internal space.

The Campus has seen significant capital investment in recent years including roof replacements, windows, refurbishment of toilets and changing facilities, Science and Drama accommodation and the complete resurfacing and renewal of the drainage system on site. A new extension has just been opened with new accommodation for Art and Moving Image Art and a refurbishment of our Technology accommodation.

The College has been designated to receive a further £4m in funding under SEP2 for the replacement of mechanical and electrical systems onsite and an extension to our Sports Hall reception and staff accommodation.

The College plans to refurbish an area in the listed building to create an additional teaching space.

Apart from this, the proposed increase in admission and enrolment numbers will not require any additional accommodation or capital injection from DE.

### **7.3 Finance**

The College has managed the resources given to it for the education of its students in a way that provides sound value for money for the public purse. Despite reductions in the value of the Age Weighted Pupil Unit and increases in employer's costs the College continues to operate within the financial limits set by DE. The College remains in a strong financial position with an accumulated surplus of £247,466 at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. A summary of the College's financial outturn over the last five years is set out in Table 19(i).

For the 2018/19 financial year the College had a deficit for the year of £125,000 and an overall accumulated surplus of £122,000. The College remains in a strong financial position (section 2.3) going forward. Currently an additional pupil in Years 8 to 12 generates £3,819 of budget share income and pupils in Years 13 and 14 generates £4,905. Based on this level of funding the following additional budget share income would be generated over the next 7 years (Table 27).

#### **TABLE 27 – Finances generated by addition pupil numbers**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Additional Budget Share Income</b>
<b>2019/20</b>	£76,380
<b>2020/21</b>	£152,760
<b>2021/22</b>	£229,140
<b>2022/23</b>	£305,520
<b>2023/24</b>	£381,900
<b>2024/25</b>	£480,000
<b>2025/26</b>	£578,100

#### **7.4 Transport Costs**

Transport costs should not increase as a result of additional places. Evidence shows that a significant number of pupils from the local area currently lose out on an admission place in the College. These pupils then have to travel much further to attend their next choice school.

#### **7.5 Capital Cost**

The College plans to undertake maintenance work to convert a vacant room into an additional classroom at the cost of around £70,000. This would be funded under the school's maintenance budget. No additional capital costs are foreseen as we have sufficient existing accommodation to meet the needs of an additional 140 pupils.

## **8. Appendix**

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

We believe the proposal has no impact on the nine equality categories as defined in Section 75; religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability and dependence.

## **Rural Needs Act**

We have given due regard to rural needs and believe that our proposal has no impact on rural needs as set out in the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

**DE (Policy Team) Comments****i) Finance Directorate**

The school received a total delegated budget of £5,613,407 in the 2021-22 financial year for **1,111<sup>1</sup>** FTE pupils, which generates a per capita of £5,053. The average for all Grammar schools is £4,876.

The total Free School Meals Entitlement for the school is **257<sup>3</sup>** pupils, which represents 23.13% of the total FTE, which places the school in Band 1 for funding purposes.

The school received £0 for Small Schools Support funding.

Increased enrolments for an individual school typically has limited impact on the ASB for schools – as these pupils would be educated and funded elsewhere.

All other financial considerations (including any in-year costs for pupil growth, in the context of a school with an approved DP to increase its enrolment) would be for the EA to consider as Funding Authority for the school.

As a Voluntary Grammar school, the accounting arrangements differ from those of controlled or maintained schools and there is no available data on the school's carry-forward.

The school's delegated budget includes a total of £324,886 for Landlord Maintenance and Administrative costs factor funding, not applicable for controlled or maintained schools.

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

---

<sup>3</sup> The school's funding allocation is based on the previous year's census data (e.g. the October 2020 census data was used to determine the 2021-22 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).

<b>Factor</b>	<b>2021-22 £</b>	<b>2020-21 £</b>	<b>2019-20 £</b>
Pupil AWPU	4,860,035	4,541,577	4,262,605
TSN – Social Deprivation	97,449	94,416	95,933
TSN – Educational Attainment	9,610	9,601	9,411
Premises Area	125,639	125,639	121,210
Premises FTE	180,775	185,059	185,429
Teachers Salary Protection	1,652	9,611	2,885
Looked After Children	3,644	2,266	4,344
Newcomer Children	9,718	5,665	1,086
Landlord Maintenance	189,566	189,566	182,884
Administration Costs	135,320	135,200	132,560

<b>Total School Funding</b>	<b>5,613,407</b>	<b>5,298,599</b>	<b>4,998,347</b>
-----------------------------	------------------	------------------	------------------

Pupil FTE (no.)	1,111	1,110	1,088
Per Capita	£5,053	£4,774	£4,594

## ii) Curriculum, Qualifications and Standards Directorate

### Examination Performance

The table below shows the GCSE outcomes in the period 2015/16 to 2018/19

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Examination achievements of Year 12 pupils <sup>1</sup>				
Proportion achieving 5+GCSEs or equivalent A*-C	98%	100%	98%	98%



Grammar average proportion achieving 5+GCSEs or equivalent A*-C	97%	97%	96%	96%
Proportion achieving 5+ GCSEs grades A*-C (inc. GCSE English and GCSE maths)	97%	99%	98%	97%
Grammar average proportion achieving 5+ GCSEs grades A*-C (inc. GCSE English and GCSE maths)	94%	94%	94%	94%
Proportion achieving 7+GCSEs or equivalent A*-C	95%	93%	93%	92%
Grammar average proportion achieving 7+GCSEs or equivalent A*-C	92%	91%	91%	91%

Outcomes at GCE A-Level or equivalent qualifications between 2015/16 and 2018/19 are detailed in the table below.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Examination achievements of Year 13 and Year 14 pupils <sup>1</sup>				
Proportion achieving 2+ A-Levels or equivalent A-E (A*-E from 2009/10)	100%	100%	100%	100%
Grammar average proportion achieving 2+ A-Levels or equivalent A*-E	100%	100%	100%	100%
Proportion achieving 3+ A-Levels or equivalent A-C (A*-C from 2009/10)	82%	78%	82%	76%
Grammar average proportion achieving 3+ A-Levels or equivalent A*-C	76%	78%	78%	80%

### **Entitlement Framework**

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

### **Curricular Offer**

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

The table below sets out the EF data for academic year 2020/21, and shows that St Malachy's College is exceeding the statutory requirement of 21 qualifying courses at both KS4 and Post-16.

<b>St Malachy's College</b>		
<b>Data</b>	<b>Key Stage 4 (Year 11)</b>	<b>Post-16 (Year 13)</b>
Applied courses	11	10
General courses	15	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>25</b>

**At KS4** St Malachy's College offered and delivered 26 qualifying courses, where no courses were delivered in collaboration. The total number of KS4 pupils at year 11 and 12 was **322**.

**At Post-16** St Malachy's College offered and delivered 25 qualifying courses, with two applied courses being delivered in collaboration with Belfast Royal Academy. Five general courses were delivered in collaboration with Dominican College, Belfast Royal Academy, Belfast Model School for Girls and Belfast Boys Model School. The total number of post-16 pupils at year 13 and 14 was **267**.

EA consultation responses noted that St Mary's Christian Brothers Grammar School was omitted from the submission (we are unsure what is meant by submission) and that any increase would be detrimental to the school. 14-19 PT note that the 2020/21 curriculum Audit Report indicates that St Mary's Christian Brothers is **fully EF compliant** and exceeds the statutory EF requirements, please see the table below. The School did not deliver any courses in collaboration at KS4 or post-16, and the total number of pupils at KS4 was **359** and at post-16 was **274**.

<b>St Mary's Christian Brothers Grammar School</b>		
<b>Data</b>	<b>Key Stage 4 (Year 11)</b>	<b>Post-16 (Year 13)</b>
Applied courses	16	8
General courses	13	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>23</b>

14-19 PT note that CCMS reference that proposals submitted by grammar schools represent individual institution solutions, as opposed to the area solutions required by the area planning process. There are 17 post primary schools in North and West Belfast ALCs.

### **Conclusion**

The EF compliance rates for 2020/21, shown above, identifies that St Malachy's College is fully EF compliant and that the curricular offer exceeds the statutory EF requirement of 21 courses at both Key Stage 4 and post-16. Therefore, it would be reasonable to assume that the College should be able to continue to offer its pupils access to a broad and balanced curriculum which meets and exceeds the statutory

EF requirement. However, 14-19 PT note the concern that the proposed increase to a number of selective schools, could have a detrimental impact on the non-selective providers in the area.

### iii) School Admissions Team

#### Background:

St Malachy's College is a Voluntary Grammar school located in Belfast with approved admissions and enrolment numbers currently set at 150 in admissions and 1050 in enrolment.

DP 619 proposes that the school increases its admissions number from 150 to 170, with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 1050 to 1190 with effect from 1 September 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter.

#### Applications:

Over the past 4 years the school has received the following applications for admission to Year 8:

Year	Approved Admissions	First Preferences Applications	Total Applications (all preferences)
2018/19	150	229	260
2019/20	150	197	239
2020/21	170	229	248
2021/22	170	207	295

\*Figures provided by the Education Authority

#### Temporary Variations:

If a school receives more applications than it has places available it can request a TV to its admissions and/or enrolment number from SAT:

The table below shows the TVs granted to input name of school in the last 4 school years.

School Year	Approved Admissions Number	Approved Enrolment Number	Temporary Variations Approved (To total of)**	
			Admissions	Enrolment
2021/22	170*	1050	198	1092
2020/21	170*	1050		1055
2019/20	150	1050	173	
2018/19	150	1050		

\* Temporary increase in admissions number

\*\* Excludes supernumerary pupils i.e. statemented pupils, Year 8 Appeals or pupils admitted by the Exceptional Circumstances Body

## **Transfer 2020 Exercise**

In light of an increased cohort size transferring to post-primary education, the Department has taken the decision over recent years to allocate additional Year 8 places in advance of the post-primary admissions process commencing. While sufficient places exist across Northern Ireland, they are not all in the right locations and in some localities there is substantial oversubscription in some or all school sectors.

The Department wrote to all post-primary schools on 11 December 2019 to invite applications from any school that wished to be considered for additional places in both 2020 and 2021. This two-year approach was designed to ensure any capital works (where necessary) are future proofed while providing certainty for schools in relation to their admissions number.

In reviewing school applications in line with the published protocol, and in light of pressure identified for 2020 and 2021 in the denominational sector in North Belfast, St Malachy's College was allocated 20 additional Year 8 places for both years.

### **Long Term:**

The long term need for school places in specific areas falls into the area planning process. SAT does not hold data on future demand for places and is unable to make a recommendation on whether the DP should be approved.

#### **iv) Investment and Infrastructure Directorate**

School Enhancement Team comment

St Malachy's College was announced in May 2018 to advance in design under the second call to the School Enhancement Programme (SEP2). The project, which mainly addresses improvements to the school's heating and windows, will not be impacted by the Development Proposal.

#### **v) Shared Education Community Relations Team**

The proposer, the Chair of the Board of Governors, has stated in the Case for Change the College has built up strong links over the past few years with Belfast Royal Academy through the Shared Education Signature Project. The project involves 1,354 pupils from across both schools in various shared activities.

4 of the 14 listed neighbouring schools are involved in Shared Education through SESP/ 2019/20 Pilot/ Transition Phase including St Malachy's College.

There was no mention of Shared Education in the consultation responses. No evidence was presented of a detrimental or beneficial impact on Shared Education in the local area.

There is insufficient evidence to ascertain if EA has complied with its duty under Article 6 of the Shared Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

#### **vi) Inclusion and Wellbeing Directorate**

It is noted from the case for change (CFC) that St Malachy's College is viewed as a sustainable school. Attendance at a sustainable school underpins the fundamental principles of the special educational needs (SEN) Code of Practice, which focuses on a continuum of need and a continuum of provision, which may be made in a variety of forms. Children with SEN require the greatest possible access to a broad and balanced education, including the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

The educational impact section in the CFC notes that *'Regarding SEN, we have experienced staff and the numbers of students at Stage 5 have continued to grow. The provision of an additional class in Year 8 would in fact better enable us to deliver SEN provision.'*

Therefore, from a SEN policy perspective, SET would support this DP, subject to any impact on pupils with SEN being considered and managed effectively.

#### **vii) Education Workforce Directorate**

No issues/concerns have been identified, from a policy perspective, in respect of this development proposal for teaching and non-teaching staff.

If the DP is approved the school advises that this will initially require the employment of an additional teacher and that in the longer term, as additional pupils each year filters through

the school population, additional teaching and support staff will be employed dependent on the staffing needs each year. Highlighted in Section 7.1 on Page 54 of the Case for Change (CfC).

Assurance should however be sought from the EA/CCMS that any potential impact on the terms and conditions of teaching staff, particularly in relation to workload as a result of the increased enrolment, should be managed in accordance with:

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 increased class sizes, will be managed.

#### **viii) Transport and Food in Schools Directorate**

Given the numbers involved it would be anticipated the financial implications for the transport budget would not be significant.

## SHARED EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

Programme	School		Partnership	
	Ref No	Name	Number	Membership
SESP /Pilot / Transition Phase	1420028	Belfast Royal Academy	88	St Malachy's College VGS
SESP /Pilot / Transition Phase	1420029	St Dominic's High School	25	Friends' School VGS
SESP /Pilot / Transition Phase	1420277	Aquinas Grammar	114	Wellington College GS
SESP /Pilot / Transition Phase	4420259	Our Lady & St Patrick's College	41	Grosvenor GS and Lagan College GMI

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE COMMENTS

## ETI Development Proposal Commentary Paper

DP 619

Date of last ETI report: January 2020

Web link: <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/sustaining-improvement-inspection-involving-action-short-strike-st-malachys-college>Date<sup>4</sup>:

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

The sub-committees of the board of governors have been realigned to focus more specifically on standards and achievements and the future knowledge and skills requirements of the local and wider economy. The development proposal aligns well with the overall strategic plan for the college as agreed in the school development plan.

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

North Belfast provides parents with a wide range of post-primary options for their children. These include voluntary grammar, non-selective, single sex, co-educational, integrated, special, controlled and maintained. In addition, families may have long-standing connections with the various schools that cross many generations of learners. This applies to the Catholic boys' grammar schools in north and west Belfast. Some boys travel from west Belfast to St. Malachy's College in north Belfast and other boys travel from north Belfast to the Christian Brothers Grammar School in west Belfast.

School data for outcomes in public examinations for post-primary schools in the wider area can be accessed through Schools Plus (<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/services/schools-plus>).

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

---

<sup>4</sup> This commentary paper is based on the information and evidence available to ETI on this date. Please check the ETI website [www.etini.gov.uk](http://www.etini.gov.uk) for any new inspection reports that may have published after this date.



One of the key potential benefits of the proposal could be the increase in opportunity and educational outcomes for those boys who live close by the college and who are entitled to free school meals (FSME). The college has focused in a specific way on encouraging boys from deprived socio-economic backgrounds to attend the school. The percentage of boys entitled FSME achieving 7+ GCSEs including English and mathematics has risen from 9% in 2013 to 22% in 2019.

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

There may a concern around the possible impact on the number of boys choosing to attend other post-primary schools in the locality. The points made in Section 2 regarding boys moving between north and west Belfast make it very difficult to measure the potential impact in the short to medium term. Implementation should not be considered until the area based plans are completed in 2020; appropriate phasing of the proposal would support other decisions that need to be made in area planning in north Belfast.

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

Sustainable Schools Criterion	Indicator	Meets criterion		
		Yes	No (reason(s))	Information not available
Quality Educational Experience	1.1 Attainment levels of pupils, Key Stage tests pending development of new indicators for Primary Schools, GCSE results for Post-Primary Schools.	✓		
	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.	NA		
	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.	NA		
	1.4 The ability of the school to cater for children with Special Educational Needs.	✓		
	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.			
	1.6 The standards and the quality of learning and teaching at the school.			v (ASOS)
	1.7 The range of curricular and extra-curricular activities available for children including career guidance, physical education, music, art, drama and science.	v		
	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.	v		
	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.	v		
Strong Leadership and Management by Boards of Governors and Principals	4.1 Governors' views on the school based on quantitative and qualitative evidence.	v		
	4.8 There is a school development plan in place and progress is being made to achieve the plan's aims and objectives.	v		
	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).	v		
<b>Strong links with the Community</b>	6.1 Degree and quality of parental involvement (schools will be asked to provide evidence on this).	v		
	6.3 Contribution of the school to the community (schools will be asked to provide evidence on this).	v		
	6.4 Presence of other features of provision, e.g. nursery or specialist unit.			

## 6. Summary of impact of the proposal

There is a need to balance the key potential benefits of the proposal, namely the increase in opportunity and educational outcomes for those boys who live close by the college and who are entitled to FSME, against the possible impact on the number of boys choosing to attend the other boys'/co-educational post-primary schools included in the 'all provision – 5 mile radius map'. As such, a decision should not be taken until the area based planning work has been considered fully.

Comments received during the two month statutory objection period

**Response to Development Proposal 619 – St Malachy’s College.  
Submitted on behalf of the Board of Governors of Blessed Trinity College.**

The Board of Governors of Blessed Trinity College object to Development Proposal 619 on the following grounds.

It is our understanding that any request for a Development Proposal such as an increase in admissions number must come from the Trustees of the school. Development Proposal 619 from St Malachy’s College is signed on behalf of the Board of Governors and does not therefore have the approval of the Catholic Trustees. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Development Proposal 619 contravenes current legislation.

The proposed permanent expansion to the admission number for St. Malachy’s is in direct contradiction to the outworking of the Area Planning process which was agreed by the Catholic Trustees and all the Catholic managed schools in North Belfast. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that approval should not be given to Development Proposal 619 as it directly challenges the Department of Education’s strategy for Area Planning.

Heavy over-subscription does not mean that a school needs to increase its admission number, especially when there are vacant places in schools in both North and West Belfast. This will disadvantage other schools in relation to enrolment figures.

Page 3 of the Case for Change – Supporting Information report by St. Malachy’s College refers to a statement made by a staff member, *“I believe it is vitally important to increase numbers for admission to enhance the learning opportunity for those children within the local community who miss out”*. Inclusion of this statement in the report by the Board of Governors is indicative of a drive to create an elitist establishment in North Belfast and is contemptuous of all other local schools and the educational opportunities they provide. All schools strive to *“enhance the learning opportunity for those children within the local community”*.

Page 3 of the Case for Change – Supporting Information report by St. Malachy’s College refers to a statement made by a parent, *“I also strongly feel that it is a shame that in the local area there are boys with a B1 who cannot continue their education in a Catholic based school”*. Inclusion of this statement is factually inaccurate given that there are a number of Catholic based schools in North Belfast.

**All further page references refer to the document entitled “St Malachy’s College Case for Change”.**

Page 9 refers to the GL Transfer Assessment and the rationale it provides for the Board of Governors’ Proposal. It is noted that neither the Department of Education nor the Catholic Trustees support the use of this unregulated mechanism to select children for Post Primary placements.

Pages 14-16 refers to the Year 8 admissions in St. Malachy’s. Like all selective schools the Year 8 applications and admissions are healthy. This is the same for the other all boys selective school St. Mary’s CBGS. Table 1 below shows a similar picture to the one presented by St Malachy’s. Even when applications are high there are lots of schools with places. If a permanent increase is permitted this will leave lots of other schools across the city with empty seats. This contradicts the premise of Area Based Planning and good governance of the public purse.

**Table 1(i)**  
Summary of Applications and Admissions to Year 8 in St. Mary’s CBGS

Year	Approved Admission Number	Total Applications	Total Admissions (excluding Statemented Pupils)	Additional Statemented Pupils	Total Admissions (including Statemented Pupils)
2019/20	175	233	176	6	182
2018/19	175	285	176	4	181
2017/18	175	225	174	4	178

**Table 1(ii)**  
First Preference Applications in St. Mary’s CBGS

Year	Approved Admission Number	Number of First Preference Applications
2019/20	175	189
2018/19	175	210
2017/18	175	176
2016/17	175	183

Pages 19 – 28 refers to examination based data to promote the value of the educational experience offered by St Malachy's. Blessed Trinity College could equally offer examination based data to illustrate the value provided to students. Blessed Trinity College, like all schools, has a robust School Development Plan with a specific focus on Raising Standards for all students. It is disingenuous to suggest that one school has a monopoly on raising standards.

Page 34 table 19(i) refers to the current financial position of the school. Whilst Blessed Trinity College is currently also financially secure, acceptance of the Development Proposal 619 would undoubtedly put a critical strain on the current financial planning arrangements. Blessed Trinity College and other schools will potentially move into deficit as a result of an increased admission number in St. Malachy's. Page 49 refers to the need to appoint additional teaching and support staff, meanwhile staff in the Catholic Maintained schools in North and West Belfast will be facing redundancies as a direct result of Development Proposal 619. The public purse will not be well served if schools are forced into issuing redundancy notices to staff.

Page 35 states, *"The College also offers its own bus service operating two buses to South and West Belfast daily"*. Furthermore, Pages 11- 13 clearly show the number of students who attend St Malachy's who do not reside in North Belfast. Clearly students are being bussed into the school from other areas of the city in order to boost the school population. This removes places for local children and creates a surplus of seats in other parts of the city.

Page 38 refers to the reorganisation of Catholic education in North Belfast and makes the following claim *"Increasing the approved enrolment at St Malachy's College will **not** have a detrimental impact on any other school"*. Page 44 states, *"20 additional places per year will **not impact negatively** on the other schools within the locality."* Both these statements are ludicrous when one considers the population figures across Belfast. Indeed, table 3 on Page 14 clearly shows that the long term growth of male population does not exist.

Page 38 states, *"St Mary's CBGS is the closest alternative provision and it is constantly oversubscribed both in Year 8 admission and for places within its **sixth form**"*. This claim is inaccurate as Table 2 shows.

**Table 2**

Population numbers in Year 13 and 14 in St. Mary's CBGS

Year	Year 13	Year 14
2019/20	151	120
2018/19	151	116
2017/18	155	127
2016/17	152	132
2015/16	158	159
2014/15	190	142

Page 39 table 20 refers to oversubscription in a number of selective schools in the Belfast area. Oversubscription is not a valid argument to increase enrolment given that there are plenty of places available in other schools in the greater Belfast area. The concern is that there are places available in a range of Catholic Maintained schools across the city and if Development Proposal 619 is accepted then this will have a detrimental effect on these schools. This shows no consideration to Area Based Planning to which all schools in both North and West Belfast are part of.

Page 43 refers to St. Malachy's being oversubscribed with first preferences. The Transfer process allows parents to add their preferences in order listing a number of schools. Table 23 indicates that first preferences for St. Malachy's has **decreased** in the last year, but this point has not been highlighted in the document.

Page 44 refers to the benefits to St Malachy's of increasing its admission number. In particular, it references the enhanced curriculum it will be able to offer students in North Belfast. This needs to be considered in the wider context of North Belfast. The enhanced provision for one school will lead to a reduction in curriculum offer in other schools.

Page 44 paragraph 2 states "*St Malachy's College is now a campus, providing for pupils in many different uniforms...from many schools*". A statement such as this should be supported with specific data. Blessed Trinity College is an active member of the North Belfast ALC and can find no evidence which would support this statement either in spirit or fact.

Statistical information on "School population projections information" show that for 2020-21 the proposed need for places in selective schools is the same as that for 2019/20 (9,279) but for non selective schools the number of required places is reduced from 15,706 in 19/20 to 15,527 for 2020/21 across Northern Ireland. A reduction in need of 179 places. (Ref: education-ni.gov.uk) The non selective schools should be filled up before selective schools increase their admission numbers. If this is allowed it will have a detrimental effect on the populations of non selective schools, therefore impacting on budgets, staffing levels and eventually the ability of these schools to deliver a broad curriculum to their pupils. Any increase in Catholic selective school admission numbers will impact on a range of Catholic Maintained schools across the city. This reduction in need for non selective schools continues into the school year 2021/22 (15,308). The figures decline generally each year and by 2028/29 the Year 8 population will have further reduced to 22,741. (Ref: education-ni.gov.uk). This clearly illustrates that acceptance of Development Proposal 619 is unnecessary given that capacity will exist within the Catholic school system.

The aim of St. Malachy's is to increase its intake by 140 students over 7 years. This would certainly strengthen St. Malachy's sustainability and finances but would leave other Catholic managed schools in North Belfast in an extremely vulnerable position.





*St. Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School*  
*Scoil Mhuire na mBráithre Críostaí*



147a Glen Road, Belfast, BT11 8NR 147a Bóthar an Ghleanna, Béal Feirste, BT11 8NR  
Telephone: (028) 9029 4000 Fax.: (028) 9029 4009  
Website: [www.stmaryschgs.com](http://www.stmaryschgs.com)

'Nurturing faith, promoting partnership, excelling in teaching and learning, creating a caring school community and inspiring transformational leadership.'

26<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Board of Governors and Trustees of St. Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School have considered Development Proposal No 619 submitted on behalf of the Board of Governors of St. Malachy's College, Belfast.

Please find enclosed our objection to this developmental proposal.

Yours faithfully

Siobhan Kelly (Mrs.)  
Principal and Correspondent to the Board of Governors

## **Objections to the Development Proposal No 619 – St Malachy’s College submitted on behalf of the Board of Governors and Trustees of St. Mary’s Christian Brothers’ Grammar School**

- It is our understanding that any request for a ‘Development Proposal’ such as an increase in admissions number should come from the Trustees of the grammar schools. All of the Belfast school development proposals, including St. Malachy’s, seem to originate with the Chair of Boards of Governors without Trustee authorisation.
- The proposed increase in the admission number for St. Malachy’s does not fit with the Area Planning which all schools in North Belfast are part of and which involved the Catholic Trustees. North Belfast is currently well served by St. Malachy’s and Belfast Royal Academy for grammar school provision. Approval should not be given to this Development Proposal as it directly challenges the Department of Education’s strategy for Area Planning.
- Heavy over-subscription doesn’t mean that a school needs to increase its admission number, especially when there are vacant places in schools in North and West Belfast. This will disadvantage other schools’ in relation to enrolment figures.
- On Pg. 3 of the ‘Case for Change’ report by St. Malachy’s College, refers to a statement made by a staff member, *“I believe it is vitally important to increase numbers for admission to enhance the learning opportunity for those children within the local community who miss out.”* Inclusion of this statement in the report by the Board of Governors is indicative of a drive to create an elitist establishment in North Belfast and is contemptuous of all other local schools (especially the non-grammar) and the educational opportunities they provide. ETi inspections of these schools and publication of recent annual area profiles by the EA indicated that these other schools also, *“enhance the learning opportunity for those children within the local community”*.
- St Malachy’s temporary variance in 2019 clearly benefitted mostly ‘A’ grade pupils- this trend will continue as evidenced in 2018 when they enrolled an exclusively A grade cohort. Parents’ comments included indicate support for the Development Plan on the grounds it will advantage B grade students but as St Malachy’s have shown in 2018, an exclusively A grade intake is desirable.
- Pg. 14-16 refers to the Year 8 admissions in St. Malachy’s. Like all grammar schools the Year 8 applications and admissions are healthy. This is the same for St. Mary’s CBGS (Table 1). Even when applications are high there are a number of schools with places. If an increase is permitted this will leave lots of other schools across the city with empty seats. This flies in the face of Area Based Planning and good governance of the public purse.

**Table 1(i)**

Summary of Applications and Admissions to Year 8 in St. Mary's CBGS

Year	Approved Admission Number	Total Applications	Total Admissions (excluding Statemented Pupils)	Additional Statemented Pupils	Total Admissions (including Statemented Pupils)
2019/20	175	233	176	6	182
2018/19	175	285	176	4	181
2017/18	175	225	174	4	178

**Table 1(ii)**

First Preference Applications in St. Mary's CBGS

Year	Approved Admission Number	Number of First Preference Applications
2019/20	175	189
2018/19	175	210
2017/18	175	176
2016/17	175	183

- Table 18 pg. 33 of the 'Case for Change' report by St. Malachy's College refers to lack of grammar school places but refers only to St. Malachy's. This does not take into account that other grammar schools such as St. Mary's who are well placed to meet the needs of the pupils who not only choose St. Mary's as first preference but also second and third preference etc.
- Table 19(i) on pg.34 shows that St. Malachy's is currently in a 2.15% deficit (with an accumulated surplus of £122,494. This is the most important driver of a request for an increased Admissions number. The report claims the school will be in a 'break-even' position by March 2020, but no details of how this will come about are given. In the absence of detail we can only assume that the 'break-even' is achieved through the proposed increase in admissions as no other explanation has been provided. What about the other schools who will be in further deficit as a result of an increased admission number in St. Malachy's? According to the Annual Area Profiles for 2019 two of the maintained schools that will be directly impacted by the proposed Developmental Proposal are already in a deficit one school by 41.24% and another by 2.71% Ref: [www.eani.org.uk/annualareaprofiles](http://www.eani.org.uk/annualareaprofiles).
- The report states on pg.35 that, "*The College also offers its own (private) bus service operating two buses to South and West Belfast daily*". Are pupils being bussed into North Belfast to boost the school population away from other areas where there are school places available?

- The report notes on pg. 38 that, “*St Mary’s CBGS is the closest alternative provision and it is constantly oversubscribed both in Year 8 admission and for places within its sixth form*”. This claim is inaccurate as Table 2 shows.

**Table 2**

Population numbers in Year 13 and 14 in St. Mary’s CBGS

Year	Year 13	Year 14
2019/20	151	120
2018/19	151	116
2017/18	155	127
2016/17	152	132
2015/16	158	159
2014/15	190	142

Sixth form figures for St. Mary’s indicate that intake in Key Stage 5 is well below the 175 enrolment number for each year group. St. Malachy’s have made a sweeping statement that is totally untrue.

- On pg. 39 of the report states that, “*The Board of Governors believe that the current admissions number of 150 does not cater for the demand for Catholic boys’ grammar school places in the North Belfast and wider area*”. There are however schools in both North and West Belfast with places. If St. Malachy’s is permitted to increase the admission number, then other schools in the area will have a reduced intake of pupils. In the correspondence to the Principal of St. Mary’s CBGS dated 25<sup>th</sup> February 2019, The Department of Education stated that, “*... there were significant numbers of available places in North Belfast*”. When the figures are analysed further, looking specifically at denominational schools, the report states that, “***no requirement for additional places in the denominational sector***”. Why then would St. Malachy’s be considered for an increase in their admissions number by 20 pupils? If permitted this will impact on the enrolment and profile of schools in North and West Belfast, both the Maintained schools and also St. Mary’s CBGS. Indeed, on pg. 15 of the report the catchment area is discussed which covers an extensive area of 15 mile radius, including Antrim and Ballnahinch. Therefore, an increase in admissions number would impact across a wide area. The inclusion on Pg.3 of the following statement “*I feel that it is vitally important to offer the additional places in order to accommodate children from the local area*” seems strange. *Indeed, any suggestion of local community impact should be treated with caution.*
- On Table 20, pg. 39 of the report submitted by St. Malachy’s includes information on four Grammar schools. St. Malachy’s has again been careful to reference ‘North Belfast and wider area’. West Belfast is being seen as a distinct and separate entity. Conveniently the impact on West Belfast has been ignored. St. Mary’s as the only other ‘all boys’ grammar school in Belfast has been omitted. Table 21 refers to the same four schools again; but **St. Mary’s CBGS has also been omitted** and in doing so this table has no merit or validity in making an argument for increased enrolment. The validity of this table is questionable. Over subscription in any of the schools that were included in the table is not a valid argument to increase enrolment given that

there are plenty of places available in other schools in the greater Belfast area. If allowed where would this end?

- Table 22(ii) refers to male school enrolment. St. Malachy's refers to feeder primary schools but these are feeder primary schools for all of the other schools in both North and West Belfast. Pupils from these primary schools do not apply exclusively to St. Malachy's. There is no information to indicated that these pupils will want a place in St. Malachy's in the future. It is impossible to make a judgement in 2019 what the choice a parent will make for their child as far into the future as 2025.
- Pg. 43 refers to St. Malachy's being oversubscribed with first preferences. The Transfer process allows parents to add their preferences in order listing a number of schools. Table 23 indicates that first preferences for St. Malachy's has **decreased** in the last year, but this point is not highlighted in the report.
- Quite rightly on pg. 43 St. Malachy's states that parents choose their preferences for post primary schools across the city. Reference is made that parents may choose Aquinas or Rathmore, again West Belfast has been excluded. This confirms that travel distance and geographical location are secondary considerations by parents. The concern is that there are places available in a range of maintained schools across the city and if grammar schools are allowed to increase admissions then this will have a detrimental effect on other schools, leading to reduced budgets, redundancies and reduced curriculum offer. This shows no consideration to Area Based Planning. All schools in both North and West Belfast are part of this.
- The distance between St. Mary's CBGS and St. Malachy's College is 4.7miles and the journey time is 10 minutes by car. An increase in St. Malachy's College admissions number will have a detrimental impact on the enrolment in St. Mary's CBGS. The transport time between in two schools using public transport is 42 minutes at its peak.
- Pg. 44 of the report refers to *"...effective and efficient use of the current resources"*, this would need to be considered in the wider context of North and West Belfast. The resources, accommodation and people' are in place in the other schools who will be impacted if an increase in Admissions number is approved. Is this effective and efficient use of the public purse?
- Page 44 states the increase in admission numbers will allow St Malachy's to skill pupils from North Belfast to meet current and future needs - this is misleading and implies that it will be North Belfast pupils who will exclusively benefit from any increased enrolment. Parents of pupils in North Belfast are being misled that the school is acting in the interests of this specific community.

- In paragraph 2 on pg. 44 the report states that, “...20 places/ year will not impact negatively on the other schools within the locality.” This is a surprising claim to made, considering the population figures across Belfast and Northern Ireland.
- “The number of 16-19 year olds in Northern Ireland is projected to decrease by 0.2% throughout the decade 2014-2024 with a concurrent projected decrease in the number of 16-19year olds in 6 of the 11 new LGDs (Local Government District)” The document goes on to state that, “In overall terms, the places available will be sufficient to meet the needs of the projected growth in population.” In Belfast particularly figures indicate that, “the population in the age range 16-19 years is projected to decrease by 1.4% by 2024”. The report highlights the need to promote shared education solutions which provide sustainable schools, not the need for grammar schools to increase their admissions number to the detriment of other schools. Ref” Providing Pathways Strategic Area Plan for School Provision” <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp47.htm>
- Section 5.3 states that the provision of an additional class will "better enable us to deliver SEN provision" Again this is a subjective, misleading and unsubstantiated comment - how? No compelling explanation is provided. What is this assumption based upon that pupil numbers correlates with quality of provision? Or that increasing pupil numbers improves quality of provision? Selective schools can only enrol Stage 5 pupils based on SEN needs - the SEN needs of other pupils transferring via GL are made known after acceptance of a place. Increasing admissions is not a decision driven by a wish to improve SEN provision or access to grammar education for SEN pupils.
- Statistical information on School population projections information show that for 2020-21 the proposed need for places in grammar schools is the same as that for 2019/20 (9,279) but for other secondary the number of required places is reduced from 15,706 in 19/20 to 15,527 for 2020/21 across Northern Ireland. A reduction in need of 179 places. (Ref: education-ni.gov.uk) The other secondary schools should be filled up before grammar schools increase their admission numbers. If this is allowed it will have a detrimental effect on the populations of other schools, therefore impacting on budgets, staffing levels and eventually the ability of these schools to deliver a broad curriculum to their pupils. This year 2019/20 the enrolment in the maintained schools in West Belfast was down. Any increase in Catholic Grammar school admission numbers will impact on a range of maintained school across the city. It is impossible to separate North and West Belfast schools because of their close proximity. This reduction in need for ‘other secondary schools ‘continues into the school year 2021/22 (15,308). The figures decline generally each year and by 2028/29 the Year 8 population will have further reduced to 22,741. (Ref: education-ni.gov.uk). Why then allow certain schools to increase their admissions number when there is already capacity in other schools?

- St. Malachy's are proposing an increase in admission number due to 'alleged increases in demand' in North Belfast, however they are continuing to operate a bus from West and South Belfast. Again indicating the impact of increasing St. Malachy's admission number will be felt across the city.
- In St. Malachy's report makes reference to STEAM educational provision, Pastoral Care and SEN provision. These claims can be made by St. Mary's CBGS and all of the other schools that will be impacted by an increase in enrolment number in St. Malachy's. They are not alone in providing well for the education of the pupils in Belfast and the surrounding area.
- St Malachy's while at the time of applying may well be able to accommodate additional numbers, '*with no additional accommodation*', to facilitate the increased admissions number; in the long term this increase may well require revisions in the accommodation in this school. This would impact on an application for funding from other schools such as St. Mary's CBGS.
- On pg. 49 of the report St. Malachy's refers to the need to appoint additional teaching and support staff, meanwhile staff in the maintained schools in North and West Belfast will be facing redundancies as a direct result of St. Malachy's and other grammar schools increasing their admissions number.
- At the end of the report, pg. 50 the financial position is discussed. This is the main reason for the request for an increase in the admissions number. This is about generating additional budget share income, while other schools will lose out. St. Malachy's is currently in a 2.15% deficit (with an accumulated surplus of £122,494. To emphasise again, this is the rationale for the requested consideration of an increased Admissions number. The report claims the school will be in a 'break-even' position by March 2020, but to emphasise no details of how this will come about are given. In the absence of detail, we can only assume that the 'break-even' is achieved through the proposed increase in admissions. Again consideration should be given to the two maintained schools who are already in a deficit one school by 41.24% and another by 2.71%. (Ref: [www.eani.org.uk/annualareaprofiles](http://www.eani.org.uk/annualareaprofiles). Increased admissions in St. Malachy's will impact on these schools and further increase their deficit.
- The aim of St. Malachy's is to increase its intake by 140 students over 7 years. This would certainly strengthen St. Malachy's sustainability and finances but would leave other schools in North Belfast in an extremely vulnerable position, especially at their very point of growth, specifically Edmund Rice College and Blessed Trinity College. There would be a similar impact in West Belfast in all of the Catholic maintained schools and St. Mary's CBGS.
- Obviously this Developmental Proposal has been a long term plan and hopefully funding already allocated through the 'School Enhancement Programme' SEP 1 and SEP 2 will not have been part of St. Malachy's plan.



T +44 (0) 2890 848 433

W [www.edmundricecollege.co.uk](http://www.edmundricecollege.co.uk)

E [info@edmundricecollege.co.uk](mailto:info@edmundricecollege.co.uk)

Acting Principal Mr Paul Berne | BA Hons | PGCE

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020

**Edmund Rice College response to Development Proposal 619 for St Malachy's College proposing an increase in Admissions Number from 150 to 170, with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 1,050 to 1,190 with effect from September 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter.**

The Governors of Edmund Rice College wish to object to this proposal, in the strongest possible manner, for the reasons outlined below.

As part of Area Planning proposals pertaining to DP 444, a model for North Belfast and Glengormley schools was approved in October 2015 to ensure the viability and sustainability of all schools in this area. This proposal took effect from September 2017. This new proposal would fundamentally undermine this process and the parameters on which it was approved. In addition, the proposal, despite indicating that 'increasing the enrolment will not have a detrimental impact on any other school', could potentially have a devastating impact on schools in Belfast in the immediate future and the longer term. Whilst the DP highlights increased numbers in the area and oversubscription for a number of 'like' schools, it is clear from the school population projections that this proposal will detrimentally impact the secondary school sector. Population projections show that the proposed need for places in grammar schools next year is the same as that in 2019-20 (9,279) but for other secondary schools, the number of required places is reduced from 15,706 in 2019-20 to 15,529 for 2020-21. This decreases further to 15,308 in 2020/21 and by 2024/25 is expected to be as low as 14,862. The population growth, which the proposals are predicated on, is not permanent and will clearly fall again. Between 2002 and 2017 the population of pupils in post-primary schools dropped by 10%, 15,202 pupils. This drop in numbers had to be absorbed almost totally by non-selective schools and during that period 34 non-selective schools closed. There are already a number of schools in North and West Belfast that have been undersubscribed in the past three years, despite an increased population. The DE Census for 2018/19 showed that there were 1143 surplus places across Belfast post-primary schools. To add extra places for the grammar sector, is not a solution that is in the best interests of all, as is reflected in EA's own area planning rationale. "Determining the sectoral split should be based on the best interests of pupils and not focused on the ambitions of individual institutions."

Other schools will be hugely disadvantaged as a result. If this is allowed, it will have a negative impact on the populations of other schools, therefore impacting on budgets, staffing levels and eventually the ability of these schools to deliver a broad curriculum to their pupils and jeopardise the ability to deliver the Entitlement Framework. Options for change in any sector must be cognisant of the 'bigger picture', from an area planning perspective, including consideration of the availability



of empty places within the entire school estate. Area solutions require consideration of all options, for an area as a whole, in order to address their potential impact. The area sub-group set up by the EA to determine a strategic solution for the Greater Belfast Region has not completed its work at this time and has further strategic work to complete.

Edmund Rice College has an enrolment number of 750 pupils. Like many schools, this year the Governors applied for a temporary variation of 21 places, to facilitate the management of increased numbers in the short term. Any long term solution to any increased demand should be agreed at Area Planning level and be applied on a fair and equitable basis across the whole area. This must serve the interests of all, not just a few. The approval of this proposal, out with wider area planning, will be divisive and inevitably create an elitist perception as the Case for Change outlines that 'an extension in numbers would further enable students to benefit from an excellent educational offering'. It is clear from the educational outcomes and recent ETI inspections that Edmund Rice College also provides an excellent educational offering for students of all ability.

The DP justifies an increase in admissions "based on the recognised standard of a grammar school admitting all A and 80% of B grades." No such standard exists, rather this is an arbitrary figure with no educational substance. Indeed, the majority of Catholic grammar schools do not fill with A and B grades. In reality, each grammar fills their admissions number by accepting pupils of all grades, starting with A's and working downwards. [In a year of lower demand, a selective school will adjust its admissions criteria to allow students attaining less well in the transfer test to be admitted to their school to ensure places are filled. With a number of selective schools currently admitting students from across the full grade range, this indicates that high outcomes in the test are not a required arbiter for admission.](#)

The DP makes the claim that it will not have a detrimental impact on other schools. This is contrary to the clear intention of targeting six main feeders of which three are main feeders of Edmund Rice College. Table 3 is misleading as the scale chosen tries to indicate a substantial difference in male enrolment numbers, when any increase is minimal. It is quite clear that the reality is that St Malachys have targeted the top twenty boys from this population.

St Malachys College makes clear in its proposal that it remains in a strong financial position with a surplus of £122,000. They emphasise the importance of improving this position further as a key motivator for the proposal. It is very clear from the proposal that the main driver is financial and St Malachys views the increase in numbers as a solution to budgetary pressures. Many non-grammar schools in North Belfast are currently running deficits and the proposal, if approved, would worsen this situation unnecessarily and unfairly. The EA is well aware of the efforts of Principals and Governors to reduce deficits despite reductions in AWPU and increased employer costs. It would have grave implications for other schools if St Malachys are allocated an extra 20 pupils each year at the expense of other schools in the area. Table 27 in the DP makes it clear that St Malachys would wish to remove £578,100 annually from the budgets of other local schools.

Furthermore, at the time of application, St Malachys may well be able to accommodate additional numbers 'with no additional accommodation' to facilitate the increased admissions number; in the long term this increase may well require revisions in existing accommodation. This would impact on application of funding from other schools.

A development proposal is a permanent change to a school's situation. Great care is needed to ensure that all future likelihoods, including the reduction in the school population is planned for. It is highly unlikely that St Malachys College will reduce the admissions number to the school to reflect any future reduction in area population.

Based on the above concerns, the Board of Governors are fundamentally opposed to the plans to increase the admissions number of St Malachys College.

## Development Proposals

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 27 April 2020 11:59  
**To:** Development Proposals  
**Subject:** Development Proposals 618, 619, 620 and 621

### **St Patrick's Academy, Lisburn response to proposals for the expansion of enrolment numbers for Grammar Schools in the Greater Belfast Area.**

**RE: DP 618; DP 619; DP 620; DP 621**

#### **Context.**

The school aged population across Northern Ireland generally, and the Greater Belfast (and Lisburn) area specifically, has been in a state of flux.

Over a number of years there was a precipitous decrease in the number of children transferring from primary to post primary schools.

"Selective schools", i.e. those claiming to offer a supposed "academic" curriculum, that (according to them) necessitated a process to identify children blessed with the gloriously promiscuous term "ability", developed their own independent testing system to allow them to pick who they would deign to educate.

While the overall pupil population decreased, the enrolment into Grammar schools remained more or less constant, as did their social make up (as indicated by FSM entitlement). The enrolment into all-ability schools mirrored the general population trend and fell, while the overall percentage of FSM and SEN pupils in such schools increased. At no stage did any selective school request a decrease in its enrolment to preserve their much vaunted "academic ability" profile. This can only be explained by the majority of Grammar schools "widening" their criteria for admittance, filtering out children entitled to FSM, and filling to capacity. This action by Grammar schools undermines their rational that they are matching provision to the needs of the child.

Because of how schools are funded the net result of this was to transfer funds from all-ability schools to the Grammar sector. In effect the Selective schools protected themselves from financial hardship by "asset stripping" their secondary colleagues. There were mass redundancies and school closure in the all-ability sector while the Grammar schools remained insulated from the pressures of a falling school aged population.

#### **Grammar School proposals.**

The outrageous proposals submitted by Grammar Schools represents individual institutions attempting a "land grab" using the (temporary) increase in the number of pupils transferring from primary school as a pretence to increase their enrolment. The proposals fly in the face of any attempt to formulate a Strategic Plan and undermine a variety of strategic working groups charged with proposing solutions for the future of educational provision in Northern Ireland.

Last year (2019) in the Greater Belfast area alone Grammar schools were permitted to admit 145 extra pupils through temporary variations to their enrolment. Of these 119 children could have been catered for in all ability schools. This decision alone equates to the transfer of approximately £507,500 from the secondary to the Grammar sector. At a time of huge financial pressure such an officially sanctioned haemorrhage of funds from the secondary to the Grammar sector is unsustainable and will lead, once more, to mass redundancies in secondary schools.

If permission is given for over-subscribed schools to permanently expand this would represent, from the Development proposals own figures, Grammar schools “asset stripping” £1,890,000 per year from the secondary sector. In addition, as Grammar schools are permitted to levy a so-called “voluntary contribution” even a £100 contribution will yield an additional £54,000 for such schools.

Such transfer of funds from all ability schools to the selective sector will exacerbate the pressures placed on secondary schools once the number of transferring pupils fall. Grammar Schools have not, as yet requested a decrease in their enrolment in response to a population decrease.

The influential establishment supporters of the Grammar sector laude “parental choice” as a driving force for expanding the selective sector. It is unsurprising that parents express a preference for schools that have been at capacity and receiving the maximum amount of funding over that last number of years. The secondary sector has, by contrast, had to manage the population downturn and associated financial pressures, including mass redundancy. This has led many to have restricted subject choice and limited freedom to fund enrichment activities.

When parents compare it is not surprising that Grammar schools seem more attractive.

**Conclusion.**

The request from a number of Grammar schools to permanently expand their enrolment is in effect a demand to transfer funds from secondary schools. If granted this will cause redundancies and school closure.

Dr Seamus Quinn

(Head teacher St Patrick’s Academy, Lisburn)

**Belfast Area Catholic Schools' Trustees**  
*c/o Catholic Schools' Trustee Service, St Mary's University College, 191 Falls Road, Belfast. BT11 6FE*

Area Planning Policy Team  
 Department of Education  
 Rathgael House  
 Balloo Road  
 BANGOR  
 BT19 7PR

**Re: Belfast Voluntary Grammar Schools: Development Proposals**

**DP 608, 618, 619, 620, 621 & 633**

DP	School	Admission No	Proposed Increase	Enrolment No	Increased Places
DP 608	Strathearn School	110	10	770	70
DP618	Assumption Grammar School	120	10	840	70
DP 619	St Malachy's College	150	20	1050	140
DP 620	Our Lady & St Patrick's College	180	10	1260	70
DP 621	Aquinas Grammar School	110	20	770	140
DP 633	Bangor Grammar School	125	10	850	50

As Trustees of a significant number of post primary schools in the Belfast area we have, over several years been engaged in meeting together with CSTS and with CCMS, in reviewing the needs of the area. These discussions are ongoing.

In the course of discussions analysis of available data has identified temporary shortfalls in post-primary provision in parts of Greater Belfast. However, it is also clear from the Live Birth/ School attendance patterns that there has been a significant fall off in Births since a peak in 2011 followed by a significant decline annually (of around 13%). It is expected that this will result in a peak in relation to post primary admissions in 2023/24 followed by a year on year fall in the provision required (see tables below). The reduction can already be seen with a sharp drop at primary level admissions in the locality from the 2018/19 and 2019/20 intakes.

The Trustees would therefore have concerns that the above DPs which seek permanent increases in admissions and LTEs will result in a longer-term increase in surplus provision within the area.

**Live Births and school intakes Greater Belfast**

Live Births						
Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total Births	4644	4617	4598	4806	4925	4737
Actual Year 1	4305	4282	4310	4474	4650	4436
Year 1 Start	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2017/18	2018/19
Year 8	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Births	4621	4596	4521	4421	3976	
Actual year 1	4301	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	
Year 1 Start	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	
Year 8 Start	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	

Given that the Area Planning mechanism had been carrying out a review of provision in Greater Belfast it was disappointing to learn that several individual schools had pre-empted a collective Area Planning solution by putting forward a series of individual school-based proposals.

In recent years, the Trustees of the Catholic schools in Belfast have worked closely in collaboration with CCMS to significantly reduce surplus places from the Maintained post-primary sector. This has resulted in;

- The closure of one school;
- The removal of 1955 places;
- The completion of the amalgamations of 5 schools into two new schools

These changes are still embedding within the sector and, even with this reduction, it should be noted that there are still surplus places across many post primary schools in the locality.

There is a concern that, if approved, there is a risk that these proposals will, in the medium term, create further empty spaces in the schools' estate rather than reducing the number, increase the threat to the sustainability of some schools and negate the work already undertaken by the Trustees and CCMS in relation to the Maintained Post-Primary sector in Belfast.

Regarding DP 619, 620 & 621.

There is clear recognition within education of the roles and responsibilities of the Catholic Trustees as owners of their schools and this role is recognised within DE Circular 2017/06 (and the 2018 update) *Guidance on the publication of a Development Proposal*. This guidance, used by all sectors, clearly sets out that, in regard to the Catholic Voluntary Grammar schools, development proposals must be brought forward by the Trustees of the schools.

This position is both an essential recognition of the role of Trustees but also ensures that, in bringing forward proposals, the Trustees, responsibly, take cognisance of the impact across the whole of the Catholic sector. The above-mentioned proposals have been brought forward out-with the above guidance, having been brought forward by the Boards of Governors of the schools.

The ongoing DE initiative to address the need for post-transfer places in various parts of Northern Ireland has announced the allocation of Ts to 10 schools in the Greater Belfast area (for 2020/2021), including most of those bringing forward development Proposals. While we recognise that this is not an ideal solution, the initiative does exemplify the potential to manage temporary shortages by the allocation of Temporary Variations using an Area Planning approach. The Trustees' preferred option is that any increases to manage the temporary growth in population should be provided by way of such temporary variations, rather than expansion through Development Proposals. This will ensure that all pupils are accommodated and that, as the numbers decline again, we will not create a position where there are significant numbers of surplus places within the locality and the potential for the enrolment and viability of some schools to be destabilised.

The Trustees would request that the above comments are taken into consideration before any decisions are made in respect of the Development Proposals.

Yours Sincerely,

Mr Kevin Burke	Chief Executive, Edmund Rice Schools Trust (NI)
Dr Bob Cummings	Trustee Representative, Dominican Trustees
Fr Gerard Fox	Secretary, St MacNissi's Educational Trust
Sr Perpetua McNulty	Trustee, Mercy Sisters, Northern Province

# Catholic Schools' Trustee Service

St Mary's University College

191 Falls Road

Belfast

BT126FE

Tel: 02890268368



**Re: Belfast Voluntary Grammar Schools: Development Proposals**

**DP608, 619, 620, 621 & 633**

DP	School	Admission No	Proposed Increase	Enrolment No	Increased Places
DP 608	Strathearn School	110	10	770	70
DP 619	St Malachy's College	150	20	1050	140
DP 620	Our Lady & St Patrick's College	180	10	1260	70
DP 621	Aquinas Grammar School	110	20	770	140
DP 633	Bangor Grammar School	125	10	850	50

CSTS have been working for a number of years with the Trustees of the Catholic post primary schools in Belfast and CCMS to review current provision and to identify any potential future need in the locality. This process remains ongoing; though it has been suspended due to Covid.

In the course of discussions analysis of available data has identified temporary shortfalls in post-primary provision in parts of Greater Belfast. However, it is also clear from the Live Birth/ School attendance patterns that there has been a significant fall off in Births since a peak in 2011 followed by a significant decline annually (of around 13%). It is expected that this will result in a peak in relation to post primary admissions in 2023/24 followed by a year on year fall in the provision required (see tables below). The reduction can already be seen with a sharp drop at primary level admissions in the locality from the 2018/19 + 2019/20 intakes.

The Catholic Schools' Trustee Service would therefore have concerns that the above DP's which seek permanent increases in admissions and LTE's will result in a longer-term increase in surplus provision within the area.

Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education Company No 601472



**Live Births and school intakes Greater Belfast**

Live Births						
Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total Births	4644	4617	4598	4806	4925	4737
Actual Year 1	4305	4282	4310	4474	4650	4436
Year 1 Start	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2017/18	2018/19
Year 8	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Births	4621	4596	4521	4421	3976	
Actual year 1	4301	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	
Year 1 Start	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	
Year 8 Start	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	

As part of the area planning processes CSTS have been engaged with all the partner organisations in carrying out a review of provision in Greater Belfast. As this process is ongoing it was disappointing to learn that a number of individual schools had pre-empted a collective area planning solution by putting forward a series of individual school-based proposals.

The Department will be aware that the Trustees of the Catholic schools in Belfast have worked closely with CCMS over a number of years to significantly reduce surplus places from the Maintained post-primary sector. This has resulted in;

- The closer of one school;
- The removal of 1955 places;
- The completion of the amalgamations of 5 schools into two new schools

These changes are still embedding within the sector and, even with this reduction, it should be noted that there are still surplus places across many post primary schools in the locality.

There is a concern that, if approved, there is a risk that these proposals will, in the medium term, create further empty spaces in the schools' estate rather than reducing the number, increase the

threat to the sustainability of some schools and negate the work already undertaken by the Trustees and CCMS in relation to the Maintained Post-Primary sector in Belfast.

With regard to DP 619,620 & 621.

There is clear recognition within education of the roles and responsibilities of the Catholic Trustees as owners of their schools and this role is recognised within DE Circular 2017/06 (and the 2018 update) *Guidance on the publication of a Development Proposal*. This guidance, used by all sectors, clearly sets out that, in regard to the Catholic Voluntary Grammar schools, development proposals must be brought forward by the Trustees of the schools.

This position is both an essential recognition of the role of Trustees but also ensures that, in bringing forward proposals, the Trustees, responsibly, take cognisance of the impact across the whole education sector.

The above-mentioned proposals have been brought forward out-with the above guidance, having been brought forward by the Boards of Governors of the schools. The Catholic Schools' Trustee Service deem that these proposals are therefore not legally proposed and as such should not be considered by the Department of Education as bona fide proposals.

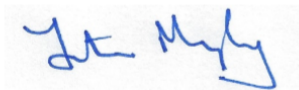
The ongoing DE initiative to address the need for post-transfer places in various parts of Northern Ireland has announced the allocation of TV's to 10 schools in the Greater Belfast area (for 2020/2021), including most of those bringing forward development Proposals. While we recognise that this is not an ideal solution, the initiative does exemplify the potential to manage temporary shortages by the allocation of Temporary Variations using an Area Planning approach.

Until agreement can be reached through the area planning processes the CSTS's preferred option is that any increases to manage the temporary growth in population should be provided by way of such temporary variations. rather than expansion through Development Proposals.

This will ensure that all pupils are accommodated and that, as the numbers decline again, we will not create a position where there are significant numbers of surplus places within the locality and the potential for the enrolment and viability of some schools to be destabilised.

The CSTS respectfully requests that the above comments are taken into consideration before any decisions are made in respect of the Development Proposals.

Yours Sincerely,



Fintan Murphy

Chief Executive

Catholic Schools' Trustee Service

St. Mary's University College 191 Falls Rd Belfast BT126FE

Tel: 02890268368 Mobile: 07880207068

Email: [f.murphy@csts.stmarys-belfast.ac.uk](mailto:f.murphy@csts.stmarys-belfast.ac.uk)

**Response to proposals for expansion to enrolment numbers for St Malachy's College**  
**St Malachy's College is proposing an increase of 20 to their admissions number from 150 to 170**  
**and an increase of 140 from 1050 to 1190 to their enrolment number**

Background

1. CCMS, as the managing and planning authority for 450 nursery, primary schools and post-primary schools, has engaged in area planning in the post-primary setting since 2006 with the establishment of the Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education's (NICCE) Post-primary Review.<sup>1</sup> Since the introduction of the *Policy for Sustainable Schools 2009*,<sup>2</sup> CCMS has worked with its education partners in the: Department of Education, Education Authority, Irish Medium Education, Integrated Education and various selective schools to address challenges facing post-primary schools. In line with the *Policy for Sustainable Schools 2009* and the *Area Planning Revised Guidance (2016)*,<sup>3</sup> CCMS's focus has been on the needs of an area.
2. CCMS acknowledges area solutions require considerable reflection and analysis due to their potential impact particularly on pupils' experiences and education finances. The rigorous requirements of the area planning process, including the need to discuss and agree potential actions at local level, are necessary ensure all sectoral partners are aligned as much as possible in bringing forward development proposals [DPs] in an area. DPs are subject to a high level of scrutiny due to the potential impact on pupils, schools, jobs and the public purse.
3. CCMS recognises for the next three to four years, the number of pupils transferring from primary schools to post-primary schools in the Greater Belfast and North Down area will continue to rise, with increasing demand for places in certain areas. However, given the longer-term predicted decrease in the primary school population in the area there is a need for caution.

Strategic Area Planning

4. *Providing Pathways: The Strategic Area Plan 2017-2020* 'sets out the parameters within which the statutory planning authorities, managing authorities and sectoral support bodies identify future education needs and develop solutions to meet those needs on an area basis' (p.1).
5. The area planning cycle is described in *Providing Pathways* as ensuring that the managing authorities will be 'better able to make a robust case for change, and provide clarity on education provision, on an area basis, as well as providing clarity on the proposals for the planned shape of provision in an area' (p.10).
6. Options for change in any sector must be cognisant of the 'bigger picture', from an area planning perspective, including consideration of the availability of empty places within the entire school estate. Area solutions require consideration of all options, for an area as a whole, in order to address their potential impact.

Area planning Activity 2006 Onwards

7. CCMS and Trustees of all post-primary schools have invested significantly in the creation of area solutions. CCMS has supported the Trustees of grammar schools on implementing area solutions across Northern Ireland<sup>4</sup>. They consulted on and re-organised schools in Belfast 2006-2018. All grammar and maintained schools participated in the design of appropriate area solutions in line with DE Guidance and indeed with significant DE financial support.

---

<sup>1</sup> From 2006-2012 the Department of Education NI grant aided CCMS and the Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education to consult on area solutions for post-primary education. A report on the consultation was published in 2012 <http://erstni.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/PPR-2012-v12.pdf>.

Since that time CCMS and Trustees have been working to deliver development proposals for change across NI.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/schools-future-policy-sustainable-schools>

<sup>3</sup> Area Planning Revised Guidance 2016 <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/area-planning-guidance-2016>

<sup>4</sup> Strabane, Carnlough/Larne, Lurgan, Omagh, Armagh, Coleraine/Portstewart, Kilkeel

8. CCMS and the Trustees of the Catholic grammar schools proceeded to implement the recommendations of the NICCE Report. Between 2012 and 2018, in Belfast, CCMS with the support of a range of Trustees:
  - closed one school;
  - removed 1955 places;
  - managed the location of places in the appropriate areas; and
  - completed two amalgamations (5 schools into 2).
9. This reorganisation is still in the process of embedding in a number of schools. Two schools (All Saints College and Blessed Trinity College) are seeking to establish themselves as newly amalgamated schools. Four others are absorbing the small increments that address the re-distribution and removal of places in the city.
10. This process was progressed on the premise that the number of places in the selective sector in Belfast would remain stable whilst these changes embedded.
11. The non-selective schools are at a significant risk to being impacted negatively if the proposals for change in the selective sector are accepted.
12. The area planning process requires all schools and sectors to be cognisant of challenges across the schools estate and it is of concern that individual institutions are in a position to submit proposals which would negatively impact on the sustainability of neighbouring schools.
13. The EA, in order to address the efficient distribution of pupils across the Belfast and North Down area, is in the process of compiling a suite of proposals. However there is a lack of consensus at the sub-group level on the scope of proposals. As a member of the sub-group CCMS would welcome restraint from individual schools in regard to the submission of individual proposals which do not fully consider all aspects of the circumstances of all schools within the area.
14. CCMS has also been working with Trustees on planning for increased numbers in the Belfast area and is disappointed that individual institutions have chosen to submit DPs whilst their trustees are engaged in this work.

#### Grammar School Proposals

15. The proposals submitted by St Malachy's College represents an individual institution solution, as opposed to an area solution required by the area planning process. This proposal cannot be viewed in isolation as along with the other grammar schools in the Greater Belfast and North Down area the expansions currently in the system represent an addition of 540 places to the schools estate.

DP	School	Admission No	Increase	Enrolment No	Increased Places
DP 608	Strathearn School	110	10	770	70
DP 618	Assumption Grammar School	120	10	840	70
DP 619	St Malachy's College	150	20	1050	140
DP 620	Our Lady & St Patrick's College	180	10	1260	70
DP 621	Aquinas Grammar School	110	20	770	140
DP 633	Bangor Grammar School	125	10	850	50
		795	80	5540	540

16. The individual school approach to area planning restricts the opportunity for an area solution. The Permanent Secretary for Education, Derek Baker commenting on Rainey Endowed Grammar

School's proposal (DP No 579) to increase its admission from 100 to 120 noted that the Rainey proposal had emerged:

*"not as part of an agreed plan for the area designed to address provision at post-primary level taking all relevant factors into account, but as a standalone proposal".*

*"This is disappointing and in my view represents a failure of proper area planning in conflict with our stated policy intentions in this regard".<sup>5</sup>*

#### Population Growth

17. The population growth, which the above proposals are predicated on, is not permanent and is set to reach a peak at Year 8 in 2023/24. Between 2008 and 2018 the birth rate in the Greater Belfast area peaked at 4,915 in 2012 but dropped to 4,270 in 2018.<sup>6</sup>
18. CCMS are aware the demand for places in their sector may not change uniformly across the city and are working with Trustees to assess where there may be a need to change provision.

#### Potential Impact of Proposal

19. It is important to note that non-selective schools are impacted disproportionately, during any period of sustained population drop. Grammar schools will reduce their admissions requirements in terms of academic selection so as to continue to fill their quota. St Malachy's College draws pupils from a wide catchment area, hence any increase to its admission number has the potential to impact admissions to a number of schools. These impacts are difficult to predict, given that admissions criteria to the grammar schools, are by way of the selective test results with varying grade requirements depending on the annual application numbers to any institution. In addition, the travel patterns of pupils to grammar schools adds to the challenge of predicting the impact of the increase on other schools.
20. CCMS is of the view that the impact of the proposed growth of St Malachy's College would impact most in post-primary schools in North and West Belfast. It is noted that 40 pupils from the Greater West Belfast area, as far as Dunmurry transferred to St Malachy's College in 2019. Yet in West Belfast there were 119 spare places across 3 CCMS schools.
21. It is notable that the number of pupils from Greater West Belfast attending St Malachy's College has increased over the past number of years.
22. Between 2002 and 2017 the population of pupils in post-primary schools dropped by 10%, 15,202 pupils. This drop in numbers was absorbed by non-selective schools and during that period 34 non-selective schools closed.
23. This issue is most significant in Belfast where approximately 57% of post-primary pupils attend grammar schools, well above the expected percentage in other areas of 40%.
24. The varying enrolment number places great pressure on non-selective schools to manage their budgets, deliver the curriculum and address staff redundancies.
25. The non-selective schools also absorb the majority of supernumerary pupils meeting DE requirements to support pupils with special needs.
26. The proposal from St Malachy's College does not adequately address the potential impact on the non-selective sector currently or when, as anticipated in the future, the school population begins to reduce again.
27. Any attempt to address increasing demand for places in post-primary schools is exceptionally challenging, as was demonstrated by the awarding of temporary variations to admissions numbers in 2018 and 2019. For example, in summer 2019, 145 extra places were awarded to denominational schools in the Greater Belfast area via temporary variations. Yet at the start of the academic year

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/node/41985>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/birth-statistics>

2019/20 there were 119 spare places at Year 8 in 3 maintained schools. This was unexpected and did not match projections carried out in the area planning process. Whilst the non-selective sector must manage these difficulties temporarily in Greater Belfast and North Down any permanent change would pose a risk to the area planning strategy and risk unnecessary expenditure of public money.

28. An eventual increase of 140 pupils would equate to on average £4284 per pupil and eventual accumulated gain of £599,760 over the course of 7 years. At a time of huge financial pressure such a diversion of funds from the non-selective to the selective sector will massively destabilise the sector and potentially heighten the risk of redundancies in secondary schools.

#### AQE/GL Test as Admissions Criteria

29. The use of academic selection remains a challenge in the education system in Northern Ireland. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) states that the commercial tests are “driving and possibly distorting the curriculum,” while Professor Elwood, QUB, suggests that they are of dubious validity, reliability or comparability.<sup>7</sup>
30. The current system of unregulated tests is particularly challenging with tests differing in structure, style and format. Further to this, there is no publicly available information on the grading mechanisms or the maintenance of standards from year to year within or across both providers. It is not clear whether any increased attainment in a given year is based on: increased entries; a better cohort; or, grade creep as schools become more familiar with the format. There is therefore a fundamental problem when planning for school places on the basis of increased parental demand for a selective school predicated on unregulated test results.<sup>8</sup>
31. In a year of lower demand, a selective school will adjust its admissions criteria to allow pupils attaining lower grades in the transfer test to be admitted to their school to ensure places are filled. With a number of selective schools currently admitting pupils from across the full grade range, this indicates that high outcomes in the test are not a required arbiter for admission.

#### Parental Preference

32. Linked to the use of academic selection are parental preferences expressed for post-primary transfer. It is clear parents have an expectation that if their child has high outcomes in the transfer test this will guarantee a place in a grammar school.
33. In years of population growth the demand for selective places increases. In the years when the growth is declining selective schools can reduce the grade at which a pupil secures a place. This impacts directly on the non-selective sector.
34. The DE schools admissions team has been working with educational partners and with schools and parents to emphasise the message that when selecting schools for transfer it is a process of parental preference and not parental choice.
35. Providing a permanent increase in places in the selective sector on the basis of parental preference for a particular institution, when capacity is available in the system, contradicts this message.
36. It is also reasonable to note that extra places in the selective sector may bring extra costs to the transport budget as it attracts pupils from a wide catchment area, which means many pupils will secure transport assistance.
37. As indicated, a permanent increase in admissions to voluntary grammar schools could potentially impact on the enrolment in the non-selective sector. This has the potential to negatively impact on the non-selective schools which have gone through the area planning process and now awaiting capital investment. The recent capital call identifies a 10% enrolment threshold as a gateway check for consideration for major capital investment. Permanently increasing enrolment in the selective sector as proposed currently will mean that there will be 540 fewer pupils in the non-selective

---

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2016-2021/2016/education/4816.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> As above.

sector. These unfilled non-selective places will significantly disadvantage non-selective schools applying for future capital calls placing more significant challenges on these schools in terms of sustainability.

#### Role of Trustees in Denominational Grammar Schools

38. Catholic School Trustees play a significant role as owners of all Catholic schools. Their role is recognised in the DE Circular 2017/09 - *Guidance on the publication of a Development Proposal (updated September 2018)* which outlines it is they who must bring forward DPs on behalf of voluntary grammar schools in the Catholic Sector. CCMS 'promote and co-ordinate, in consultation with the trustees of Catholic maintained schools, the planning of the effective provision of Catholic Maintained schools.'<sup>9</sup>
39. The involvement of trustees across the schools estate ensures that an overview of challenges and issues is taken and ensures that individual institutions do not submit proposals which would negatively impact on the sustainability of neighbouring schools.
40. If the position is that a proposal can be submitted by proposers outside those named in the DE DP guidance, this poses significant challenges for all sectoral bodies working towards area-based solutions. Furthermore it is unclear how, as the owners of Catholic Voluntary Grammar schools, the trustees have not been required to sign-off development proposals which may require capital investment on their property.

#### Inequality

41. Table 1 notes the % pupils in receipt of free school meals attending schools in the areas impacted on by the St Malachy's College development proposal. The data from the table below demonstrates that pupils who are eligible for free school meals are notably under-represented in grammar schools. The numbers in the majority of the selective schools in the North and West of the city range between 11% - 37% of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, in comparison to the 25% - 75% across the non-selective schools in the aforementioned geographic areas. This level of inequality is inappropriate educationally in that it reduces diversity in schools. St Malachy's College has received pupils from controlled, integrated and Irish Medium schools and the proposal has the potential to impact schools in these sectors.

Table 1 2019/20 DE Census numbers (inc stated pupil numbers)

School Name	Pupils	% pupils entitled to FSM
St Malachy's College	1,110	22%
Edmund Rice College	700	43%
Blessed Trinity College	1,283	56%
Dominican College (Fortwilliam)	1045	21%
Mercy College	651	70%
Glengormley High School	696	35%
Belfast Boys' Model School	1048	58%
Belfast Model School for Girls	1011	59%
Belfast Royal Academy	1448	16%
Hazelwood College	1048	56%
St Patrick's Academy (Lisburn)	491	38%
All Saints College	876	70%
De La Salle College	884	54%
St Colm's High School	482	75%
St Dominic's High School	1043	25%
St Genevieve's High School	1042	53%

<sup>9</sup> Article 142 The Education Reform (NI) Order 1989



St Louise's Comprehensive College	1544	61%
St Mary's Christian Brothers GS	1159	37%
Rathmore Grammar School	1278	11%
Colaiste Feirste	721	58%

42. The evidence indicates that the higher concentration of disadvantaged pupils in non-grammars has a significant impact on academic outcomes, as well as on other contributing factors such as school attendance.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the high results among the top performers in Northern Ireland mask a long tail of underachievement. The OECD notes that the selective system presents "clear structural challenges to equity."<sup>11</sup>

#### Rural impact

43. There is also a significant long-term impact in terms of selective schools in the area drawing in pupils from such a wide catchment area. Although attracting the majority of pupils from the Belfast area, St Malachy's draws pupils from schools such as Ballymacrickett PS and Ballymacward PS. The Case for Change acknowledges that pupils enrolled in the College come from a wide catchment area coming from 76 different primary schools ranging from the local North Belfast area as far as Carrickfergus, Crumlin and Portglenone. There is potential for an impact on post-primaries outside Belfast if more pupils from rural areas travel in to the city.

#### Conclusions

44. The temporary variation method works reasonably well when dealing with short-term population increases resulting in demand for additional places in particular areas. Whilst this continues to be reviewed, to ensure greater cross-sectoral parity in additional places provided, it should remain as the methodology to manage increases until an agreed area solution can be found in areas where long-term patterns of population growth can be established.
45. The proposals to increase selective places in Greater Belfast and North Down will produce a less stable context within which the non-selective schools are operating in. This will further exacerbate the challenges they already face and add to the difficulties that the selective system has already created.

<sup>10</sup> Shewbridge, C., Hulshof, M., Nusche, D., Stenius Staehr, L. (2014) OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Northern Ireland OECD Publishing

<sup>11</sup> Shewbridge, C., Hulshof, M., Nusche, D., Stenius Staehr, L. (2014) OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Northern Ireland OECD Publishing