

**MILL STRAND INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL &
NURSERY UNIT**



***Nursery
Development Proposal***

“Promoting Excellence, Celebrating Difference”

November 2017

CASE FOR CHANGE – Supporting Information

SUMMARY / OVERVIEW

AREA PLANNING DISTRICT	Causeway Coast and Glens Council Area
DP NUMBER	DP 542
PROPOSER	Board of Governors of Mill Strand Integrated PS & NU Contact: Philip Reid, Principal Tel: 028 7082 3090
SCHOOL(S) NAME	Mill Strand Integrated Primary School & Nursery Unit
SCHOOL REFERENCE	306-6544
TYPE	Primary
MANAGEMENT	Grant Maintained Integrated
DP PUBLICATION DATE	Week commencing 14 May 2018
PROPOSAL	It is proposed to establish an additional 26 part-time nursery places at Mill Strand Integrated Primary School with effect from 1 September 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter.

STATUTORY CONSULTATION

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

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

EDUCATION AUTHORITY COMMENTARY ON PRE PUBLICATION STATUTORY CONSULTATION

<p>PROPOSER</p> <p>Provide detail of consultation with the Board of Governors, teachers and parents of the affected school(s) – dates of meetings / letters.</p> <p>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>Meetings at which members of the Board of Governors including staff representatives were consulted on their views on the future development of the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 30th January 2014• 20th March 2014• 30th April 2014• 28th May 2014• 6th November 2014• 22nd January 2015• 28th March 2015• 4th June 2015• 24th September 2015• 19th November 2015• 21st January 2016• 3rd March 2016• 28th April 2016• 7th June 2016 <p>Following the initial outcome of DP484 the Board of Governors further discussed the way forward.</p> <p>Following consultation on the dates below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 28th September 2017• 19th October 2017 <p>It was unanimously agreed that the submission of this Development Proposal was vital to meet the needs of the school and wider community.</p> <p>Meetings of <u>Parents' Council/Committee</u> to outline the proposals for increasing the school size from Sept 2016 as well as address the critical issues and need to relocate the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 28th May 2015• 17th June 2015• 9th September 2015• 18th September 2015• 24th September 2015• 16th October 2015• 2nd November 2015• 26th November 2015• 20th January 2016• 4th March 2016• 4th May 2016 <p>The documented shortfall of places within a 2-mile radius of the school, the significant under provision in demand for integrated pre-school places and the exclusion of the 64 children catered for at Mill Strand's non-statutory pre-school over the past three years in EA data/submission was discussed in detail at Parent Council meetings on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7th September 2017• 16th October 2017
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	<p>A further survey of parents, pupils and the wider school community was undertaken from 6th–17th November 2017.</p> <p>The views of the Governors, Staff and parents are detailed within the document and were unanimously in favour taking forward a Development Proposal for an additional 26 part-time nursery places at their grant maintained integrated primary school.</p>
<p>CONFIRMATION BY THE PROPOSER</p>	<p>I confirm that the school(s) Board of Governors, Staff and Parents of Pupils were consulted on and Equality Screening of the proposal has been carried out.</p> <p>Name: Elsa McLennan - Chair of Board of Governors</p> <p>SIGNED: </p> <p>DATE: 30.11.17</p>

ASSOCIATED PROPOSALS

<p>DP</p> <p>Published</p> <p>DD/MM/YY</p>	<p>None</p>
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**The following is to be completed by the EA and signed off by it.
 EDUCATION AUTHORITY COMMENTARY ON PRE PUBLICATION STATUTORY
 CONSULTATION**

<p>THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY</p>	<p>I confirm that the schools which the EA consider might be impacted by this proposal were consulted on 11 January 2018.</p> <p>NAME: John Collings</p> <p>OFFICE HELD: Director of Education</p> <p>SIGNED: </p> <p>DATE: 10 May 2018</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>The Authority, before submitting a proposal to the Department, is obliged to consult with the Trustees and managers of any school or schools which would, in the opinion of the Authority, be affected by the proposal. Comments were invited from 77 schools which might be affected by the proposal on 11 January 2018 (all within the Causeway Coast & Glens Council area) to be returned to the Education Authority by 8 February 2018.</p> <p>One of the providers was not included in the initial consultation; therefore, their comments on the proposal were invited to be returned by 23 April 2018.</p>
<p>Responses/Assurances in respect of issues raised during consultation.</p>	<p>Seven responses were received all of which expressed concerns about the proposal and in many cases the concerns were similar. The following provides a summary of issues raised:</p>
<p>Dates of EA meetings e.g. Education Committee/ Board etc</p> <p>Details of issues raised by members of EA Board</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That pre-school provision is not defined according to sectors, so all pre-school settings, regardless of location, are considered accessible to children from all backgrounds. • That there is no due consideration to the potential impact of the sustainability of other neighbouring schools. • That there is sufficient capacity within the area to cope with any additional demand and this should be filled prior to additional capacity being created. • That the impact of increasing statutory nursery provision would be a further bias and would be prejudicial to existing voluntary playgroups in the area. • That the Department of Education has consistently been unable to provide the necessary resources to establish nursery provision with other primary schools in the area. • That there are concerns over the safe operation of the site with access issues to the school and drop off/pick up arrangements highlighted. • That pupils from other schools also attend services in churches.

- That there has been a long history of cross community pre-school provision in the area and an inclusive ethos within local schools, including well established Shared Education links between schools.
- That area planning cannot be adequately considered whenever the new site for Mill Strand IPS is still to be identified. The impact from an area learning perspective cannot be reasonably considered in this situation.
- That the level of pre-school/ nursery provision across the 5 mile radius indicates that there is over provision in the area and that the population projections would indicate that fewer pre-school places are likely to be required in the future.
- That the parental demand for integrated pre-school provision, includes demand from outside the two mile radius noted in the Case for Change therefore the demand for pre-school provision within a two mile radius does not justify an additional 26 places.

A further response to the proposal was received from the Controlled Schools' Support Council. It stated it recognised the potential for this proposal to impact on the sustainability of controlled schools in the area and welcomed the opportunity to make the following comments:

- There are a number of statutory and voluntary providers in the area which will be impacted by the proposal.
- That pre-school provision is not defined according to sectors, so all pre-school settings, regardless of location, are considered accessible to children from all backgrounds
- The proposal has potential to affect the ability of neighbouring controlled schools to remain sustainable and therefore may disadvantage children and young people in the schools in the overall area.
- The demand for pre-school provision within a two mile radius does not justify an additional 26 places.
- That there has been a long history of cross community pre-school provision in the area and an inclusive ethos within local schools, including well established Shared Education links between schools.
- Excellent transition programmes exist within all pre-school settings and primary schools in the area to ensure all children experience a smooth transition from pre-school to primary school regardless of the setting from which they are transferring or the primary school within which they will be enrolled.

This development proposal was discussed by the EA's Education Committee at its meeting on 10 May 2018.

<p>EDUCATION AUTHORITY COMMENTS</p> <p>In the context of planning on an area basis - what is the EA's view of the proposal, taking into account any pre-publication consultation. Does the EA support the proposal?</p> <p>NAME: John Collings</p> <p>OFFICE HELD: Director of Education</p> <p>SIGNED:</p>  <p>DATE: 10 May 2018</p>	<p>EA notes the guidance provided by DE and notes the recommendations of PEG; and</p> <p>EA is concerned that the implementation of this proposal will result in increased costs for the existing provision which is already in excess of demand</p> <p>The PEG report is included within the Case for Change paper.</p> <p>The proposal being taken forward by the Board of Governors is in accordance with the Education Authority's Strategic Area Plan and Annual Action Plan 2018/19.</p>
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**EDUCATION AUTHORITY
 PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAMME 2018-19
 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH an additional 26 part-time nursery places at Mill Strand
 Integrated Primary School Nursery Unit with effect from 1 September 2018 or as soon as possible
 thereafter**

PEG Comments

School	MILLSTRAND INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT															
Address	33 Dhu Varren, Portrush BT56 8EW															
Does PEG support the proposal?	<p>PEG considered the DP from Mill Strand IPS for comment in line with guidance provided by DE regarding pre-school education and the statutory duty to encourage and facilitate Integrated and Irish-Medium education as follows:</p> <p>"It is important the Education Authority and the PEG support the Department in fulfilling its statutory duty by striving to meet demonstrated parental demand in an area for pre-school education at grant-maintained and controlled integrated primary schools, as well as parental demand for Irish-medium pre-school education"</p> <p>In this context, PEG supports the DP on the basis of demonstrated parental demand as evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number of 1st preference applications (50 for 26 places). • overall enrolment trends for the school and the P1 intake over a number of years, which would suggest that a 52 place nursery unit would be sustainable. <p>However, PEG would have strong concerns in regard to the potential impact of this additional provision as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential displacement of existing funded pre-school provision in the area. Some non-statutory settings are operating with already low numbers and additional provision may affect their sustainability. • Potential for increased uptake of younger children into statutory nursery settings and the consequent increased cost on public funds. • Impact on existing cross-community provision in respect of the duty to promote, encourage and facilitate Shared Education. 															
What is the potential impact if the proposal is/ is not approved? (alternatives for meeting demand/potential for over provision)	See attached statistics. Currently within the wards a total of 152 funded pre-school places are available and in January 2018, 173 1 st preference applications have been received. Existing non-statutory providers currently have spare capacity within their settings and are not operating to maximum registration.															
What is the PEG assessment of need for pre-school provision for the area? Is this need currently met?	Demonstrated parental demand for Integrated pre-school provision. Mill Strand IPS currently has a nursery unit with 26 full-time places but has received 50 1 st preference applications.															
How many 1 st preference applications were received by the setting? (usually 2 years figures but this depends on the timing of the development proposal)	<p>2018 – 26 places – 50 1st Preference applications 2017 – 26 places 50 1st Preference applications 2016 – 26 places 34 1st Preference applications</p> <p>Mill Strand IPS overview:-</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Year 1</th> <th>Total Enrolment</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2017-18</td> <td>47*</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016-17</td> <td>53</td> <td>245</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015-16</td> <td>28</td> <td>216</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014-15</td> <td>32</td> <td>210</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*P1 number from Admissions office – census 2017-18 not available.</p>		Year 1	Total Enrolment	2017-18	47*		2016-17	53	245	2015-16	28	216	2014-15	32	210
	Year 1	Total Enrolment														
2017-18	47*															
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2014-15	32	210														

Are there current or anticipated pressures in placing pre-school children in the area?	Projected live births for the Atlantic, Dunluce, Portstewart, Royal Portrush area: 2017 admissions 73 (145 1 st preference applications) 2018 admissions 86 (173 1 st preference applications) 2019 admissions 59
Have children been unplaced at the end of the process in previous years?	In both 2016/17 and 2015/16 there was one child unplaced in Portrush at the end of Stage 1. No further preferences given in Stage 2 so they remained unplaced.
Has demand been increasing over time but the number of places has not? Is the level of need or provision changing significantly? Eg new housing development, provider leaving PSEP	Increased demand for 2018.
Can existing voluntary/private providers expand to help meet demand? Is there potential for new providers to come on to the programme?	Existing providers can take additional funded places, if required, within their current registration.
What is the potential impact on existing good quality provision (displacement)?	Existing non-statutory providers currently have spare capacity within their settings and are not operating to maximum registration. Displacement may occur for these settings if an additional nursery unit is approved.
If there are other development proposals in the area, how might they impact? (eg if proposal A were to be approved, would B still be required?)	No other Development Proposals.
Other comments	

1. BACKGROUND

Brief Description of School

Mill Strand Integrated School was established by a group of parents from Portrush and surrounding areas and opened in 1987. Since the school opened in 1987 with 52 pupils, it has grown and developed into a popular, local school. Following approval of DP483 the school's Enrolment Number for 2018 is **260** and the Admissions Number is 58 for P1 (Source: EA website).

As it celebrates its 30th Anniversary, Mill Strand IPS has a current enrolment of **248 (297** including the **26** Nursery & **23** additional pre-school). The school continues to be a popular, over-subscribed school despite having to operate in inadequate, sub-standard accommodation.

The school accommodation consists of 12 classrooms, a small Learning Support room, assembly/dining/PE hall, secretary's office and principal's office. Six of the classrooms are in the permanent building, one of which, the Nursery, is accommodated in the original house in which the school was founded. The Secretary's office, Principal's Office, Learning support room and staffroom are also located in this two-storey building. Six of the classrooms are located in mobile units.

The current teaching staff consists of principal, 9 full-time teachers and 2 part-time/job-share teachers. The classroom assistants, secretary, building supervisor, cleaners, supervisory assistants, meals' staff and staff in the additional pre-school centre complete the full staff team.

As well as delivering the full curriculum a wide range of extra-curricular activities are also undertaken within the school including: golf, surfing, cycling proficiency, football, glee, dance, netball, hockey, art club, cookery club and drama club. In addition, the school was one of the first outside Belfast to run an After School Club offering wraparound care until 6pm daily and during periods of school closure.

Mill Strand Integrated Primary School is delighted to have a hard working Parents' Council that contributes greatly to the social and financial support of the school.

The existing Nursery Unit was initially established as a Pre School, becoming a GMI Nursery in 2001, offering 26 part-time places. Due to social deprivation these were increased to full time places in November 2009. The Pre-School Playgroup at the school was established for September 2015 to meet parental demand for places at an integrated setting and is now registered for 23 children.

Location including any relocation details

Mill Strand Integrated Primary School is located at 33 Dhu Varren, Portrush, Co. Antrim and has a current enrolment of **248**.

The first tranche of potential capital projects under the Stormont House and Fresh Start Agreements was announced on 23 March 2016 and Mill Strand Integrated School & Nursery was included in this announcement.

Consequently, since 23 November 2016, the school has been working in collaboration with the Department of Education and, in recent months, with McAdam Design to develop a new school that will help Mill Strand meet the demand for integrated education in the Portrush area. It is anticipated that the work will be completed in time for the start of the 2021/22 academic year. The Department of Education and McAdam Design are currently working with the Project Board to identify the most suitable site for relocation within a 1.5 mile radius of the existing school.

The plans for the new 14 class base school are such that there would be sufficient room to allow for the potential of a double nursery unit, to meet established and documented demand. This would also be the best possible opportunity to address the documented 'under provision' of pre-school places in the Portrush area as it can be included in the Fresh Start investment in Integrated and Shared Education.

It should be noted that whilst the 1989 Education Reform Order enabled the grant aiding of integrated schools, integrated nurseries were excluded from this and this aspect was only repealed in 1998. Thus many integrated schools were established in those early years and were not permitted to have funded nursery units.

In the past, controlled and maintained schools which were being built or rebuilt would have been considered for a nursery unit. In 2006 the Department of Education published:

Outcomes from the review of pre-school education in Northern Ireland and reframed the policy thus:

'Decision: The wider issue about children having access to high-quality provision in a suitable environment in all early years settings will be considered further, taking account of:

- The more integrated arrangements in support of early years that have recently been announced; and
- the strategic development and use of the schools' estate.

Meanwhile, the current arrangements, based on a policy of non-sectoral provision, will remain. It is therefore unlikely that there will be new building in the statutory sector other than:

- Units at replacement primary schools (i.e. existing units whose parent schools are being rebuilt) where they are necessary to meet demand in their areas;
- Replacement nursery schools that have reached the end of their useful life but which are still required to maintain pre-school provision levels in their area;
- New schools/units where amalgamations and rationalisations of primary schools offer the potential for (needed) centralised nursery provision; and
- New schools/units in areas where demographic change has resulted in a need to provide more pre-school places and where it is decided that statutory rather than voluntary/private provision is required.'

2. SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

Stable Enrolment Trends

Current School Enrolments – approved, historical and current actual enrolments, available places

Table 1: Enrolment at Mill Strand Integrated Primary School & Nursery 2011-2017

Year	Admissions
2017/18	297*
2016/17	268*
2015/16	232*
2014/15	210
2013/14	207
2012/13	207
2011/12	189

Source: NEELB Open Enrolment 2015/16

**inc additional pre-school to meet parental demand.*

Above figures include Nursery & [Pre School (2015-16), (2016-17) & (2017/18)]

Please note that 2015-16 figures comprise of 186 School, 28 Nursery and 18 Pre School and increased to 242 by the end of June 2016.

*The 2016-17 figures comprise of 221 School, 27 Nursery and 20 Pre School
The 2017-18 figures comprise of 248 School, 26 Nursery and 23 Pre School*

Current Approved Enrolments/Admission Numbers

Table 2 Nursery Admissions – first preference applications, total applications accepted at end of admissions process, approved admission, actual admission

School	Year	1 st preference	Total applied	Total admitted	Total Level of Over-subscription for 1 st choice applications
Mill Strand IPS Nursery Unit	2017/18	49	56	26	23
	2016/17	38	38	26	12
	2015/16	43	43	29	17
	2014/15	23	23	26	0
	2013/14	44	44	28	16
	2012/13	31	31	26	5

Source: NEELB & DE

** The short term funding of a pre-school has clearly illustrated the need for additional pre-school places in integrated settings.*

NB In 2016/17 all 12 families not admitted through Open Enrolment chose to attend the school's Pre School setting. In 2017/18 the school has been able to accommodate 23 children in the non-statutory pre-school and has four children on a waiting list.

High Quality Educational Provision

The District Inspector made a district inspection visit to the school on 6 April 2016 and this included a visit to the nursery unit. The Inspectorate noted that there had been a change in personnel and the principal was positive and pleased with the new appointment. The teacher, along with the assistants worked very well as a team and were engaged in plenty of one-to-one support for the children as well as using ICT very effectively to photograph and record the children's competence in completing important tasks and activities that are required in the pre-school curriculum. Interactions were purposeful. Learning and soft-skills were also focused.

The staff coped well in working with a fairly large number of highly inquisitive and engaged children at the time of the visit and signs were clear, on the day of the visit, that they had made significant progress since the time of their last inspection building on the existing 'good' practice towards developing a high capacity of sustained improvement.

Sound Financial Position

The school is currently operating with an acceptable budget surplus. Its three-year financial plan has been carefully budgeted by the Principal to allow for continued growth and to maintain the high standards currently in the school.

Strong Leadership & Management

In 2012 the ETI acknowledged the work of the Principal stating:

"The Principal... provides very good leadership and management. He knows well the children, their families and the community they come from. He maintains a clear overview of development work to bring about whole-school improvement, and is supporting and building the capacity of the teachers as effective co-ordinators. He values well the commitment and skills of all the staff and is very knowledgeable, supportive and appreciative of their contributions."

Leadership & Management has further strengthened in recent years with significant development at both Governor and Middle Leadership level.

The Board of Governors has seen a reconstitution within the last year, enabling the school to strengthen its board with the addition of highly skilled members, bringing a wide range of professional and personal qualities to the school. With the anticipated appointment of three highly respected and prominent governors to the remaining Trust Foundation and DENI positions the school is due to have a full complement of 16 governors by the end of 2017. The Board work closely with the Principal to realise the vision of the school and improvement measures suitably identified in the school's Development Plan to bring about high quality, sustained improvement in the interest of all stakeholders. In doing so the Board suitably utilises its challenge function and is very supportive.

The Board of Governors has worked tirelessly since the submission of the school's previous Development Proposal to maintain the high standards of the school and support those parents seeking an integrated education for their children. Its reformed Project Board has engaged fully with DENI officers to inform and progress the school's new build, bringing a high degree of professionalism, enthusiasm and support to the work of the board.

Mill Strand Integrated School & Nursery has also invested heavily in staff development and in particular Leadership Development. For the past three years the school has been at the forefront of developing distributive leadership, facilitating the development of all teachers as 'Leading Learners' through InSET and leadership opportunities within the school. The school is currently in its second year of a three-year programme to develop all teachers as leaders creating agility within leadership & management structures and clarity & understanding at all levels within the school towards realising its 2020 Vision.

The ETI has recognised the school's Development Plan as an example of outstanding practice. This plan has been further refined and improved for 2017/18 with the development of leadership at its core and carefully prioritised action planning highlighted to facilitate sustainable high quality improvement in the interest of all learners.

Accessibility

- Access

Mill Strand Integrated PS's is currently located within the Portrush area, within convenient transport distance for all its present pupils. It is also readily accessible to future pupils travelling from areas outside the current immediate catchment area and is situated on the main bus route connecting the three towns it mainly serves.

The current site has health & safety issues relating to access from the main road. This has been exacerbated by the removal of parking, drop off and collection rights by the neighbouring landowner at the start of the 2015 academic year. Remedial Minor Works have been undertaken by DENI to address this issue pending the relocation of the school to a larger site in the town. The school has also put in place staggered drop-off and collection times to alleviate traffic flow from the main road. As the Nursery collection time is before that of the main school it can easily accommodate drop-off and collection.

The new school will be located, designed and built to 'handbook' standards and to comply fully with access requirements.

- Accommodation/Site

The school currently operates a Nursery and Playgroup within its existing accommodation. No additional accommodation would be required to accommodate a double intake nursery on the existing site. An additional Nursery classroom would, however, be required at the new site/build. As the school is currently at the design and pre planning stage it would be very easy for the Integrated Consultant Team & Project Board to include this in the new build Nursery under Fresh Start Agreement Funding.

- Capital Proposals/Minor Works applications with the Department.

The school and its Project Board is currently working with the Department of Education under Fresh Start Agreement funding to develop and build a new 14 class base school and nursery unit on an alternative site in the Portrush area. Mill Strand Integrated School & Nursery has submitted a Minor Works application for four additional temporary classrooms pending the completion of the new build. DENI is currently working with the school to provide a double modular unit of two classrooms on site for September 2018 with a further unit planned for September 2019. These classrooms, together with existing

accommodation will provide adequate accommodation for the growing school population until the new build is completed in February 2021 for the start of the 2021/2022 academic year.

Strong Links with the Community

As evidenced by ETI 2012 Mill Strand Integrated PS has exceptionally strong links with the local community and is widely recognised as '*a school in the heart of the community, catering for the whole community*'. Mill Strand IPS is the only school in the wider 'Triangle' area that hosts services in all three of the main churches: Harvest at Ballywillan Presbyterian, Sacraments, including First Holy Communion, at either Star of the Sea Portstewart or St Patrick's, Portrush and a Christmas Carol Service at Holy Trinity Church of Ireland, Portrush. The school regularly utilises local businesses and venues to host school events, functions and plays. The school's strong and vibrant Parents' Council further illustrates these strong links evidenced through the numerous well-supported and innovative community events held every year.

3. AREA PLANNING IMPACT

Mill Strand IPS is the only integrated primary school and pre-school provision in the Coleraine, Portrush, Portstewart 'Triangle' area. This proposal would address parental demand for Integrated Pre-School Education. Consultation with Mill Strand IPS Parents' Council has highlighted the concerns of parents regarding the level of oversubscription at Mill Strand IPS Nursery Unit and Primary School. Admissions are restricted to 26 in the Nursery, this has been particularly oversubscribed for the past few years. To address oversubscription in the school, a development proposal was submitted and approved earlier this year. The P1 approved admissions number is now 58. With regard to pre-school provision, in order to address the oversubscription, the school opened an independently funded pre-school playgroup with funding from the Integrated Education Fund (IEF) in September 2015. Table 3 below shows the admissions and enrolment at the playgroup over the last 3 years.

Table 3 – Admissions and Enrolments at Mill Strand IPS Independent Playgroup

	Year School	No of 1st pref App	Total No of Applications	Total No Admitted
Mill Strand IPS Playgroup	2017/18	23	27	23 (all correct age)
Mill Strand IPS Playgroup	2016/17	15	21	20 (inc 3 u/a)
Mill Strand IPS Playgroup	2015/16	17	17	17

Impact on other settings

This Development Proposal has been notified in the Area Action plan. Table 4 (below) shows the P1 children in Mill Strand IPS have attended a number of other pre-school settings.

A substantial majority of the pre-school cohort of children attending Mill Strand IPS Nursery Unit and Pre-School Playgroup enrol in P1 at Mill Strand IPS as demonstrated below. A small number of the P1 children come from a variety of other settings with a few children coming to P1 with no pre-school experience. This is particularly pronounced in the 2016/17 year, when 9 children had no pre-school experience.

Table 4: Pre-school Experience of P1 intake at Mill Strand IPS

Year	Name of Setting	No of Children	Total No Admitted
2017/2018	Mill Strand IPS Nursery Unit	27	52
	Mill Strand IPS Playgroup (unfunded)	17	
	Causeway Pre-School	1	
	Portrush Pre-School	0	
	Portstewart Nursery Unit	1	
	St Colum's Pre-School Centre	0	
	Stepping Stones Creche, Portstewart	0	
	Nursery outside area e.g . Isle of Man/Enniskillen	4	
	No pre-school	2	

2016 / 2017	Mill Strand IPS Nursery Unit	27	53
	Mill Strand IPS Playgroup (unfunded)	17	
	Causeway Pre-School		
	Portrush Pre-School		
	Portstewart Nursery Unit		
	St Colum's Pre-School Centre		
	Stepping Stones Creche, Portstewart		
No pre-school	9		
2015 / 2016	Mill Strand IPS Nursery Unit	26	28
	Causeway Pre-School	1	
	Portrush Pre-School		
	Portstewart Nursery Unit		
	St Colum's Pre-School Centre		
	Stepping Stones Creche, Portstewart		
	No pre-school	1	
2014 / 2015	Mill Strand IPS Nursery Unit	27	32
	Causeway Pre-School	3	
	Portrush Pre-School		
	Portstewart Nursery Unit		
	St Colum's Pre-School Centre		
	Stepping Stones Creche, Portstewart		
	No pre-school	2	

Table 5 Alternative Pre-school/Nursery Provision within a 2 miles radius

School Name STATUTORY	Year	No of places available	No of 1st pref App	Total No of Applications	Total No Admitted
Mill Strand IPS Statutory Nursery Unit	2017/18	26	58	61	26
VOLUNTARY PROVIDERS					
Portrush Community Playgroup (Situating at Portrush PS)	2017/18	32	16	22	22
Causeway Pre-School (Situating at St Patrick's PS)	2017/18	15	11	12	12
TOTAL		73	85	95	60

Table 6 Alternative Pre-school/Nursery Provision within a 3 miles radius

School Name STATUTORY	Year School	No of places available	No of 1st pref App	Total No of Applications	Total No Admitted
Portstewart PS Statutory Nursery Unit (Situating at Portstewart PS)	2017/18	26	33	35	26
VOLUNTARY PROVIDERS					
St Colum's Pre School (Situating at St Colum's PS)	2017/18	21	10	13	13
TOTAL		47	43	48	39

Source: EA

Table 5 above, highlights that Mill Strand IPS is significantly oversubscribed and there is a very high level of demonstrated parental demand for integrated pre-school provision. Portstewart PS Nursery Unit is also heavily oversubscribed. The seventeen children that Mill Strand IPS took into their independently funded pre-school playgroup may have masked what is already evident in Table 5 and Table 6, that there is a shortfall in pre-school provision in the area. A fact that was commented on in the DE submission to the Minister on the previous proposal put forward by Mill Strand IPS for a second nursery unit.

“Preschool provision significantly lower than the planning figure as highlighted by the Early Years Team in July 2017:

“The level of provision within the two mile radius is currently significantly lower than the planning figure, even if the proposed statutory provision were made available. This would suggest that pre-school education in the area is insufficient to meet demand, however, the EA has advised that in each of the last two years, every target aged child in the area whose parents stayed with the pre-school admissions process to the end received the offer of a funded place, suggesting that demand in the area is currently being met with the current level of provision.”

[Early Years Team Summary Page 179 Response to DP 284 9 July 2017]

The EA’s statement quoted in the submission to the Minister on DP No 484 (Pt 147) was:

“in each of the last two years, every target aged child in the area whose parents stayed with the pre-school admissions process to the end received the offer of a funded place, suggesting that demand in the area is currently being met with the current level of provision.”

The school would argue that this is evidence of the ‘masking’ of actual demand and provision because it doesn’t include the 37 pupils supported by Mill Strand IPS through non-statutory pre-school support over that period and a further 23 children in 2017/18. It would be important to note that 9 children in the 2016/17 year did not arrive in P1 with any pre-school experience.

The above figures further reinforce the evidence supplied by Mill Strand Integrated School and the clear statement made by the Early Years’ Team that:

“The level of provision within the two mile radius is currently significantly lower than the planning figure, even if the proposed statutory provision were made available. This would suggest that pre-school education in the area is insufficient to meet demand.”

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NICIE submitted a paper to DE officials in July 2017. Subsequently, DE wrote to EA and CCMS on 31st October 2017 to point out, *“It is important the Education Authority and the Pre-School Education Group (PEG) support the department in fulfilling its statutory duty by striving to meet **demonstrated parental demand** in an area for pre-school education at grant-maintained and controlled integrated primary schools, as well as parental demand for Irish-medium pre-school education.”*

The significant level of oversubscription at Mill Strand IPS constitutes ‘demonstrated parental demand’ for additional integrated pre-school provision.

Religious Balance of Pre-school settings in Portrush and surrounding areas

Table 7 (below) demonstrates that the statutory provision in Mill Strand IPS is providing a religiously integrated provision with a good representation from all communities attending. The table below shows that whilst there is definite mixing in the Mill Strand Integrated Nursery Unit, of the other settings, only Portrush Pre-school playgroup has Catholic and Protestant children in the same classroom.

Table 7: Religious Balance in these settings; including nursery units, year 2016/17

Funded Providers	No. of Protestants	% Protestants	No. of Catholics	% Catholics	No. of Others	% Others	Total
Mill Strand IPS Nursery Unit	10	37.0	7	25.9	10	37.0	27
Causeway Pre-School	*	*	#	#	0	0.0	15
Portrush Pre-School	17	58.6	6	20.7	6	20.7	29
Portstewart Nursery Unit	12	46.5	0	0	14	53.8	26
Stepping Stones Creche	#	#	*	*	0	0.0	10

Key	
-	means zero cases.
*	refers to less than five cases where data is considered sensitive.
#	means figure has been suppressed under rules of disclosure.

Source DE

NICIE has raised the matter of the assertion of pre-school provision being non-sectoral with senior officials in the Department of Education in recent months.

Referring to the 2016/17 statistics and using the value of 20% to 79.9% Catholic as denoting a setting which both of the main traditions can attend comfortably, i.e. truly non-sectoral:

- Twenty-nine out of the 95 nursery schools have between 20% and 79.9% Catholic, this is a total of 30.5%.
- Ninety-one playgroups out of a total of 399 have a balance of between 20% and 79.9% Catholic, i.e. 22.8% and out of those 8 are the PEG funded integrated playgroups, 8.8%.
- Thirty-nine out of 238 nursery units, 16.8% have between 20% and 79.9% Catholics and out of those 18 are integrated nursery units, 46.2%.

It is difficult then to state that pre-school is in reality non-sectoral.

Impact on other integrated provision

Other integrated settings (Carhill CIPS, Ballycastle CIPS, Ballymoney CIPS) of these three schools, only one has a nursery unit, Ballycastle CIPS (19.8 miles away) which is oversubscribed and too far away to be impacted. All the schools serve catchment areas that are discrete and separate from Mill Strand IPS. The distance involved means that none of these schools, even if they were in a position to take more children, are realistic options for parents seeking integrated provision.

4. RATIONALE FOR PROPOSAL

The desire for this proposal is led in part by the parents of children attending Mill Strand IPS as they want local, accessible integrated pre-school education for their children. The level of over-subscription in the nursery unit as shown in Table 2, demonstrates parental demand that the Governors believe must be addressed.

In addition, this would support the realization of the objectives of Area Based Planning which include 'The aim of the plan is to facilitate the development of a network of viable and sustainable primary schools which can effectively deliver the Northern Ireland

Curriculum. This would address the mismatch in admissions between the two-form entry in the primary and the single unit entry in the nursery thereby supporting the school to deliver improved outcomes for children, a smoother transition and to become a more sustainable school. This would also support the DE by assisting in its duty 'to encourage and facilitate the growth of integrated education.

Specific reasons include:

- More efficient and effective way of funding and administering early years provision.
- To create equality of opportunity in accessing services to support vulnerable children in relation to attendance, welfare, safeguarding and Special Educational Needs and inclusion.
- To rationalize governance and inspections under a single model, that is the LMS management system.
- The Northern Health and Social Care Trust, the registering authority for the playgroup, require the school to adhere to a number of procedures as part of their requirements. In a letter to the school dated 19th August 2016, the Early Years Panel have asked "that reasonable steps would be taken to avoid congested areas within the school such as 9.00am, 10.45am and 12.40 and outdoor play would be timetabled to ensure children do not mix with others within the setting and the Early Years Panel viewpoint on this remains unchanged." In practice this means that the school cannot allow the children in the playgroup to mix with the children in the statutory nursery unit at Mill Strand IPS except for the school nativity as long as appropriate risk assessment is in place according to the Health Trust requirements of registration. This is only allowed as it would be time limited. Therefore approval for an additional 26 statutory nursery places at Mill Strand IPS would allow the school to operate under one management system, LMS.
- Parents of children attending Mill Strand IPS want their children to be able to avail of pre-school education in an integrated school. The governors took the decision to open a Playgroup in Sept 2015, funded by IEF in an effort to support parental demand for integrated pre-school. The Playgroup currently has 23 children enrolled from September 2017.
- The staff and governors are keen to see parental demand for integrated pre-school provision at Mill Strand IPS met, provision that is heavily oversubscribed on an annual basis.

- The staff and the Governors recognize the desirability of educating children from all backgrounds together in a culture of respect and mutual understanding, promoting excellence and celebrating difference. Integrated education is an ethos that permeates all aspects of school life in an environment underpinned by the 'Statement of Principles of Integrated Education'.
- Approval for additional pre-school provision in Mill Strand IPS would support parents in being able to access the highly sought pre-school provision in this integrated school environment from the age of 3 to 11 years in the Triangle area.
- Those involved in Mill Strand Integrated PS would like to play a role in moving towards a shared future for all. The school has been at the forefront of building a shared future and continues to strive to break down barriers in a community still divided on grounds of religious difference.

Need for Additional Pre-School Provision

In the departmental submission to the Minister on DP No 484, a series of 'Other Considerations' were addressed (page 29) "In determining need, the Department generally assumes a level of provision at 95% of target age children, predicated on the application rate for pre-school places that is approximately 92%. As the existing non-statutory provision at Mill Strand IPS is not PSEP funded provision, it is not included in the analysis below, either before or after the proposed change.

The numbers of pre-school places and associated percentages, measured against the Year One enrolments for 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 academic years.

Table 8 Level of Pre-school Provision – Two mile radius of Mill Strand IPS

Year	Statutory places	Non-statutory places	Reception places	Total pre-school provision (exc. reception)	P1 places	Level of pre-school provision (% of P1 places)	Underage children in statutory places
2014/15	26	47	0	73	93	78.5	0
2015/16	29	38	0	67	109	61.5	0
2016/17	27	44	0	71	110	64.5	0
2017/18 (as proposed)	52	44	0	96	110	87.3	-

Source: Extract of submission to Minister on DP No 484

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/DP%20484%20Millstrand%20IPS%20%28Nursery%20Unit%29.PDF>

The level of provision within the two mile radius is currently significantly lower than the planning figure, but would be close to 100% if the proposed statutory provision is approved.”

It's important to note that the EA has asserted that every child who had stayed within the process got a place. However this doesn't take account of those who were unable to stay within the process and those who have taken places in the unfunded setting at Mill Strand IPS.

In September 2018, Mill Strand IPS anticipates an enrolment of 274 as it currently has 49 children enrolled in the school's statutory nursery unit and independent playgroup whose parents have all indicated to the school that they are committed to Integrated Education and wish to enrol in P1 for September 2018. The school also has a waiting list of pupils that it cannot accommodate in its pre-school settings having had a request for temporary flexibility turned down. This temporary flexibility request was for children with siblings at the school for which any alternative provision presented insurmountable travel difficulties. As the request was unapproved all four families are not in receipt of funded pre-school places and are included in the numerous parents who did/could not 'remain within the pre-schools admissions process'. These children are also excluded from EA figures.

There is no alternative for parents seeking an integrated education. All other providers within a three-mile radius are sited beside or in the schools for which they are feeder pre-schools. All of these schools are either controlled or maintained settings. Mill Strand Integrated School would fully support this arrangement, however, as it enables all of the schools concerned to work closely with their pre-schools, facilitate seamless transition to primary education, enable the highest levels of collaboration and communication throughout the foundation stage (Nursery – Year 2) and aid the early identification and intervention of SEN. Mill Strand IPS would argue, however, that important relationships and friendships are developed in this pre-school year along with a familiarisation of the ethos of the school. It is unacceptable therefore that these bonds and friendships should be broken at the age of four on the basis of religion.

The school appreciates the view of the ETI that children will benefit from having access to a pre-school education within the integrated education sector, should that be the wishes of their parents and that the ETI is supportive of DE's wider policies, which include arrangements for integrated education.

Table 9 Millstrand IPS – Religious Balance (figures for whole school)

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	
Protestant	76	69	69	71	74	98	33%
Roman Catholic	80	86	81	74	71	80	27%
Other /No Religion	51	52	60	71	100	118	40%
Total	207	207	210	216	245	296	

NB 2017/18 figures include Non-statutory Pre-school

5. EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

The school currently provides a strong capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all learners as evidenced by recent ETI inspections. Approval for the establishment of additional nursery provision at Mill Strand Integrated PS would be significant in providing parents with much sought after integrated pre-school provision at the school to meet parental demand. This would increase accessibility to integrated education and strengthen the position of the school within the Portrush area.

By extending the capacity of the Nursery to 52 places, the school will be able to extend the availability of high quality pre-school provision and build on the outstanding progress of pupils in the foundation stage.

An essential part of integrated education is the celebration of difference, of allowing children to maintain and develop social and friendship bonds that cross divides of cultural, religious, national or social boundaries.

To maximise the educational outcomes for the school's young people, it is essential that these relationships and ethos be maintained from the earliest opportunity in an integrated setting rather than be broken by failing to meet parental choice of both integrated Nursery and Integrated School provision. This would allow for acceptance and celebration of difference to be firmly built into the children's DNA so that they may make a lasting positive impact on our society.

- **Educational Benefits including High Quality Educational Provision**

The outcomes for children within nursery units have been shown to be a higher quality than those within playgroups (EPPNI). Mill Strand IPS has been able to see some practical evidence to support this. The most obvious benefit of 26 additional places for pupils would be the continuity and progression of educational provision that can only be facilitated through a Foundation Stage education on a single site. The shared collaborative planning and professional communication between all Foundation Stage staff as well as the use of 'To Build a Profile' in Mill Strand IPS Nursery enables the school to track children in order to provide personalised targets and learning opportunities to ensure they are meeting their own individual milestones and next steps at an appropriate pace. This carries forward seamlessly into Year 1 with teachers already familiar with pupils, their individual qualities, talents, attributes and needs.

All Foundation Stage staff contribute to pre-school curriculum planning and delivery to address the 7 Areas of Learning, early Literacy and Numeracy skills as well as Personal Social and Emotional Development laying foundations for access to the curriculum. It is this coherent, collaborative approach that has led to significant educational benefits for Mill Strand Integrated pupils in recent years.

The provision of 26 additional Nursery places will also enable the school to continue the practice of creating two equally balanced Year 1 classes, taking into account the different personalities, qualities, talents and needs of the whole year group, currently facilitated through non-statutory pre-school places. This enables the school to not only put in place appropriate educational provision from the earliest possible opportunity but it also allows the school to create two equal classes that will help the school maximise educational outcomes for the whole year group throughout its seven years of primary education.

By bringing all pre-school provision under the umbrella of DE /ETI the school would not only reduce the bureaucratic burden of having to operate two parallel management systems, it would also enable all pre-school provision to fall under the remit of the ETI.

The school believe that this would further enhance and support the high quality of pre-school provision already in place.

- **How Would the Proposal Benefit Children?**

Transition to primary education is a significant milestone in a child's development. The ETI acknowledge and support the assertion of the school that children will benefit from the likelihood of smooth transition between pre-school and Year 1. Having 26 additional Nursery places would enable the school to continue to provide a very high quality of transition for all pupils entering the school and not just those who have gained one of the existing 26 Nursery places at the school.

The school believes that transferring to a school that pupils are already familiar with, feel secure and happy in, as well as being already fully aware of the needs of each individual pupils entering the school can only be beneficial to children. A Buddy system operates in Mill Strand IPS in which pupils attending the Nursery develop 'Buddies' from the school's Year 6 during their pre-school year. These 'Buddies' engage regularly with each other through play, story sessions and off-site visits. These relationships are maintained following transition, with the Year 1 pupils keeping the link with their 'Buddies' who are now in Year 7. Social Services, Early Years' regulations for Playgroups prevents playgroup children from having this Buddy system of support or from having any engagement with other pupils and staff in the school. It also prevents these children from joining the Nursery pupils for lunch in the dining hall or playing with them in the outdoor Nursery playground. The approval of 26 additional Nursery places would enable all pre school children to benefit from the same opportunities for learning and their personal, social & emotional development.

The school would further argue, that important relationships and friendships are developed in this pre-school year along with a familiarisation of the ethos of the school and that it is essential that these are maintained. It is unacceptable therefore that these bonds and friendships should be broken at the age of four on the basis of religion. These relationships extend well beyond the pupils in the classroom. They include relationships between children outside school, parents, grandparents and the wider community. Mill Strand Integrated School's Nursery further develops this through a child centred 'open

door' policy at drop off and has been able to develop exceptionally strong family and community links as a result. The provision of 26 additional part-time places at Mill Strand Integrated School would ensure that all pupils enrolling in Year 1 have access to the same developmental opportunities in their pre-school year.

- **Equality of Opportunity & Early Intervention including specific provision for SEN**

The importance of early intervention & support has been underlined in the Chief Inspector's Report 2012-2014 and cannot be overstated, particularly regarding educational outcomes. Mill Strand Integrated School currently has 28% of pupils in receipt of Free School Meals and 19% of its pupils registered with Special Educational needs, including 8 with full Statements. In September 2017, nine pupils enrolled in Year 1 who did not have the benefit of pre-school provision or at either of Mill Strand Integrated School's Pre School settings. It is significant that five of these pupils demonstrate significant, previously unaddressed SEN including Social Emotional & Behavioural needs, Learning Difficulties and ASD. These needs now require immediate intervention in Year 1, a full year after they should have been identified and addressed, enabling equality of opportunity for all pupils entering primary education.

The provision of 26 additional part-time Nursery places at Mill Strand Integrated School would enable the school to ensure that all pupils entering Year 1 the following year would not only have had access to an equally high quality of pre-school provision but also equality of early identification of needs and intervention, raising the long-term educational outcomes for the pupils concerned.

6. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Governors of Mill Strand Integrated School & Nursery have determined that they will continue to "*strive to meet **demonstrated parental demand** for pre-school education at the area's only integrated primary school*". To do this, the existing Playgroup can be supported for a further year if necessary. It is therefore feasible that the implementation of this plan, if approved, would allow for 26 additional part-time places from September 2018.

The school has already secured 'expressions of interest' from 46 families, and will apply its published criteria against all Open Enrolment applicants in the coming weeks to fill the school's existing 26 Nursery places and, outside the PEG process, its 23 Playgroup places. A waiting list will then be drawn up from remaining applicants listed in criteria order.

Should this Development Proposal be approved the unfunded Playgroup places can easily be transferred to funded Nursery places with any unfilled places being filled from the waiting list.

As the school has already put in place a facility for pre-school children, no additional physical work or resources are required. Existing teaching and non-teaching staff would be retained on temporary contracts pending the advertisement and appointment of permanent staff at a time conducive to the operation of the new Nursery setting within the 2018/19 academic year.

Mill Strand Integrated School & Nursery would continue to operate with 52 Nursery places in its existing accommodation at Dhu Varren pending the completion of its new build for September 2021. At this point, it would be feasible to have in place a double Nursery Unit on site at the school's new, double intake, school.

This change would have a positive impact on the management of the school. As Playgroup provision operates under NHSS Registration through Early Years Social Services rather than DE the school currently has to facilitate two different operating and management procedures with separate management boards. This effectively prevents the integration of the Playgroup pupils into the school, the engagement of Playgroup children with Nursery children and adds significantly to the workload of senior management in the school.

The provision of 26 additional part-time Nursery places would enable these pupils to realise the same benefits as Nursery pupils and also better facilitate joined play for the whole year group, assessment of needs and team teaching by all pre-school staff.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Using 2016/17 Common Funding Formula (CFF) values, a high-level budget estimate to implement the proposal would be in the region of £73k (full-year cost) and £43k (in-year cost). While Mill Strand IPS could expect to receive a budget increase of this scale as part of the outworking of the CFF, it would not be an additional pressure on the Aggregated Schools Budget as funding follows the destination of pupils, whichever school they attend. Any additional recurrent costs would be a charge against the school's existing budget.

There will be capital requirements if the development proposal is approved but these can be included in the overall Fresh Start plans and financial support for the new school. There is sufficient space on the current site to accommodate a nursery unit.

As pre-school education does not qualify for transport assistance the provision of 26 additional part-time places would not contribute to any additional transport costs.
