

**CCMS**

Council for Catholic  
Maintained Schools

**Ballyhackett Primary School**

**303-2104**

**The Case for Change**

**March 2019**

## CASE FOR CHANGE – Supporting Information

### SUMMARY / OVERVIEW

EA AREA	Causeway Coast and Glens
DP NUMBER	DP 588
PROPOSER	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, Linen Hill House, 23 Linenhall Street, Lisburn
SCHOOL(S) NAME	Ballyhackett Primary School
SCHOOL REFERENCE	303-2104
TYPE	Primary School
MANAGEMENT	Catholic Maintained
DP PUBLICATION DATE	Week commencing 2 September 2019
PROPOSAL	<b>Ballyhackett Primary School will discontinue with effect from 31 August 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter</b>



## ASSOCIATED PROPOSALS

DP XXX Published DD/MM/YY	Proposed to ... with effect from ... or as soon as possible thereafter
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**EDUCATION AUTHORITY COMMENTARY ON PRE-PUBLICATION STATUTORY CONSULTATION**

<p><b>THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY</b></p>	<p>I confirm that the schools which EA consider might be impacted by this proposal were consulted on 19 March 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> 13 June 2019</p>
<p><b>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.</b></p> <p><b>Summary of views received (number of responses, recurring themes, petitions, community support or opposition).</b></p>	<p>In accordance with Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, a copy of the proposal was sent on 19 March 2019, to schools which, in the opinion of the Authority, might be affected by the proposal. A total of 5 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 16 April 2019.</p>
<p><b>Responses/Assurances in respect of issues raised during consultation.</b></p>	<p>A copy of the proposal was then re-issued to a further 21 schools which, in the opinion of the Authority, might be affected by the proposal on 25 March 2019. The closing date was extended and comments were invited from the Boards of Governors and Trustees, to be returned to the Education Authority by 1 May 2019.</p>
<p><b>Dates of EA meetings e.g. Education Committee/Board, etc.</b></p> <p><b><u>Details of issues raised by members of EA Board</u></b></p>	<p>In total three responses were received.</p>

**EDUCATION AUTHORITY  
COMMENTS**

**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?**

**NAME:** Kim Scott

**OFFICE HELD:** Acting Director of Education

**SIGNED:** 

**DATE:** 13 June 2019

All three responses disagreed with the Proposal to discontinue education at Ballyhackett PS.

The response from the Ballyhackett PS Board of Governors indicated that an ERS ballot was held and parents overwhelmingly voted to explore the option of Transforming to a Controlled Integrated Primary School - 69% of the parents (76% when late votes were counted).

The detailed response from the Governors centred on the following:

- This consultation process simply cannot continue until there has been clarity provided on this issue and ample time provided to the school and Board of Governors to seek proper legal advice to mount a challenge.
- Closure of the school will force catholic faith families to relocate to urban areas to access catholic education and erode the catholic population in our local community.
- The governors are concerned about the impact on rural schools and request a copy of the Rural Needs Assessment.
- The Governors challenge many of the 6 criteria of the SSP, to include the quality of education and composite classes.
- The Governors stated that they would like time given to allow both Federation and Integration to be considered as options.
- The EA are promoting a Transformation Process. The Board of Governors feel that the “Transformation Process” is in effect creating an opportunity to make efficiencies without due regard to the impact of such decisions on rural schools and their children.
- Was there no consideration given to solutions between Bellarena, St Aidan’s, St Anthony’s.
- Governors also refer to the review of Home to School Transport and would ask whether parents would eventually have to pay for the home to school transport considering their child was forced to move to a school further away?
- In reference to the NI Human Rights Commission Report, if anything research would point to stress, trauma and environmental change as having a detrimental effect on the Mental Health of

our children. The Governors would argue that the impact on children's lives and in particular the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs are not being considered in the proposal. There have been no impact assessments or equality screenings completed with the children.

- From the Good Friday Agreement, "An essential aspect of the reconciliation process is the promotion of a culture of tolerance at every level of society, including initiatives to facilitate and encourage integrated education and mixed housing."
- The current proposal diametrically opposes this by ignoring the initiatives that the teaching staff and Governors have developed in Ballyhackett Primary School, that are totally in accord with what is stated in the agreement. The children of both Ballyhackett and Castleroe Primary School will suffer if this proposal is successful.
- This is the first time the school has gone in to deficit, so many schools are dealing with financial pressures and the reduction to the education budget.
- School was not made aware of the plan when recruiting a new principal and would like time to put a three year development plan (a strategic and promotional plan) in place.

#### **St John's PS**

- Was not originally issued with the affected schools.
- The proposed closure of Ballyhackett would have a detrimental impact on the rural community it serves.
- Ballyhackett and St Johns work together on extra-curricular activities and on a transition post primary programme.
- There is a region wide understanding within the education system that the status quo is no longer sustainable. Unfortunately within this process, while there are many factors to be considered, small rural schools may be most at risk of being impacted. St John's PS would like to offer their continued support to the community of Ballyhackett.

	<p><b>Other</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If Ballyhackett was to close it would be sad day and our Parish, which stretches from Ballyhackett, Castlerock, Articlave and beyond the west side of Coleraine, would only have one Catholic school, St John's PS.</li><li>• It is desirable to us as a parish community for the children of Ballyhackett to continue to have their education in a parish environment and are allowed to benefit from the Catholic school ethos.</li></ul> <p>This development proposal was discussed by the EA's Education Committee at its meeting on 13 June 2019.</p>
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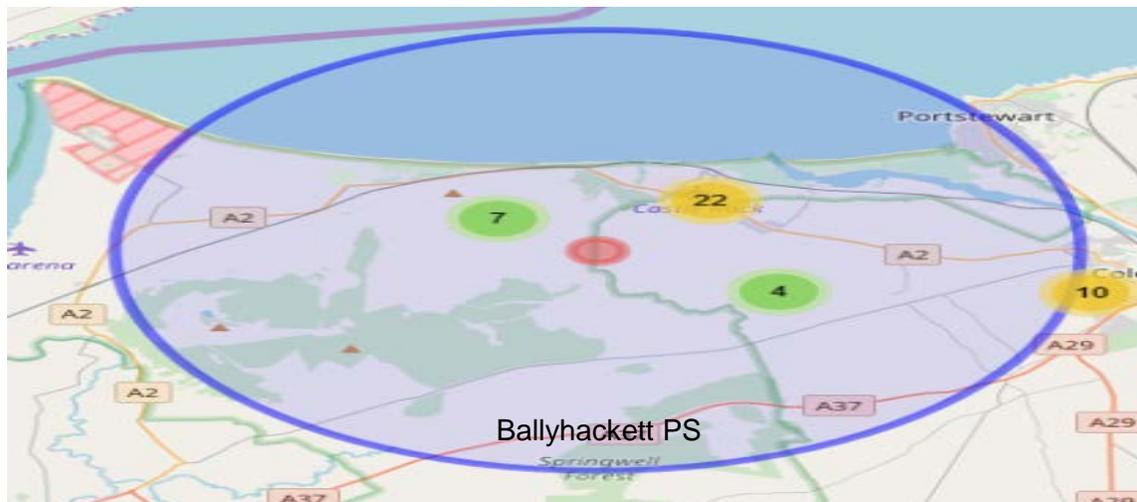
## 1. BACKGROUND

Ballyhackett Primary School (PS) is situated on the Altikeeragh Road, Ballyhackett, Castlerock, seven miles west of Coleraine. Ballyhackett PS (then national school) was built in 1870 by the Clothworkers' Company of London who owned the land and several adjoining town lands. In 1880 the nearby Altikeeragh School closed and its staff and pupils were incorporated into Ballyhackett PS. The school has had ongoing refurbishment and in 2008 had a major refurbishment with extension. In 2011 an additional porch was added to the school entrance.

The school is situated in the Castlerock\_1 SOA (Super Output Area) which has a multiple deprivation measure of 373 and an education, skills and training deprivation measure of 320. The rank for the proportion of pupils attending special schools or attending primary schools with Special Educational Needs Stages 3-5 is 349. In total there are 890 SOAs in Northern Ireland where 1 is the most deprived score and 890 the least deprived.

Map 1 below displays that the majority of the children who attend the school come from the villages of Castlerock and Articlave and the surrounding rural area. The majority of the children travel to school by a bus provided by the Education Authority.

### Map 1



The SOA rank for employment deprivation is 518 and 18 pupils (45%) in the school are entitled to free school meals (DE Census 17/18). The most recent available census (DE

17/18) recorded that 4 or less students have a statement of educational needs (stage 5). The exact number is suppressed. Seven pupils were identified as being on stages 1 to 4 of the SEN register.

The school, constructed on a site of 0.86 hectares/8.53 acres, has a LIA of 336 m<sup>2</sup> (Appendix B). As per the schedule of accommodation (Appendix B), there are 6 classrooms. The Minor Works Report can be viewed in Appendix C.

“Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools” (Sustainable Schools Policy or SSP) which was published in 2009, underpins all area planning work. The aim of area planning is to facilitate the development of a network of viable and sustainable schools that can deliver the NI Curriculum effectively and provide access to a range of education provision that is appropriate to the needs of pupils. CCMS is committed to excellence in the delivery of education, so that every pupil can realise their potential and contribute to a caring, inclusive and progressive society.

In striving to realise this aspiration, the area planning process aims to ensure that every pupil has:

- access to a broad and balanced curriculum with opportunities to realise his or her potential;
- an education in which the learning outcomes are appropriate to their needs;
- access to quality teaching delivered in a caring and supportive environment; and
- education delivered in modern, well-resourced facilities, suitable for the delivery of education in the twenty-first century.

On 28 April 2017 the Education Authority (with CCMS) published *Providing Pathways Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-2020 Annual Action Plan for Primary, Post-Primary and Special Schools, April 2017–March 2018*. When reviewing the requirements for the Action Plan 2018/2019, in line with the Sustainable Schools Policy (SSP), it was agreed to include Ballyhackett PS. See Table 1.

**Table 1:**

<b>Ballyhackett PS 50 Altikeeragh Road Castlerock Coleraine BT51 4SR</b>	<b>Address school provision where sustainability is an issue</b>	<b>Managing authority to consult on options for future provision of Ballyhackett PS by March 2019</b>
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At the August 2018 meeting of CCMS' Education Provision Committee, it was agreed to initiate consultation to examine future provision at the school.

CCMS has met with the schools' Board of Governors and principal, to discuss options for the schools' future. Based on available information CCMS is taking forward a development proposal for the discontinuance of Ballyhackett PS. Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 describes the process regarding the discontinuance of a school. This process requires the publication of a development proposal.

As part of the pre-publication consultation on the development proposal CCMS sought feedback including any objections and/or other comments on the proposed discontinuance of Ballyhackett PS from the Board of Governors, teaching staff, non-teaching staff and parents/guardians of children attending the school on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018. See Consultation Summary Appendix E.

## **2 SUPPORTING STATISTICS TO EXPLAIN/HIGHLIGHT THE EVIDENCE OF NEED FOR CHANGE**

### **2.1 Historic Enrolments**

Over the past number of years the school has experienced a downturn in enrolment numbers. The enrolment in Ballyhackett PS has decreased from 47 in 2007/08 to 36 in 2018/19. There is no indication this number will increase, and no evidence it can reach 105 pupils as required by the Department of Education's (DE's) Sustainable Schools Policy 2009.

**Table 2:**

<b>Enrolment Statistics *</b>								
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Total (P1-P7)
2007/08	3	5	10	8	9	8	4	<b>47</b>
2008/09	9	3	5	10	9	9	9	<b>54</b>
2009/10	6	8	3	5	9	9	9	<b>49</b>
2010/11	6	5	7	3	5	9	8	<b>43</b>
2011/12	10	6	5	7	3	5	9	<b>45</b>
2012/13	7	10	6	5	6	3	5	<b>42</b>
2013/14	3	7	11	7	5	6	3	<b>42</b>
2014/15	4	3	6	11	7	5	4	<b>40</b>
2015/16	6	5	2	6	10	6	5	<b>40</b>
2016/17	8	6	5	2	7	10	6	<b>44</b>
2017/18	4	8	7	5	3	6	11	<b>44</b>
2018/19	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>36<sup>1</sup></b>

## 2.2 Population Change – 0 – 15 Year Olds

Over the period 2014-2024, the population of Northern Ireland is projected to increase by 5.3% (98,200 people), reaching 1,938,700 by 2024.

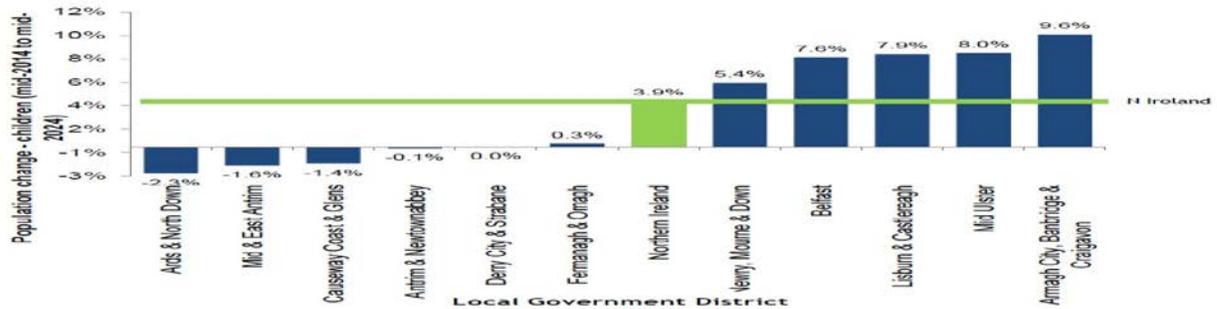
Whilst the number of children in Northern Ireland (0-15 year olds) is projected to grow by 3.9% throughout the decade 2014-2024, the Causeway Coast and Glens Local Government District (LGD) shows a marginal decrease (-1.4%), as detailed in table 3 below.

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<sup>1</sup>2007/2008 – 2017/18 data from DE Census. 2018/19 data received directly from school.

## Population Change

Table 3



### 2.3 Quality of Accommodation

The condition of Ballyhackett PS is 424<sup>th</sup> out of a total of 1182 schools. The suitability of the school is rated as 955<sup>th</sup> out of 1180 schools.

In September 2014 the ETI inspected the school and noted the following in regards to health and safety / accommodation: *The condition of the fabric of the mobile classroom has been identified as having potential risks. It is in the best interest of the children that these are resolved as a matter of urgency.*

*The arrangements for securing access to the rear of the school building needs to be kept under review. (p6)*

Both of these issues have since been rectified.

There remain a number of minor works outstanding including the following.

- Upgrade of goal posts.
- Upgrade the drainage/playing surface to meet statutory requirements such as health and safety.

### 3 SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

The main focus of the area planning process is embedded in the Sustainable Schools Policy, Schools for the Future – A Policy for Sustainable Schools (DENI 2009) and applies to primary and post-primary schools. The policy outlines the criteria school managing authorities should consider, when making decisions affecting the best use of resources, in order to deliver an education to children and young people. The policy sets out six sustainability criteria, and associated indicators, which are identified as the key references for assessing existing education provision to ensure it adequately meets the needs of pupils.

#### 3.1 SSP1: Quality Educational Experience

##### 3.1.1 Composite Classrooms and number of teachers

The table below demonstrates composite year groups, with over two year groups in a single classroom in each of the three classes. There are less than 3 classroom teachers (2.8 in November 2018).

Neither of the indicators above, for the criterion of quality educational experience, are met by Ballyhackett PS, Castlerock.

**Table 4: Classroom management**

Number of pupils 2018/2019	Mon-Tues	Wed-Friday
2 P1	Classroom 1	Classroom 1
4 P2	Classroom 1	Classroom 1
8 P3	Classroom 1	Classroom 2
7 P4	Classroom 2	Classroom 2
5 P5	Classroom 2	Classroom 3
4 P6	Classroom 2	Classroom 3
6 P7	Classroom 2	Classroom 3

### 3.1.2 The standards and the quality of learning and teaching at the school.

**Table 5: Inspection findings**

The most recent ETI inspection report published in September 2014 assessed Ballyhackett Primary School as follows.

<b>Overall Performance Level</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Achievements and Standards</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Provision</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Good</b>

The ETI report indicated (p5):

*'In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address.'*

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

*'The shared education programme is an exemplar of best practice. The rich range of experiences provided extend and enhance the shared learning experiences and development opportunities of the children, parents, governors and staff. The leadership and management have worked collaboratively with their partner school to plan for future sustainability of this work which is essential for broadening the children's experiences.'*

*'It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff. In particular, the leadership and management need to review the appropriateness of enrolling small numbers of reception children through the school year.'*

The ETI endorsed the quality of provision but also highlighted that matters relating to sustainability would have to be addressed by CCMS, governors and staff.

The Sustainable Schools Policy, Schools for the Future – A Policy for Sustainable Schools (DENI 2009), the *Section Educational Experience for Children* (p20) contains the following comments.

*Teachers in small schools face problems of having less scope for professional interaction and mutual support. The school is unlikely to provide a wide programme of extra-curricular activities and will have a smaller range of teacher specialisms e.g. music.*

*The smaller numbers of children in each year group limit the opportunities for working alongside peers, social interaction and challenge, and participation in extra-curricular activities including team-based experiences.*

The ETI Chief Inspector's Report 2014-2016 (p11) comments: *When the composite class spans more than two year groups, ensuring adequate progression in learning and planning to meet individual needs across a wider range of abilities and stages of development can be more challenging for the teacher. It may also limit opportunities for the children to develop socially and emotionally with those of a similar age and stage.*

### **3.1.3 The quality of the physical environment for learning and teaching.**

A number of minor works remain outstanding in regard to the school as noted in Section 2.3.

### **3.1.4 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.**

The 2014 ETI Inspection (p4) noted: *The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. There is an inclusive and respectful ethos where children and families from a diverse range of backgrounds are welcomed and valued. There are excellent working relationships at all levels and a clear commitment by the staff, governors, parents and volunteers to work collaboratively in the best interests of the school.*

## **3.2 SSP2: Stable Enrolment Trends**

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### **3.2.1 The enrolment trends in the school in the past three years and projected demand in the area.**

Table 2 (p9) demonstrates the enrolment figures remain consistently below the number of 105 contained within the SSP, from 54 in 2008/09 to 36 in 2018/19. It is not anticipated there will be a significant increase in the short, medium or long term demand in the area to impact the enrolment numbers significantly.

### **3.3 SSP 3: Sound Financial Position**

#### **3.3.1 The school's annual finances indicate that it can live within its delegated budget.**

All schools receive delegated budgets and have the authority to determine expenditure from these budgets. Guidance for schools requires that they should not accumulate surpluses or deficits in excess of 5% of their delegated budget, or £75,000, whichever is the lesser.

The schools financial deficit has been growing in recent years. Current financial plans created by the school do not address this increasing deficit. Table 6 below provides information from the school's three year Financial Plan 2018-21. It is based on the school's enrolment of 36 pupils in 2018/19, and projections of 35 pupils in 2019/20 and 36 pupils in 2020/21 (P1 – P7). The financial plan indicates a projected deficit of - £55,222 in 2020/21.

**Table 6: Summary of the 3 year Financial Plan**

	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>£196,674</b>	<b>£178,739</b>	<b>£174,256</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£207,890</b>	<b>£201,411</b>	<b>£200,649</b>
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>-£6,157</b>	<b>-£28,829</b>	<b>-£55,222</b>

**Source: School Financial Projection received by CCMS from LMS on 6 November 2018.**

Further details of the 3-year Financial Plan are included in Appendix D.

### **3.4 SSP 4: Strong Leadership and Management by Boards of Governors and Principal**

#### **3.4.1 ETI Inspection Report**

The ETI inspectors in their 2014 report (p4) made the following observations: *The leadership and management have a shared vision for providing a high quality education which values every child. The principal, in collaboration with staff who hold positions of responsibility, has undertaken initial auditing of school provision, which is used effectively to identify relevant priorities for improvement. The action plans are well focused on improving the provision and further raising standards. Actions taken need to be rigorously and systematically monitored and evaluated to ensure that the school fully realises its vision of providing high quality education for all of the children.*

#### **3.4.2 Composition of Board of Governors – skills and experience of Board members and number of vacancies.**

The Board of Governors benefits from a wide range of skills and includes representation from parents, teachers, Trustees, school principal and the Department of Education.

#### **3.4.3 Management of staff attendance and absenteeism.**

There are no issues to be addressed with staff attendance and absenteeism.

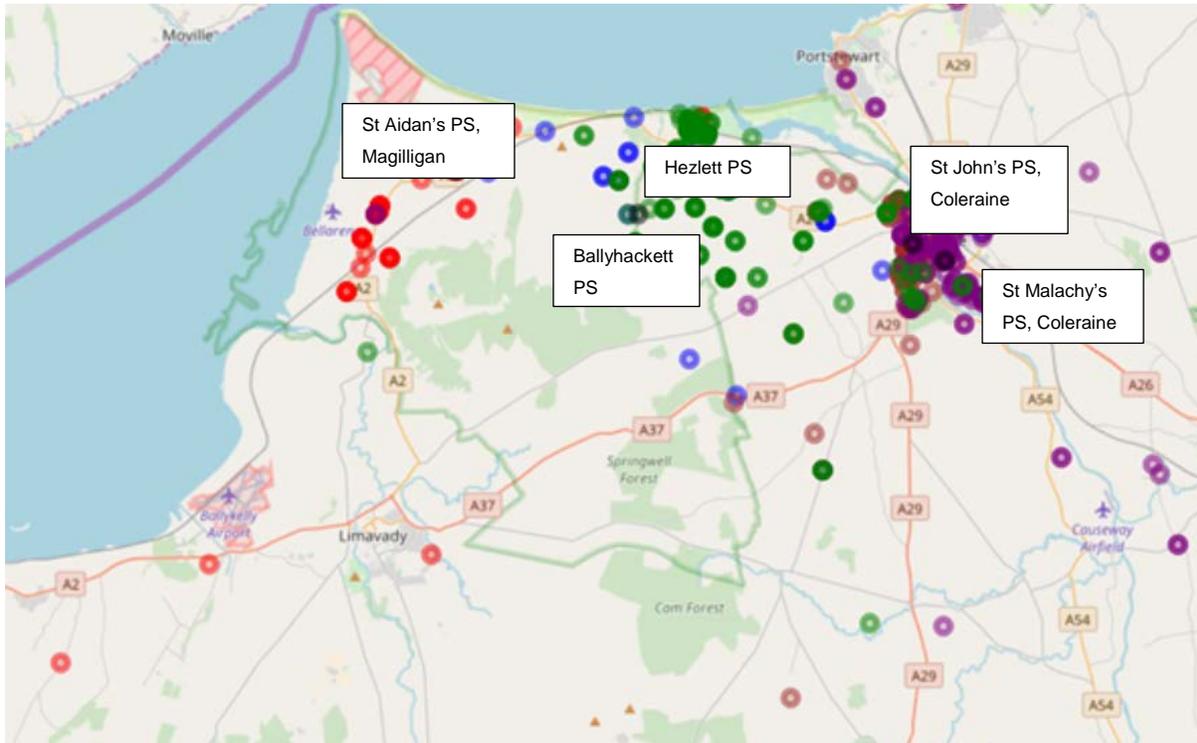
#### **3.4.4 Pupil behaviour, expulsions, suspensions and non-attendance as well as positive behaviours such as involvement in school management (e.g. buddying and mentoring schemes).**

There is no information contained in the ETI Inspection Report on the issues noted above.

### **3.5 SSP5: Accessibility**

### 3.5.1 Distance to another suitable primary school

**Map 2: Primary schools in close proximity to Ballyhackett PS**



Map 2 shows the location of primary schools in close proximity to Ballyhackett PS. Table 7 shows the distance to such primary schools from Ballyhackett PS. There is currently capacity within the local schools.

A further map showing schools within a 10 mile radius can be found in Appendix F.

**Table 7 – Distance from Ballyhackett PS to nearby schools**

Primary School	Distance (miles) from Ballyhackett PS	Sector
St John's Primary School, Coleraine	6.8 miles	Maintained
St Aidan's Primary School, Magilligan	6.3 miles	Maintained
St Malachy's Primary School, Coleraine	9 miles	Maintained
Hezlett Primary School, Coleraine	2 miles	Controlled

### 3.5.2 Capacity in nearest schools

**Table 8: Capacity in nearest schools (2017/18)**

	<b>Approved enrolment</b>	<b>Actual enrolment</b>	<b>Statemented pupils</b>	<b>Available places</b>
St John's Primary School, Coleraine	351	155	1	197
St Aidan's Primary School, Magilligan	82	67	1	16
St Malachy's Primary School, Coleraine	323	210	3	116
Hezlett Primary School, Coleraine	295	246	5	54

Source: DE website - <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-enrolments-school-level-data-201718>

The enrolment figure includes supernumerary pupils (which are pupils with a statement of Special Educational Needs). When calculating the unfilled places, the Department of Education excludes supernumerary pupils from the calculation. This means when you add the unfilled places to the enrolment, it will not match the approved enrolment number.

### **3.6 SSP 6: Strong Links with the community**

#### **3.6.1 Multi-functional use of buildings outside formal education, for example, for sport, voluntary and community use.**

The school provides its building for sport, voluntary and community use, which includes the following.

- Flower arranging
- Zumba
- Fitness classes
- Gaelic Games
- Soccer
- Tin whistle
- Church events (due to lack of Church Hall)
- Bodhran
- Fiddle
- Language classes
- Archaeology

## **4 AREA PLANNING IMPACT**

#### **4.1 Outline the Area Planning context and how this proposal will contribute to the delivery of education provision within the area. How does the proposal align with the current Area Plan, its key strategic themes and actions outlined in the Annual Action Plan?**

The DE's SSP focuses on the longer-term viability of educational provision. Its primary objective is to ensure that all children get a first class education, in fit for purpose facilities. This is regardless of background or where they live, making best use of the resources available for education. This policy drives the area planning process to ensure there is a network of strong viable schools to meet the educational needs of pupils.

CCMS has a statutory duty to promote and co-ordinate, in consultation with the Trustees, the planning of Catholic maintained schools. Area planning is focused on the Sustainable Schools Policy. In October 2016, the Education Authority's Providing Pathways - Strategic Area Plan for School provision 2017-2020 was published. The then Minister of Education, Peter Weir, MLA, stated:

*'The Sustainable Schools Policy, which is implemented through the Area Planning process, focuses on providing children and young people with high quality education that meets their needs and enables them to achieve their full potential....*

*The educational experience of our children and young people is greatly enhanced when they attend schools that are educationally and financially viable. The Sustainable Schools Policy is a framework for assessment of the sustainability of primary and post-primary schools. The six criteria and supporting indicators clearly illustrate what a sustainable educational experience should look like. Schools must: deliver a broad and balanced curriculum, offer extensive extracurricular activities, have high quality pastoral care systems and have the confidence of the communities they serve.*

*In primary schools pupils should be in a class with no more than two year groups but ideally they should be in single year group classes. They should be able to interact with peer groups and have the best chances to prepare for successful transition to post primary school. However there are still a significant number of schools that are struggling, for a wide range of reasons, to deliver the best for their pupils. This is particularly evident in the primary sector and, despite the best effort of teachers, it becomes harder to deliver a high quality education if pupils are taught in composite*

*classes. We have too many small primary schools with more than two year groups in a single class. ....'.*

CCMS, in taking forward the Annual Action Plan (2018-19) p22, identified a key issue for Ballyhackett PS, to 'address school provision where sustainability is an issue' with the action, 'Managing authority to consult on options for future provision of Ballyhackett Primary School by March 2019'.

CCMS subsequently ran a consultation on the future provision of the school between 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and 4<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

**4.2 Specify links to other proposals. Provide detail on other DPs (including those in planning and not yet published) that could impact on education provision in the area, affecting consideration of this proposal and outline any reason for not bringing them forward together.**

There are no other links with other proposals.

**4.3 What other options/size were explored and why was this the most appropriate area solution?**

The alternative options explored at the consultation stage are listed below.

**4.3.1 Maintain the status quo by keeping Ballyhackett PS open**

The implications of maintaining the status quo are as follows (as presented at the pre-publication consultation in November 2018). There would be:

- no disruption to present provision;
- protection of parental choice;
- no improvement to the school's financial position;
- two year groups in each of the three classes (see table 4);
- more than one key stage being taught in a single classroom;
- challenges in providing appropriate curriculum delivery;
- fewer opportunity for pupils to interact in sports, leisure and cultural activities; and
- fewer opportunities for staff development.

This option would result in no change to the current provision. It would provide continued pressure on staff to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum, to mixed aged classes in conjunction with an increasing budget deficit, leading to increasing pressure on available resources. In consideration of the Annual Action Plan, the low enrolment numbers, the school's financial position, and the Sustainable Schools Policy, to do nothing is not a sustainable option.

#### **4.3.2 Shared Education**

'Shared Education' is an education tool that allows pupils from different sectors to be educated in classes together. It does not, in and of itself, address the sustainability issues identified in small 2 teacher schools as these are associated with low enrolments in individual schools.

Shared campus projects allow schools to share a campus whilst retaining their own individual identity. Guidance from DE (Options for Sharing and Integrating: A Short Guide for Schools, 2018) specifically notes that schools must be sustainable in order to participate in the Shared Campus Programme. The Castlerock area currently has 2 schools, Ballyhackett PS (maintained school) and Hezlett PS, (controlled sector school). The schools are in close proximity but do not participate in shared education programmes. Ballyhackett PS participates in a shared education programme with a controlled school, Castleroe PS, Coleraine.

Given the circumstances in which Ballyhackett PS currently finds itself, there is insufficient evidence that a shared option could improve the sustainability of Ballyhackett PS.

#### **4.3.3 Amalgamation**

Amalgamation is the process whereby 2 or more schools, from the same sector, can come together to create a sustainable school. An amalgamation must be capable of delivering a school of at least 105 pupils, which will retain this number into the future. Having considered this option, CCMS is of the view there is no suitable school in the area for Ballyhackett PS to amalgamate with. Therefore, an amalgamation is not a viable option.

#### **4.3.4 Closure of Ballyhackett Primary School**

If Ballyhackett PS was to close and pupils and staff transferred to sustainable schools the implication areas follows. There would be:

- small school removed from the community and parental first preference not realised;
- longer travelling distance for pupils;
- greater opportunities for pupils to be taught in their own peer groups;
- greater opportunities to interact in sports, leisure and cultural activities;
- increased opportunities for specialist teaching and for professional development of staff;
- pupils enrolled in a sustainable school; and
- greater long term security for staff.

#### **4.3.5 Conclusion**

In considering the future of Ballyhackett PS, the options considered would not provide sustainable provision for the school.

CCMS recognises the commitment of the governors and staff but current circumstances would not provide for a sustainable school. It is recognised, despite the school's best efforts, the financial deficit is projected to grow.

The recommendation to close Ballyhackett PS was presented at the consultation evening on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018. The purpose of this pre-publication consultation was to inform stakeholders of the challenges faced by the school. It was also to facilitate a meaningful discussion on the CCMS recommendation. It provided an opportunity for all stakeholders to present their views and contribute evidence to be considered as part of the process, including any alternative sustainable options. The summary of responses received on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018, during consultation meetings, and through the consultation period, is recorded in Appendix E.

Having given due consideration to all feedback received, CCMS Education Provision Committee, approved the proposal to proceed with a DP for the closure of Ballyhackett PS with effect from August 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter.

#### **4.4 What is the potential impact on other schools, what account has been taken of this?**

It is not anticipated, given the low enrolment numbers in the school, there will be any significant impact on other schools. If a DP is approved, a CCMS Education Adviser will liaise with Ballyhackett PS and schools where the pupils will transfer and assist the pastoral aspect of the move. The receiving schools will facilitate parental visits, to ensure parents will have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with alternative provision.

There will be meetings with SEN co-ordinators where appropriate (to take account of transfer). Administration of admissions documentation will be required (transfer of common transfer files).

#### **4.5 In the case of pre-school provision the EA's Pre-school Education Group (PEG) are responsible for planning pre-school provision and overseeing the allocation of places to the non-statutory sector.**

Noted.

## **5 RATIONALE FOR PROPOSAL**

### **5.1 Explain the objectives of the proposal and the desired outcomes if approved – for example to reduce number of available places or to increase enrolment to meet demand. Detail how this aligns to Departmental policies and consideration given to Statutory Duties.**

The Providing Pathways - Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-2020 (p6) (Area Plan): *aims to ensure all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum that meets their needs in sustainable schools within a diverse system of education.*

This proposal addresses sustainability issues, as determined by the SSP, at Ballyhackett PS. The key sustainability criteria are addressed in Section 3, and the following conclusions can be drawn from the assessments made.

## **Quality educational experience**

The Quality Educational Experience SSP criterion has an indicator '*No more than two composite year groups in a single classroom at primary school level*'. Ballyhackett PS operates three composite year groups in a single classroom.

## **Stable enrolment trends**

Ballyhackett PS has, as detailed in Table 2, experienced a low enrolment in the last 5 years. The current enrolment is 36 pupils with low numbers (n=2) opting to enrol in Ballyhackett PS in September 2018. The school's enrolment falls well below the SSP criteria for a rural school of 105 pupils.

## **Sound financial position**

The school is showing an increasing budget deficit which will further increase in the 2018-2021 financial years. At the end of the 2020/21 financial year, the deficit is anticipated to be -£55,222.

Enrolment trends are down. There are large classes of pupils due to leave in the next 2-3 years, the number of pupils enrolling at the school are low so it is likely that this will have a further impact on the budget. Once again, this will impact on staffing and provision and will have a knock on impact on class sizes and curriculum delivery.

## **Strong leadership and management by Boards of Governors and Principal**

- The Board of Governors benefits from a wide range of skills. The school has benefitted from the appointment of the present Principal in December 2017.

## **Accessibility**

- The school is accessible for those who send their children there. A number of the children who attend the school come from the villages of Castlerock and Articlave and the surrounding rural area. Nearly 60% (58%, n=21) of the children are entitled to travel to school by a bus provided by the Education Authority. There are also accessible schools nearby.

## **Strong links with the community**

- The school has strong links with its local community.

The proposal to close Ballyhackett PS, recognises that continuing with the status quo will perpetuate the challenges experienced by the school. It is unable to meet a number of the sustainability criteria, particularly in regard to the quality of the educational experience (due to falling enrolment), enrolment and finance.

## **5.2 Equality Duty**

Equality screening of this proposal has been carried out. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998: A Guide for Public Authorities advises (p7); *“The first duty is the Equality of Opportunity duty, which requires public authorities in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between the nine equality categories of persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation; men and women generally; persons with a disability and persons without; and persons with dependants and persons without”*. The evidence received to date, suggests that there are no major impacts on the protected groups within Section 75 Northern Ireland Act 1998. The final screening document will be published on CCMS’ website, when the proposal reaches the public objection period. It will also be available, on request, from the CCMS’ office.

## **5.3 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

Article 12 (1) of the UNCRC: *Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her views the right to express those views freely on all matters affecting the child, the views of the child given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.*

CCMS had discussions with the Ballyhackett PS principal regarding the most age appropriate method of capturing pupil feedback. CCMS suggested the School Council be utilised. A number of pupils (n=15) sent in drawings, that illustrated their experience at Ballyhackett PS.

## 5.4 Rural Needs Act 2016

Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 ('the Act') requires public authorities to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or reviewing a policy, strategy or plan and when designing or delivering a public service.

The areas from which Ballyhackett PS attracts pupils are, according to the Inter-Departmental Urban-Rural Definition Group (A Guide to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 for Public Authorities (Revised) April 2018, p16), defined as rural. Therefore CCMS must take "due regard" to the Act.

A number of options were identified, which are contained within this Case for Change, which consider the potential for maintaining primary provision in the area. These include: shared education; amalgamation and maintaining the status quo. Each of these options has been discounted as they do not provide sustainable education provision. The details for the rejection of these options are outlined in Sections 4.3.1 – 4.3.5.

The options above were presented, as part of the consultation with staff, the Board of Governors, parents and pupils of Ballyhackett PS. This ensured information was received from the impacted stakeholders on all matters, including rural needs.

In determining whether to proceed with this proposal, due consideration was given to the balance between meeting the enrolment, educational and financial requirements of the SSP and removing provision. There is no evidence the enrolment, educational and financial aspects of the school can be satisfactorily addressed.

The proposal for the closure of Ballyhackett PS would have a positive impact on primary education in the area. The reasons for this are detailed throughout the Case for Change. The proposal ensures pupils would have equitable access to a broad and balanced curriculum, as is afforded to other primary pupils across Northern Ireland. The intention of this proposal is to advance the aspirations, aims and objectives of the Sustainable Schools' Policy (SSP) (p27), "*It is important that children in rural communities have access to a quality education in cost effective provision*".

## **6 EDUCATIONAL IMPACT**

### **6.1 What are the educational benefits of this proposal?**

As a result of enrolling in a sustainable school, it is more likely that pupils will be taught in single year group classes or classes of no more than two year groups. This will ensure that pupils are working alongside peers of a similar age and stage. In a sustainable school, it is more likely that pupils will benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities. There will also be opportunities to benefit from a range of teacher specialisms. The pupils will also benefit from the security of being enrolled in a sustainable school.

### **6.2 Provision of high quality education should be the desired outcome of all proposals - outline how this proposal aims to achieve this outcome.**

The schools within the area, listed in tables 7 and 8, received Highly Effective/Very Good/Good ETI reports and can provide for the educational needs of the pupils. There is capacity in all of the local schools. The local schools include schools which have pupil numbers which meet the SSP criterion of no more than two year groups in a classroom. The pupils will be taught in more age appropriate classes which will assist teachers in ensuring there are appropriate levels of differentiation in teaching and learning. By being taught in a class with no more than two year groups, pupils should benefit from wider peer and social interaction. There may also be more opportunities for extra-curricular activities and participation in team events. It can allow better use of educational resources including the deployment of teaching and support staff. There may also be greater opportunities for the professional development of staff through interaction with peers and CPD opportunities such as 'Trusted Colleague Network'.

If Ballyhackett PS was to cease provision, the pupils would be afforded the opportunity to enrol in sustainable schools thus ensuring the following:

- greater opportunities for pupils to be taught in their own peer groups;
- increased opportunities for specialist teaching and for professional development of staff; and
- pupils enrolled in a sustainable school with less financial pressures.

### **6.3 Outline how the proposal will benefit children and young people in the school(s) and in the area overall.**

This proposal will benefit pupils as it will add to the longer-term viability of school provision. Its primary objective is to ensure that all pupils get a first class education in fit for purpose facilities, regardless of background or where they live, making best use of the resources available for education. This proposal will progress the development of a network of strong viable schools to meet the educational needs of pupils.

### **6.4 Provide details of how the specific requirements of pupils with SEN will be catered for under the new arrangements.**

If this proposal is approved, CCMS, in liaison with the EA and the schools involved, will ensure the following steps are taken:

- continued support for SEN pupils following the closure;
- assistance for pupils, as required, in managing the change to a new setting;
- continued appropriate placement for pupils with a statement of special educational needs, and assistance for these pupils in managing the change to a new setting;
- early, and confidential, transfer of statements and individual education plans (IEP) to the new school;
- consideration, as necessary, of the facilities and equipment required to support pupils with SEN;
- consideration, as necessary, of Learning Support Centre provision where appropriate; and
- consideration, as necessary, of transport arrangements.

Current policy means that where a pupil lives beyond 2 miles from their nearest “suitable” school, they are entitled to transport assistance to any suitable school.

Special transport needs may arise, if a pupil has a level of impaired mobility which necessitates the use of a wheelchair, or a pupil has a medical condition/severe learning difficulty.

This is determined by the EA, who indicate which special transport arrangements must be made. Where pupils have special transport needs, officers of the EA, drawing upon medical and other advice as required, will assess the pupil's transport needs and make appropriate arrangements.

## **7 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (IF THE PROPOSAL IS APPROVED)**

**Note: The timeline should be considered in advance of DP publication, this will impact on when the DP should be published to allow sufficient time from decision to implementation.**

**7.1 Outline all actions required to deliver the proposal if approved. Does the implementation date reflect this, is it deliverable? If phasing is being proposed explain why it is necessary?**

**If a development proposal is approved the following steps would be taken.**

- A CCMS Education Adviser would liaise with Ballyhackett PS and schools where the pupils would transfer to, to assist the pastoral aspect of the move.
- Parents would have the opportunity to visit alternative schools.
- Meetings with SEN co-ordinators would be organised to take account of transfer to alternative school(s).
- Administration of admissions documentation would be organised.
- There would be sufficient time for the school, to liaise with the EA, regarding the transfer of their assets to other schools and secure storage of documents which need to be held.

**7.2 Depending on type of proposal, this could include arrangements for pupils transferring to other school(s), maintaining continuity for examination classes, applications for additional accommodation and timeframe for delivery which takes account of time needed to secure all the necessary approvals to allow accommodation to be provided.**

Pupils transferring to post-primary schools would participate in the same policies and procedures for transferring to a post-primary school, as per current policies and guidelines.

**7.3 Details of any arrangements for Shared Education Partnerships and how they would be impacted should be included in this section.**

Ballyhackett PS has been in a longstanding Shared Education Programme with Castleroe Primary School. This partnership would be negatively impacted by the withdrawal of provision at Ballyhackett PS.

**7.4 Will there be composite classes or will they be removed, will the school operate a double entry?**

This proposal means the pupils will have a greater opportunity to attend schools which do not have more than 2 year groups in one class.

**7.5 How will the School/EA ensure that the education of the children is protected during/after the proposed change?**

Measures will be put in place to protect the educational and pastoral needs of the pupils, during the transfer to another school. Once the receiving schools know the particular nature of the pupils' needs, they can be proactive and prepare appropriately to offer the required support and care strategies to enable the pupils to make good progress.

The staff in the receiving schools will have expertise in catering for pupils with special needs and they will ensure that there is no diminution in the level of care currently in place. Individual education plans will set out the nature of support pupils require and the expertise to deal with pupils in this situation is already there. Individual education plans will transfer across to the new school with the pupils who have them in place.

## **8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

**Detail finance/resource implications (both capital and recurrent) of the proposal and approximate costs where available.**

### **8.1 Is the proposal cost effective?**

**Finance – Budget position, impact on budget, cost of proposal.**

This proposal is cost effective. The school projects that by March 2021, its deficit will rise to -£55,222 (Appendix D). The school's budget is based on its existing numbers, additional needs and special circumstances.

This proposal is cost effective and will strengthen provision in the area, were the schools will benefit from the additional pupils.

If approved, there will be savings made upon closure of Ballyhackett PS. Savings would accrue from the following main source:

- reduction of building maintenance costs; and
- removal of small school support funding.

### **8.2 Staffing – Additional teaching staff required, cost/redeployment, redundancy cost**

The school cohort is commensurate with the current and anticipated enrolment. Any redeployment/redundancy costs will be in line with current guidelines.

It is not possible to predict the number of redundancies or redeployments in advance of a decision, in regard to the development proposal. Therefore, it is not possible to cost these accurately at this time. Employment/deployment opportunities for both teaching and non-teaching staff will be sought in alternative schools, in the event of the closure of the school.

### **8.3 Transport – Any additional cost**

There will be an increased transport cost associated with any pupil who is currently less than 2 miles from Ballyhackett PS and where they live beyond 2 miles from an alternative school.

**8.4 Accommodation – brief description of current accommodation/site, any capital proposals or minor works applications. Immediate day one minimum capital requirements should the DP be approved, site suitability to support changes, estimated cost and timescales for delivery of changes. Note: Approval of a DP does not automatically attract additional funding or accommodation and that these issues will be dealt with separately by the Department.**

It is not anticipated there will be any accommodation costs to facilitate the closure of Ballyhackett PS.

### **8.5 Other issues requiring resources**

N/A

## **APPENDIX A – Annual Area Profile 2018**

## Primary School Annual Area Profile 2018

DE Ref No	School Name	Status	Council Area
3032104	Ballyhackett Primary School	Catholic Maintained	CAUSEWAY COAST AND GLENS

Annual Census Information			
Year	Total pupils Y1-Y7	IMU	FSME %
2014/15	40	0	35.0
2015/16	40	0	32.5
2016/17	44	0	47.7%
2017/18	44	0	40.0%
Approved Reception-Year 7 enrolment number			67
Approved Reception-Year 7 admissions number			10
Year 1 Pupils 2017/18			4
First Preferences Applications 2017/18			2

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

Budgets			
Year	Available Delegated Resources £	Surplus/Deficit £	Surplus/Deficit %
2014/15	203,730	16,424	8.06%
2015/16	207,931	15,035	7.23%
2016/17	200,479	11,443	5.71%

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

## **APPENDIX B – Schedule of Accommodation**

**303-2104 (03-0505) - Ballyhackett Primary School Site, 50 Altikeeragh Road, Castlerock, Co Londonderry, BT51 4SR Size = 0.86(Has)/2.124(Acres) - L.I.A. = 336(M2)**

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No	Name	Size (m2)	Description
<b><i>Ballyhackett Primary School BLOCK 1 Main School</i></b>			
0	Shell Block 1		Shell Block
1	Entrance/Corridor 1	61.91	Corridor
2	Corridor 2	36.94	Corridor
3	Assembly/Dining Hall 3	43.70	Multi purpose Hall
4	Store 4	3.06	Store
5	<b><u>Classroom 5</u></b>	51.01	<b><u>Classroom</u></b>
6	Toilet Girls 6	9.50	Toilet
7	Store 7	4.22	Store
8	Toilet Boys 8	9.11	Toilet
9	Toilet Staff 9	3.40	Toilet
10	Office Principal 10	11.04	Office
11	Staffroom 11	29.46	Staffroom
12	Store 12/11	7.09	Store
13	<b><u>Classroom 13</u></b>	57.66	<b><u>Classroom</u></b>
14	<b><u>Classroom 14 (903 on Drg)</u></b>	60.27	<b><u>Classroom/Resource Rm</u></b>
15	Boiler Room 15	2.19	Boiler Room
16	Watertank Area 16	5.67	

### ***Ballyhackett Primary School BLOCK 2 Grounds***

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999	External Grounds 999	0.00	Grounds
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## APPENDIX C – Minor Works



## **APPENDIX D – Financial Plan**

**SCHOOL FINANCIAL PLAN 2018 - 2021**



**Ballyhackett Primary**

CODE 20960

\*\*\*Only complete cells in grey\*\*\*

	Prior Year October 2017	Year 1 October 2018	Year 2 October 2019	Year 3 October 2020
<b>Full Time Equivalent Enrolment</b> (excluding Spec Unit pupils)	45	37	35	36
<b>Planned Teaching Complement</b> (after amendment to Variables as below)	3.00	2.80	2.80	2.80
<b>Planned Pupil/Teacher Ratio</b>	15.00	13.21	12.50	12.86

Variables - Teaching Staff - To assist in budget forecasting	Year 1 Change in Staff (Enter as Positive Fig.s)	Year 2 Change in Staff (Enter as Positive Fig.s)	Year 3 Change in Staff (Enter as Positive Fig.s)
Increase in Permanent Teachers			
Increase in Temporary Teachers			
Decrease in Permanent Teachers			
Decrease in Temporary Teachers			

**PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS**

Cost of Living Pay Award Estimate  
Other Costs - estimated rate of inflation

	Year 2	Year 3
Cost of Living Pay Award Estimate	1%	1%
Other Costs - estimated rate of inflation	2%	2%

	YEAR 1 (2018-2019)	YEAR 2 (2019-2020)	YEAR 3 (2020-2021)
<b>Expenditure Summary</b>			
Staff - Pay Teaching	£157,188	£150,051	£148,624
Staff - Pay Non Teaching	£35,581	£35,937	£36,293
Staff - Other Costs	£0	£0	£0
Premises, Fixed Plant and Grounds	£7,411	£7,559	£7,710
Operating Costs	£7,310	£7,456	£7,605
Non Capital Purchases	£400	£408	£416
Capital Expenditure	£0	£0	£0
Stock Adjustment	£0	£0	£0
Less Income (enter as negative figure)	£0	£0	£0
<b>Estimated Savings (enter as a negative figure)</b>			
Reduction in Teaching Staff (as per Variables)	£0	£0	£0
Please specify	£0	£0	£0
Please specify	£0	£0	£0
Please specify	£0	£0	£0
<b>Estimated Additional expenditure (enter as a positive figure)</b>			
Increase in Teaching Staff (as per Variables)	£0	£0	£0
Please specify	£0	£0	£0
Please specify	£0	£0	£0
Please specify	£0	£0	£0
<b>TOTAL PROPOSED EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£207,890</b>	<b>£201,411</b>	<b>£200,649</b>
<b>CFF BUDGET SHARE PER CAPITA</b>	<b>£4,371</b>	<b>£4,831</b>	<b>£4,979</b>
<b>Budget Summary Allocation</b>			
Common Formula Funding (CFF) Budget Share	£196,674	£178,739	£174,256
Other funding - (Please specify)	£0	£0	£0
Other funding - (Please specify)	£0	£0	£0
Other funding - (Please specify)	£0	£0	£0
Other funding - (Please specify)	£0	£0	£0
<b>Total Delegated Budget</b>	<b>£196,674</b>	<b>£178,739</b>	<b>£174,256</b>
Carry-over from Previous Year	£5,059	-£6,157	-£28,829
<b>Total BUDGET</b>	<b>£201,733</b>	<b>£172,582</b>	<b>£145,427</b>
less PROPOSED EXPENDITURE	£207,890	£201,411	£200,649
<b>ANTICIPATED CARRY-OVER</b>	<b>-£6,157</b>	<b>-£28,829</b>	<b>-£55,222</b>
<b>% CARRY-OVER</b>	<b>(3.05%)</b>	<b>(16.70%)</b>	<b>(37.97%)</b>
<i>In Year Movement</i>	-£11,216	-£22,672	-£26,393

## **APPENDIX E – Consultation Summary**



**CCMS**  
Council for Catholic  
Maintained Schools

**Ballyhackett Primary School**

**303-2104**

**PROPOSAL:**

**The discontinuance of Ballyhackett PS with effect from  
31 August 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter.**

**Summary of the responses to the consultation in regard to the proposal to discontinue Ballyhackett Primary School with effect from 31 August 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter.**

*This summary contains a resume of the key issues raised at the stakeholder consultation meetings and through written comments subsequently received. The following table notes the key issues, who raised the issues and how they were addressed. Any issue requiring further action from the written responses or the meeting is noted.*

Three consultation meetings were held as below.

**The staff consultation was held on 20 November 2018, 10 staff were in attendance.**

**The governors' consultation was held on 20 November 2018, 7 governors were in attendance.**

**The parents' consultation was held on 20 November 2018, 40 parents were in attendance.**

The atmosphere at the consultation meetings was generally respectful, professional and well-ordered. CCMS Advisers delivered the presentations. Before each presentation, the presenters highlighted the SSP requirements and the area planning imperatives.

The key issues identified in the stakeholder consultation and at the meetings include:

- **There were no responses, verbal or written, in favour of the proposal to close Ballyhackett PS.**
- **The BoG has requested a completed copy of the Rural Needs Impact Assessment.**
- **Response from MLA suggested opening the school to more community use to generate income.**
- **Respondents focused on the school being the focal point of the rural community.**
- **404 responses from members of the community noted the Rural Needs Act of 2016 stating the proposal to be detrimental to the growth and prosperity of the rural community.**
- **Many responses also noted that while Ballyhackett PS may be a Catholic school, it is made up of many different faiths and none.**
- **Many parents said their children flourished in a composite class.**
- **A teacher/BoG member quoted from the NI Assembly briefing paper that there are no significant differences in single year group classes as opposed to composite classes.**
- **Concern from parents that CCMS could not guarantee the same high standard of education pupils are currently receiving.**
- **Closure of the school will be detrimental to the whole area.**
- **Proposed closure impacts on equality obligations as laid out in EQIA.**

A consultation period to allow parents and others to respond to the CCMS recommendation ran from 20 November 2018 to 4 January 2019.

Insert “Yes” in the relevant part of the table below where the issue was addressed. Note actions required if an issue was not addressed fully at the meetings or by letter in response to specific queries raised in the consultation responses.

Issues	Staff	Govs	Parents	Any action required
<b>Staffing matters</b>				
The staff are very experienced with many years of service, commitment and loyalty to the children of the area.	Yes			
Staff go above and beyond the call of duty to ensure an optimal educational environment for the pupils.		Yes		

<b><i>Pupils issues</i></b>				
Composite classes receive support in other jurisdictions.	Yes			
Composite classes work well here. In large single-year-group classes it takes much longer for the teachers to get to know the children.	Yes	Yes		CCMS stated that 50% of classes in NI schools are composites of two year groups with 11% composing of three year groups. CCMS stated that because a child attends a big school it does not mean that s/he will be lost. It all depends on the quality of education on offer.
Many autistic pupils are lost in a big school.	Yes			As above.
In Ballyhackett PS pupils get great care and attention from the outset.	Yes	Yes		As above.
Research carried out for the NI Assembly shows that care can be given to pupils in composite classes.	Yes			CCMS Adviser stated that they had read the same piece of research and it refers to composite classes of no more than two year groups.
Our 3-class composite has only 15 children. It feels like we got under 40 pupils and CCMS were 'right in there immediately'.	Yes			Advised that the process was determined by SSP criteria. Assured those present that no school is treated any differently.
CCMS should have done more to protect the school given its unique location.	Yes	Yes		
With a reputation for holiday homes and as a retirement haven, the Castlerock area consequently has low numbers of resident children.	Yes	Yes		
Changes to education provision in the locality are impacting on parent choice and, thus, on enrolment numbers.	Yes			
The characteristic of a school where staff, governors, parents and pupils come from different religions provides a sound model for shared education.	Yes	Yes	Yes	
A staff member complained about the use of the term 'non-compliance' in the section	Yes			Adviser had not been aware of using this term but apologised, if this was the case.

of the presentation dealing with the ETI's report.				
How much weight can be given to a quality education experience based on a report from 2014?	Yes			Adviser explained that we have to go on the inspection report, no other data testing or quantifiable information available. Adviser stressed the importance of using quantifiable data. Further advised that we are not judging what is happening in the classroom we can only use facts.
Is there a published weighting for criteria?			Yes	No weighting, but all the SSP criteria are used as indicators. We are tasked with gathering as much information as possible.
Pupils from Ballyhackett are well-taught and do not need any extra assistance in reading and writing when transferring to post-primary.	Yes			
The inspectors reported that the children were 'great advocates for the school'.	Yes			
Children with additional needs will not receive the same level of care elsewhere.	Yes	Yes		There are effective small schools and there are effective big schools. It is a matter of judgment for parents as to which alternative best suits the needs of their children if proposal is taken forward. CCMS would provide as much practical information on the alternative schools as was possible if proposal is progressed.
Concerns expressed about class sizes in alternative schools.	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above we show all the alternatives available and that it is important that parents consider all options. It is possible that moving from a small school to a larger school may result in greater class sizes. However, children do adapt to changing circumstances and teachers of larger classes will have systems in place to ensure that all children are catered for. Being part of a larger class size can also have a positive impact on the social and emotional element as they could work with a range of pupils. There are effective small schools and there are effective big schools. It is a matter of judgment for parents as to which alternative best suits the needs of their children. Governors were assured that CCMS would provide as much practical information on the alternative schools as was possible if proposal is progressed.

Can parents see the inspection reports from the alternative schools?	Yes			Reports are available online and parents can look at them any time. Furthermore, all the schools in the presentation have a minimum of good in their recent inspections. If a decision is made to close the school, CCMS will consult with families on where is best for their child (ren) to attend.
How sustainable are the other schools in the area?	Yes			We do not comment on other schools but in arriving at a decision on alternative schools, parents should take account of the criteria in the SSP. Current focus is on two teacher schools. Every decision or recommendation we make is assessed against the SSP. The presentation details the enrolment data and spare capacity of alternative schools in the area.
Ballyhackett is the feeder school for Loreto Convent. If parents choose to send their child to Hezlett, will they get the same preference in the selection scheme?	Yes	Yes		Ballyhackett is no. 6 with Hezlett no. 7 on the Loreto list of admissions criteria. If parents had concerns, then CCMS could speak with the school. We are not in a position to offer assurances but agreed that CCMS could speak with the school if parents had concerns. If the proposal is progressed, consultation with affected schools will form part of the next stage.
Travel to alternative schools will curtail participation in after school activities.		Yes		Advisers acknowledged the value and level of participation in the extra-curriculum school activities. Adviser stated that if numbers within the school remain low this will impact on staff and therefore provision such as afterschool activities would also be affected.
Several small schools in the area are having to deal with the threat of closure. Has federation been fully explored? More time should be given to allow fuller investigation of alternatives.		Yes	Yes	CCMS is tasked to carry out its duties in line with policy and Department of Education priorities. Addressing the sustainability of two teacher schools remains a priority and CCMS prioritises these based on the sustainable schools' criteria. We recognise that parents may be nervous following a consultation and that is why we give assurances that if the school were to cease provision that it would not be until August 2020. However, we have a duty to inform parents of anything that may impact their children.
How many closure proposals are stopped after consultation?		Yes		

Ballyhackett PS is essential for pupils, staff, parents and a community which does not have a parish hall.		Yes		
Will CCMS consider the pupils' voice?		Yes	Yes	CCMS has been in discussion with the principal about the most age appropriate way of capturing this and the School Council was suggested. Comments from recent inspectorate visit was also suggested.
The threat of closure has the potential to affect the mental health of the pupils.		Yes		Assurances was given that the well-being of the pupils was at the centre of the proposal and this school as well as any potential new school will work with parents to ensure that children are properly supported throughout the process if proposal is progressed. Both governors and staff should encourage parents to raise any concerns in the consultation.
What happens if the school has a larger than anticipated enrolment next year?		Yes		These are questions that need to be asked as part of the consultation responses but in responding individuals must also state how they propose to meet the SSP criteria.
Are you focusing on enrolment and admission numbers?		Yes		Advisers confirmed that enrolment and admission numbers were on the criteria against which the viability of the school is measured. They drew attention to the SSP which contains the criteria against which the school is evaluated. They also advised that the financial situation may mean that school will have to introduce additional or larger composite classes potentially impacting on the quality of the education provision.
Where did the 105-figure come from?			Yes	Adviser explained that the figure comes from the SSP enrolment minimum threshold for a rural school.
The school has been in operation for 150 years and would never have reached the 105-figure in recent memory.			Yes	
It is distressing for pupils to have to go to a bigger school. Children learn very well in this unique educational setting with great pastoral care.			Yes	There are a number of schools in the area who have been identified as having 'strength' in their pastoral care provision. Larger schools have systems in place to ensure all children are cared for. Many schools offer nurture facilities, buddy systems, mentoring etc. If the proposal is taken forward it would be a good idea to read some inspection reports, visit websites.
Have you spent time with pupils in the classroom?			Yes	No, this is not within CCMS' remit, the ETI carry out this function. We record everything that you say.

<b>Consultation Process</b>				
The decision to close has already been made. Why are we being consulted?	Yes			Adviser explained that a process has to take place and CCMS are obliged to adopt a view against the criteria contained in the Sustainable Schools Policy (SSP). Adviser described the decision-making processes. CCMS currently has a proposal which is the subject of stakeholder consultation. This proposal is based on all information available to date. Once responses have been received from the consultees during this process, a subsequent review will take place within CCMS. This review will give due consideration to feedback received through the consultation process. A decision will then be made on whether or not to proceed with the proposal. Should any stakeholder provide an alternative option which meets the requirements of the SSP, this will be given due consideration by CCMS and may be subject to a separate consultation process. Advisers covered the entire procedure leading up to a final decision being made by the education minister/permanent secretary. They stressed the importance of considering all views and encouraged all to respond to the consultation.
Ballyhackett PS is in a very rural area which has experienced a reduction in services on many fronts.	Yes			
CCMS is very keen to ensure everyone has their say. Yet CCMS more likely to close a school than EA.	Yes			Confirmed that CCMS works very closely with EA and that there is a joint strategy on area planning.
The school and other rural schools are not being treated equitably.		Yes		
Changes to education provision in the locality are impacting on parent choice and, thus, on enrolment numbers.	Yes			
The school now has a fantastic leader of both pupils and staff alike.	Yes			
The school plays a central role in the community and parish.	Yes	Yes		

Rural schools are afforded little or no protection. They are victims of discrimination.		Yes	Yes	Advisers stated that consultation process offers consultees (staff, governors and parents) the opportunity to contribute their views, provide their feedback and submit any alternative options to CCMS. All views received will be given due consideration and will inform the decision whether to progress with the proposal or not. If CCMS decides to progress a development proposal, the Department of Education will make the ultimate call on the implementation of such a proposal.
Why was extensive work on security carried out on the premises while this proposal was being prepared?		Yes		Adviser indicated security work was completed by EA but it as a result of H&S issue within an ETI Inspection Report.
Closure of rural schools is very detrimental to rural proofing.		Yes		Adviser indicated that the current focus is on 2 teacher schools. The equality screening and rural proofing documents are currently being drafted which will be consolidated by the consultation responses. These will be published if proposal is taken forward.
This is the first year that a small deficit has been incurred in this school.		Yes		Advised that CCMS applied an impartial view using the criteria contained within the SSP. Advised that area planning was happening across education. Assurance offered that the process was the same as that applied within EA and that the action plan covered the work of both bodies. Governors were reminded that this was just the opening of a discussion and that the final decision was a long way down a process that is designed to inform at each stage.
Is the deficit accumulative?			Yes	Adviser indicated that the projected enrolment for the next number of years will lead to an increasing budget deficit.
Closure will instigate a potential breach of contract between the school and parents/pupils.		Yes		
The initiation of this consultation will influence the decision of parents as to where to send their children in future.		Yes		Adviser acknowledged that it could be alarming for parents if taken out of context. Offered assurances that a number of options had been considered but that no sustainable opportunities were identified within the area. He said that consultees should provide robust and valid rationale against the SSP when responding to the consultation.

Did EA specify Ballyhackett PS as an alternative in the consultation on the closure of Bellarena PS?		Yes		Advisers will check with EA.
Is it too late to consider an integrated or federated option?		Yes		All options would be given due consideration. Those present were reminded that any response must reflect the SSP but that all options were open for the governors to investigate.
With no minister in place will this be a direct rule decision?				The consultation process was explained.
If the school is closed, how will the pupils get to other schools?			Yes	If the proposal is taken forward it would require the provision of home-to-school transport for some of the pupils and would require communication with the Education Authority transport. Any transport arrangement will be in accordance with transport regulations and identified preference school for parents.
Can we reverse the process?			Yes	Provide us with robust and valid rationale against the SSP for keeping the school opened.

Table of responses received in the written consultation from Monday 10 April 2017 to Thursday 11 May 2017

	Parents	Staff	Governors	Joint	Totals
'Yes' Responses	0	0	0	0	0
'YES' Responses but with some concerns raised	0	0	0	0	0
'No' Responses	23	11	2*	2**	38
Neither 'Yes'/'No' responses.	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of responses received.	23	11	2	2	38

\*Includes a collective response from the Board of Governors

\*\*Teacher Governor/Parent Governor

<b>OTHER RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>Current Pupils</b>	<b>15 &amp; 15 drawings</b>
<b>Past Pupils</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Parents of Past Pupils</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Grandparents of Pupils</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Former Staff/BoG Members</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Members of Community</b>	<b>404</b>
<b>Political Representatives</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Blank Responses</b>	
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>456</b>

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>494</b>
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Key issues raised by the written responses not raised at meetings. Most written responses re-iterated the key points noted on Page 2.

Issue	Raised by	Any action required
The Permanent Secretary's decision will be open to challenge.	Govs	No action required since all procedures and guidelines have been complied with.
The school should be afforded adequate time to seek legal advice.	Govs	As above
Catholic families in rural areas are being discriminated against.	Govs & Parents	No action required as presenters have clearly articulated that they are following DE policy.
CCMS should support the robust exploration of integrated and/or federated status.	Staff, Govs, Parents	No action required. NICIE has the remit to promote integrated education. All options must meet the requirements of the sustainability criteria.
The school should be given special status.	Staff, Govs, Parents	No action required
The evidence base for the effects of composite classes on pupils' learning is inadequate.	Staff, Govs, Parents	No action required. There is an abundance of evidence on the positive effects of children being taught in single year group classes.
Ballyhackett should have been included on the list of viable alternatives for pupil transfer from Bellarena PS.	Govs, Parents	No action required. EA carried out the consultation with Bellarena PS.
Articles 3 and 12 from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child are not being complied with.	Staff, Govs	No action required. Pupils' views have been included in the consultation.
Impact assessments and equality screenings have not been carried out nor has CCMS sought to elicit the views of the pupils.	Staff, Govs, Parents	No action required. CCMS has carried out all obligations in regard to the consultation. Such

		assessments and screenings will be published if a DP issues.
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The following issues were raised by a number of pupils in writing (either past or present or living in the area) – in no particular order:

Issue	Any action required
Ballyhackett PS provides a high standard of education.	No action required
The school has a long tradition of providing good education for the people of the area.	No action required
The staff go well beyond the call of duty to further the interests of the pupils.	No action required
All the pupils are well looked after in Ballyhackett PS.	No action required
The SEP with Castleroe PS is of great benefit to the children.	No action required

The analyses of the written submissions from stakeholders and non-stakeholders are included below:

<u>Stakeholder Comments:</u>	Staff	Governors (Joint Response – 9 Signatories)	Governors (Separate/ Individual	Parents	Pupils
CCMS has failed in its role as an advocate for the school and has abandoned small rural schools.		9	2	6	
The timelines are unrealistic.		9		2	
The Permanent Secretary’s decision will be open to challenge.		9			
The school should be afforded adequate time to seek legal advice.		9			
Catholic families in rural areas are being discriminated against.		9		2	
CCMS should support the robust exploration of integrated and/or federated status.	1	9	1	9	
The definition of rurality as used in the SSP is unsatisfactory.	3	9	1	10	
The BoG requests a copy of the completed RNIA.		9		1	
The school should be given special status.	5	9	2	6	
There is not a simple correlation between school enrolment and educational attainment.	2	9	3	6	
There are positive gains for pupils of composite classes.	2	9	1	8	
The evidence base for the effects of composite classes on pupils’ learning is inadequate.	1	9	3	4	
The assumption that the alternative primary schools will provide higher quality educational experiences is dubious.	3	9	2	16	
Sustainability should not simply be accessed in terms of enrolment and finance.	1	9	2		
There are strategies used in other jurisdictions to protect small rural schools which could be applied here.	1	9	1		
The consultation process is flawed due to omissions (unspecified) in the presentation to parents.		9	1		
The EA’s Transformation Programme is biased against small rural schools.		9			

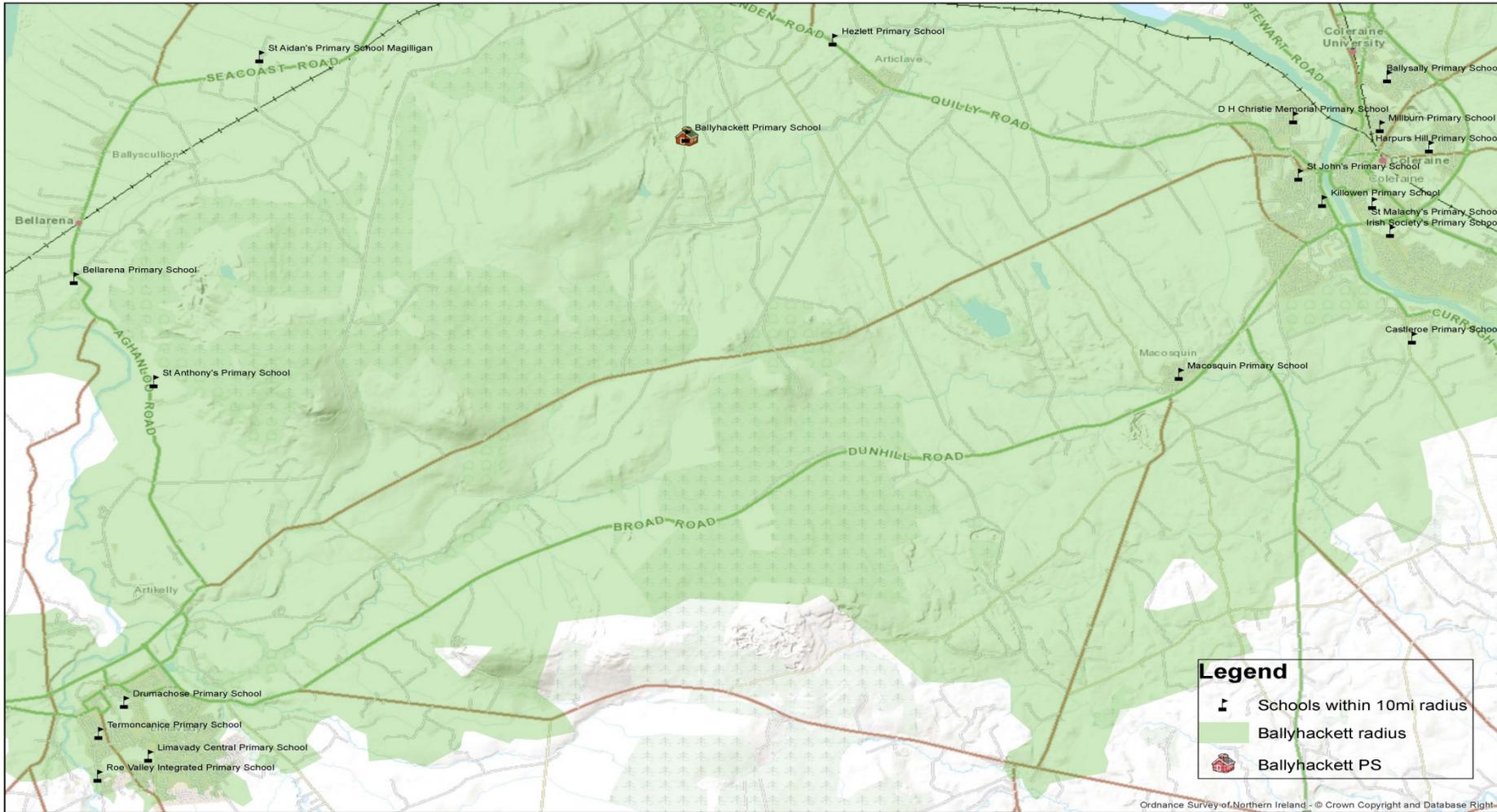
The EA's TP is about efficiency with little regard being paid to pupils and communities.		9			
The possibility of uniting St. Anthony's, Bellarena and Ballyhackett primary schools as a viable unit should have been tested in advance of the closure of St. Anthony's and the pending closure of Bellarena.		9	1		
Ballyhackett should have been included on the list of viable alternatives for pupil transfer from Bellarena PS.		9	1	1	
The alternative options provided by the BoG have not been given adequate attention by CCMS.	1	9	1		
The assurance given by CCMS on the provision of transport to alternative schools is ill-founded in the light of the Transport Review being carried out by DE.		9			
Stress, trauma and environmental change will have a detrimental effect on the well-being of the pupils.		9	2	5	
The welfare of children with additional needs will be jeopardised.		9		14	
Articles 3 and 12 from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child are not being complied with.	1	9			
Impact assessments and equality screenings have not been carried out nor has CCMS sought to elicit the views of the pupils.	2	9	1	5	
The closure of the school, given its interaction with various social and religious groupings, will impede social cohesion.	4	9	1	1	
The projected financial deficit is small when compared with that of many other schools.	1	9	1	5	
CCMS should suspend the Consultation Process at this juncture so that the principal and governors can devise and implement a strategic and promotional plan.	4	9	3	9	
Ballyhackett PS is a victim of discrimination.	4	9	2	5	
Ballyhackett PS provides a high standard of education.	5		3	22	15
The school meets four of the six sustainability criteria.	4		3	5	
The school welcomes children from all faiths and none.	5	9	3	7	
The school has provided good education for many generations.	4		2	14	3
The alternative schools offered were not chosen by Ballyhackett parents.	3		2		
Closure will diminish knowledge and appreciation of the locality.	3	9	1	3	
The school plays an essential role in the community.				23	
The staff go well beyond the call of duty to further the interests of the pupils.				12	5
All the pupils are well looked after in Ballyhackett PS.				10	10

Local awareness of the proposal has been detrimental to enrolment				4	
The SEP with Castleroe PS is of great benefit to the children.				9	7

<b><u>Non-Stakeholder Comments:</u></b>	<b>Grandparent s</b>	<b>Past Pupils</b>	<b>Former Staff Members</b>	<b>Parents of Past Pupils</b>	<b>Others</b>
School has looked after many generations of children very well.	2	3		3	404
Ballyhackett looks after children with additional needs very well.	1			1	
Pupils get more individual attention in a small school.	1	4		4	3
Education standards are high.	3	6	2	6	404
Closure could decimate the community. (RNIA)		6	2	3	404
A long-term development plan is required to improve sustainability.		2	2	2	2
The decision has already been made to close the school.	1				
The proposal will do immense damage to enrolment.	1				2
The proposal disregards rural proofing.		3	2	3	404
The staff go above and beyond the call of duty.				4	1
Small composite classes have a positive effect.	2			2	1
The integrated nature of the enrolment has many positive benefits.	1		2	1	3
Local schools help pupils avoid the criminal justice system					1

# Appendix F

## Schools within a 10 mile radius to Ballyhackett Ps



<b>NAME</b>	<b>CATEGORY</b>
Ballyhackett Primary School	Maintained Primary
Ballysally Primary School	Controlled Primary
Bellarena Primary School	Controlled Primary
Castleroe Primary School	Controlled Primary
D H Christie Memorial Primary School	Controlled Primary
Drumachose Primary School	Controlled Primary
Harpurs Hill Primary School	Controlled Primary
Hezlett Primary School	Controlled Primary
Irish Society's Primary School	Controlled Primary
Killowen Primary School	Controlled Primary
Limavady Central Primary School	Controlled Primary
Macosquin Primary School	Controlled Primary
Millburn Primary School	Controlled Primary
Roe Valley Integrated Primary School	Integrated Primary
St Aidan's Primary Scholl Magilligan	Maintained Primary
St Anthony's Primary School	Maintained Primary
St John's Primary School	Maintained Primary
St Malachy's Primary School	Maintained Primary
Termoncanice Primary School	Maintained Primary