



**EAST
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LEARNING™

EASTSIDE LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

**EDUCATION FRAMEWORK
2015 - 2025**

The EastSide Learning Partnership was established in 2014 to promote partnership working between schools and the community in east Belfast and agree a strategic direction for education in this part of the city. This will drive a plan for improving the education offer in east Belfast; to benefit all those interested in improving education and learning outcomes for children and young people in the area.

The Framework and its accompanying plan of action have been produced as an outcome of a number of meetings and workshops with key stakeholders in the education sector, the community, and the political sphere.

The group also received advice and information on projects being developed elsewhere in Belfast. Throughout this process the focus has been on exploring those issues that are impacting negatively on the effectiveness of education across the area; for schools, teachers, parents and children.

Five priority areas for our activity have been identified, all of which we feel are at the heart of improving the education experience for all children and young people in east Belfast. They acknowledge our shared principles and values and will be the reference point for the first stage of our work over the coming years.

The Framework is for the period 2015 – 2025 because we believe that it will need this time to deliver the long term impacts that we outline. We will develop rolling implementation plans that will describe the actions necessary to deliver our shared outcomes and measure their effectiveness.



ASPIRATION & ATTAINMENT

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Inspired, informed and confident young people will make better choices, develop resilience and have a greater chance of success. Parents and family, media and society, teachers, community and friends all have a part to play.

We know that attitudes, aspirations and values are key influencers of behaviours and outcomes. Our schools, particularly those serving some of our most disadvantaged children and young people, would benefit from more parental involvement to support children's learning. Reasons for the absence of this support are complex; they can be related to family circumstances, educational experience of parents, an individual school's ability to involve parents, or just having the time to devote to this work.

We believe that everyone needs to work together to remove these obstacles: if schools can be supported to help parents feel more involved in their children's learning, we can develop positive community ethos that values education and improves performance.

ASPIRATION & ATTAINMENT ACTION PLAN

PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Family learning initiatives are developed that increase the opportunities for parents to engage with and support their children's learning.

A range of evidence based in-school interventions are identified, supported and co-ordinated, to demonstrate improved outcomes.

Community based initiatives are supported that enhance children's learning - extracurricular activities are developed and supported

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

Improved understanding of schools in the community. Parents are better able to support their childrens' learning.

More targeted support available for under-performing pupils.

Barriers to learning are identified and broken down; more children arrive at school 'ready to learn'.

LONG-TERM IMPACT

Educational aspiration forms part of the local narrative – all those supporting children and young people – families, schools, communities and churches, are working together for a common purpose.

All schools feel supported and performance levels are improved for all pupils.

All children are able to access enhanced opportunities.





AREA BASED PLANNING

Area based planning is a priority as it aims to help reshape our schools for the future; providing for increased sharing of accommodation and resources, *'to ensure that we have the right type and size of schools, in the right places, to meet the needs of our pupils and young people.'*

Area Based Planning was introduced in 2008 to 'anticipate the future education needs of an area' and develop plans to meet these. It has a broader based focus than just schools and colleges and is intended to relate to planning of other fields such as health, youth provision and community regeneration and development. We believe that getting this planning right, with all the key interests engaged from the outset, is an imperative; to deliver a plan for education that will achieve successful outcomes.

Proposals affecting changes in the school estate can be met with significant opposition, not least because of the manner in which these are currently developed and communicated to stakeholders; we need to change this and create more comprehensive area based plans that go beyond the statistics and involve the wider community in shaping education for the future.

AREA BASED PLANNING ACTION PLAN

PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Develop extended facilities in all local schools that deliver a wide range of activities to schools and the communities they serve

Develop school infrastructure throughout the area to deliver excellent early years, primary, post primary and special school facilities.

Establish hubs to co-ordinate activity, improve communications and work strategically.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

New school design is improved to enhance and facilitate community use. Increased focus on integrated planning to provide improved local services.

Agreed plans are in place to improve the school infrastructure, including rationalisation where necessary. Improved access to school facilities outside the school day.

Pupils experience better transitions and a wide range of subject choices. Clusters of schools with common issues and interests network to share good practice, training and skills and develop shared services.

LONG-TERM IMPACT

School facilities are fit for purpose, providing excellent learning environments and are a focal point for their communities.

Provision for education across all age ranges and abilities is strategically located to improve accessibility and maximise effectiveness and impact.

The education experience for teachers, pupils and their parents is improved.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Building relationships with all stakeholders is crucial, to deliver a shared vision for education in east Belfast. Sharing responsibility, knowledge skills and resources means that it will be more likely that we can achieve this vision. Additionally, developing a mutual understanding and respect for all the different organisations involved in the partnership, will play a vital role in ensuring successful outcomes.

We all realise that achieving positive outcomes for children is clearly not just the responsibility of schools – the home and community environments will have a greater impact. We believe that we cannot afford to continue to work in 'silos'; cross-cutting solutions are what is required to deliver positive, sustained improvements for education

Bringing all the partners together to ensure good planning and improving how we communicate with each other will improve the quality and delivery of service; helping us deal more effectively with the problems caused by weaknesses in our current structures

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN

PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Development of the EastSide Learning Partnership and an agreed framework for education in East Belfast.

Build school community partnerships, to deliver programmes of activity that support the shared goal of improving attainment.

Integrated planning – develop a set of actions that recognises and reflects the need for collaborative working.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

Key stakeholders are committed to partnership working and set priorities for achieving a first class education for children in East Belfast.

Better working relationships and understanding between school based and community based activities. The benefits of joint working are recognised and valued.

Better connections between health professionals, employers and other interested stakeholders.

LONG-TERM IMPACT

Timely and effective decision making linked to shared outcomes.

All available resources used to secure better outcomes for children and young people.

Public assets managed more effectively; providing value for money for investments.



VALUING ALL EDUCATION PATHWAYS

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While we celebrate the success of many of our young people in achieving academic qualifications and moving on to further and higher education too many of our young people leave school don't attain the skills and qualifications they need in later life. For too long vocational learning has been seen as the poor relation to academic learning. We believe that, good vocational programmes that require different content, different skills and different forms of teaching, are needed to secure better futures for all our young people.

We believe that a clearer 14-18 pathway is needed, to ensure that there is a wider offer available to them. All young people and their parents should receive timely advice and support, for them to have realistic and achievable ambitions; whether that is to progress to further or higher education or to a rewarding job.

A greater emphasis on vocational opportunities is required. Rather than doing academic work up to 16 and then vocational after 16, they could be doing a blend of both from 14 onwards. Employers increasingly value character and resilience not just qualifications. We would like a curriculum better aligned to those outcomes; as we would question the value of high-stakes exams at 16 and would look more to outcomes at 18 – both academic and vocational

VALUING ALL EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS ACTION PLAN

PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Support the development of school facilities and resources to facilitate additional vocational choices at 14+.

Developing new models of in-school preparation for work, that involves local employers. Communicating emerging opportunities more effectively.

Schools in the hubs are supported to co-ordinate and enhance their careers offering, through improved training, better networks and more resources.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

The vocational offer is enhanced and more valued within schools and the wider community.

Links to employers made in Year 10 and choices widened. More flexible learning, more vocational options.

Careers support in school is provided at an earlier stage, is better informed and more co-ordinated.

LONG-TERM IMPACT

Fewer young people 'drop out' of school and the pathway to FE and other training is improved.

Reduction in the number of young people leaving school without qualifications.
Increased employability.

Fewer young people leave school without a pathway to further education and/or training.





EARLY YEARS DEVELOPMENT

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The most significant period for a child's development and learning capacity is during pregnancy and the first three years of life. If we can reduce the impact of adversity on children at an early stage, we can improve outcomes later in life.

More and effectively targeted early intervention with programmes of support will deliver long term savings and benefits. We believe that increasing investment in early years will play a vital role in delivering our strategy – resulting in our children arriving to formal education confident and ready to learn.

The Learning Partnership is committed to securing more investment in early years settings and our primary schools; and most importantly, the support provided needs to be sustained and connected, throughout all the key transitions.

EARLY YEARS DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Support is provided to the East Belfast Early Years Network to improve links with Nursery provision, share good practice and improve training for early years staff; statutory and voluntary.

Initiatives are supported that link the activities of community based early years provision with statutory services – midwives, health visitors, other providers.

Support for projects that help parents give their children the best start in life and create a positive home environment.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

A stronger network of providers is in place, quality training opportunities are maximized and communication between stakeholders is improved.

More connected services to support early intervention for early years. Information to support early intervention is shared between stakeholders to improve outcomes.

Parents feel supported to make better choices and their parenting skills are improved.

LONG-TERM IMPACT

Services are of the highest possible standard and children arrive at school ready to learn.

Fewer children require more intensive support and delays in providing support are reduced.

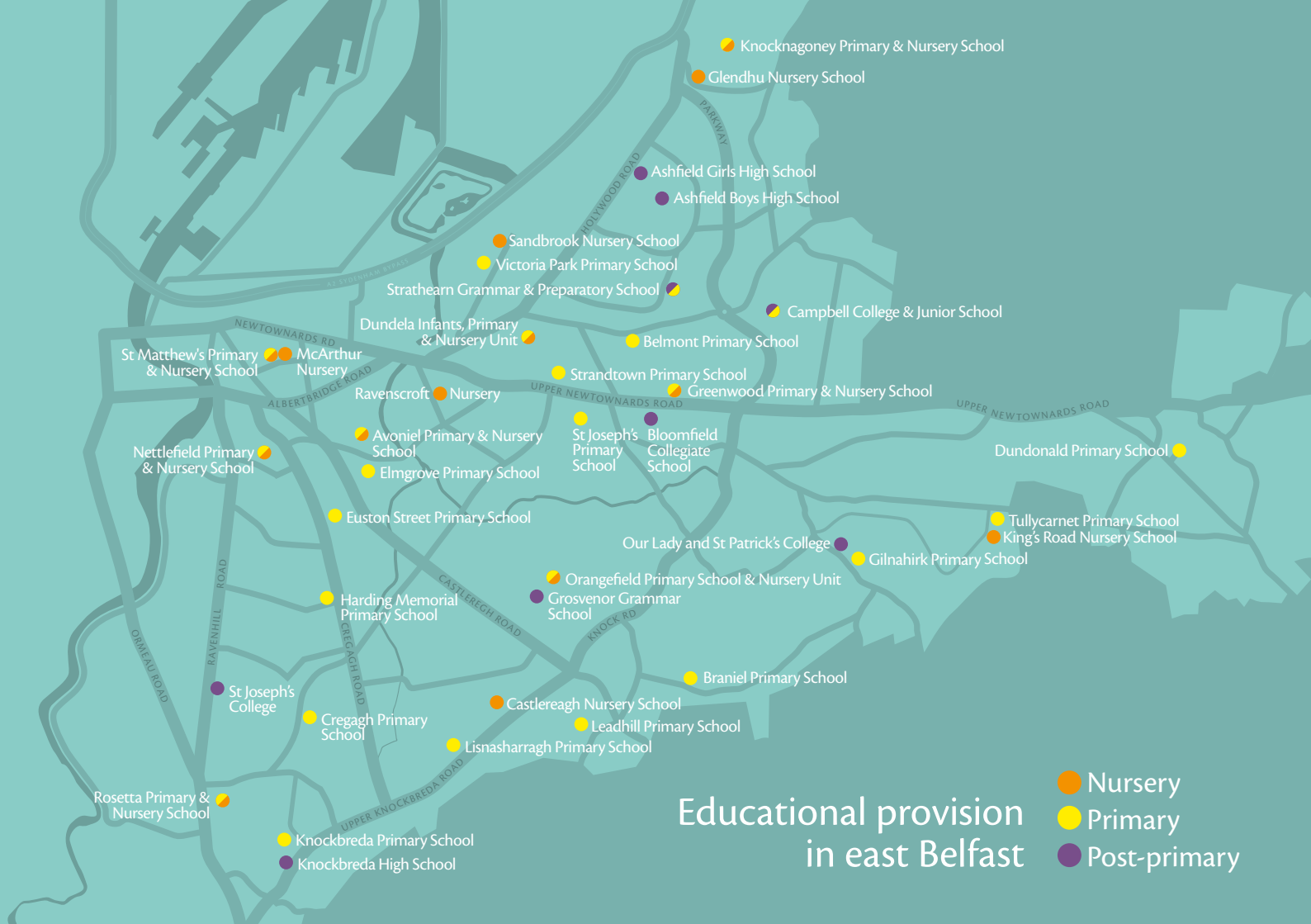
Parents and their children have more confidence and experience greater self –reliance.

A photograph of three young children and an adult sitting around a table, engaged in a craft activity. They are using yellow paper strips to create a map. The table is covered with many yellow paper strips, some of which are already cut into shapes. The children are focused on their work, and the adult is assisting them. The background shows a hallway with white walls and a door.

EAST BELFAST MAP

NURSERY,
PRIMARY &
POST PRIMARY
SCHOOLS

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Educational provision in east Belfast

- Nursery
- Primary
- Post-primary



Department for
**Social
Development**

www.dsdni.gov.uk

EastSide Learning can be contacted on 028 9045 1900