



The state of our schools

East Belfast is served by 22 primary schools and 13 post primary schools (6 grammar and 7 secondary schools).

Over the last few years there has been significant investment in new schools - Belfast Education & Library Board (BELB) has just completed new buildings for the following East Belfast schools as part of the Belfast Schools Strategic Partnership Partnership:-



Grosvenor Grammar (2010)



Orangefield Primary School (2009)



Glendhu Nursery School (2010)



Ashfield Girls High School (2009)

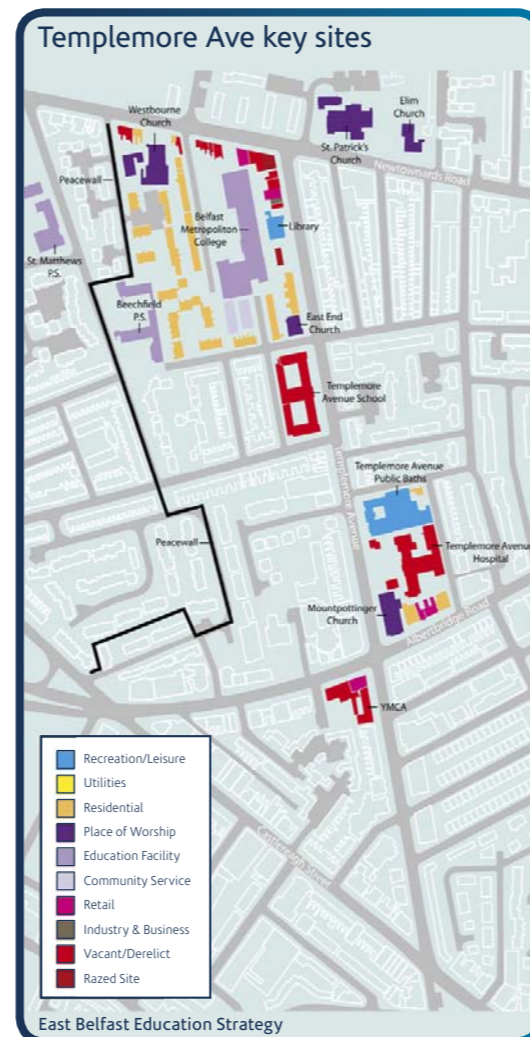
These new schools have fantastic facilities that are available for use by local communities including third generation sports pitches, sports halls and fitness suites, a dance studio and an impressive range of audi-visual technology and multi media equipment.

Individuals and groups seeking to access the facilities can register as community members and get news about events, programmes and community information. Once registered as an individual community member or as a group representative, members can go online to view the facilities and make bookings at www.communityschools.org

A new building is also underway for St Patricks & Our Lady's at Knock while advanced plans for new builds at Victoria Park Primary School, Strathearn and others have been on hold as a result of public expenditure cuts. While these new schools are welcome there is a long way to go to ensure that all children and young people can access the same opportunities. Population decline in some places and the policy of open enrolment has resulted in some of our schools becoming unsustainable. The majority of these are located in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods; two primary schools have closed in the Inner East Belfast Neighbourhood Renewal Area in the last four years - Mersey Street Primary School (August 2006) and Beechfield Primary School (June 2010). Five other primary schools in the area are part of a rationalisation programme which is expected to reduce the numbers to at most three in coming years.

The physical condition of some of these schools is poor and high maintenance costs make replacement imperative. Similar circumstances prevail in the post primary sector.

Where next for Education in East?



Whilst a downward trend in the pupil population is expected to continue well into the future, large scale developments in East Belfast could begin to reverse this trend. Projects such as Titanic Quarter combined with new social housing developments will present new opportunities. Belfast Metropolitan College is currently building a new campus at Titanic Quarter which is to be completed by August 2011. Area Based Planning in education recognises the importance of planning the education estate in tandem with planning in other fields such as health, social services, youth provision, sports, arts and recreation and community regeneration. Only by working in partnership, combining knowledge and talent across these fields, can this be achieved.

A redeveloped Education Campus for Templemore Avenue

The possibility of regenerating Templemore Avenue with a focus on reinstating education facilities on derelict sites is a priority for East Belfast Partnership. This interface area has been denuded of facilities – losing a major health centre, library, two primary schools and soon likely to lose further education facilities at Tower Street. There is a serious risk that without proper planning and investment the area will slip into further decline and existing problems will be intensified.

EBP believes that a regeneration project based around education needs in the Templemore Avenue area could provide an opportunity to deliver better integration of services and provide high value shared facilities for the adjacent communities. The role of local parents in this process is vital.

Our only obstacle is low expectation

The East Belfast primary schools all agree that education is a partnership between school and home and that this relationship must be nurtured. In disadvantaged neighbourhoods where there are high levels of poverty, parents can lack some of the skills required to support their children at school. They can therefore become distanced from schools, which only increases the challenge as those schools who most need parental involvement experience the greatest difficulty in securing this.

There is robust evidence that parental attitudes and circumstances play the most influential role in the formation of a child's aspirations, especially in the early years. They can act as role models and build their children's self esteem and the confidence to succeed.

In the most educationally disadvantaged area in East Belfast the Tullycarnet Family Project (TFP) offers a variety of activities for pre-school and primary school children, preparing them for school and supporting parents to be actively involved in their children's education. We need investment in more projects like the TFP which help schools offer extended services to children and their parents. For more information on the TFP and similar projects visit: www.barnardos.org.uk/northernireland.htm



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Introduction

This briefing paper has been produced by East Belfast Partnership (EBP) to provide information on education in East Belfast and an outline of the key issues affecting education provision in the area. It also illustrates some of the different methods of presenting the information that is available.

The information in the briefing is targeted at those who need to understand how young people in East Belfast are accessing education, their educational performance and reasons for significant variations in attainment within East Belfast. This could be our politicians, community leaders, parents and the school community itself.

The briefing sets out some of the challenges and opportunities for ensuring the widest access to quality education in East Belfast and some of the trends and influences that are driving change.

More detailed information on all the issues raised is contained in the East Belfast Education Strategy which can be viewed at www.eastbelfastpartnership.org

Background

There are 2 main policies that are influencing how education will be delivered in NI

- **Schools for the Future** – A Policy for Sustainable Schools.
- **Every School a Good School** – A Policy for School Improvement.

Both policies have the stated aim of tackling inequalities and the low level aspiration that prevents young people from achieving their potential.

Government hopes to achieve these objectives through a number of initiatives including;

- **Area Based Planning** - which requires schools to collaborate with each other and key local agencies to make best use of facilities
- **The Entitlement Framework** - which aims to offer all young people a full range of subject choices whatever their school
- **Extended Schools** - which provides additional resources to schools to enable them to extend the range of opportunities offered to their pupils
- **The Schools Modernisation Programme** - which seeks to achieve a "fit for purpose schools' estate, efficiently delivered and managed".

Ranges

- 42-73 (4) Least Deprived
- 31-42 (6)
- 22-31 (5)
- 14-22 (6)
- 03-14 (6) Most Deprived

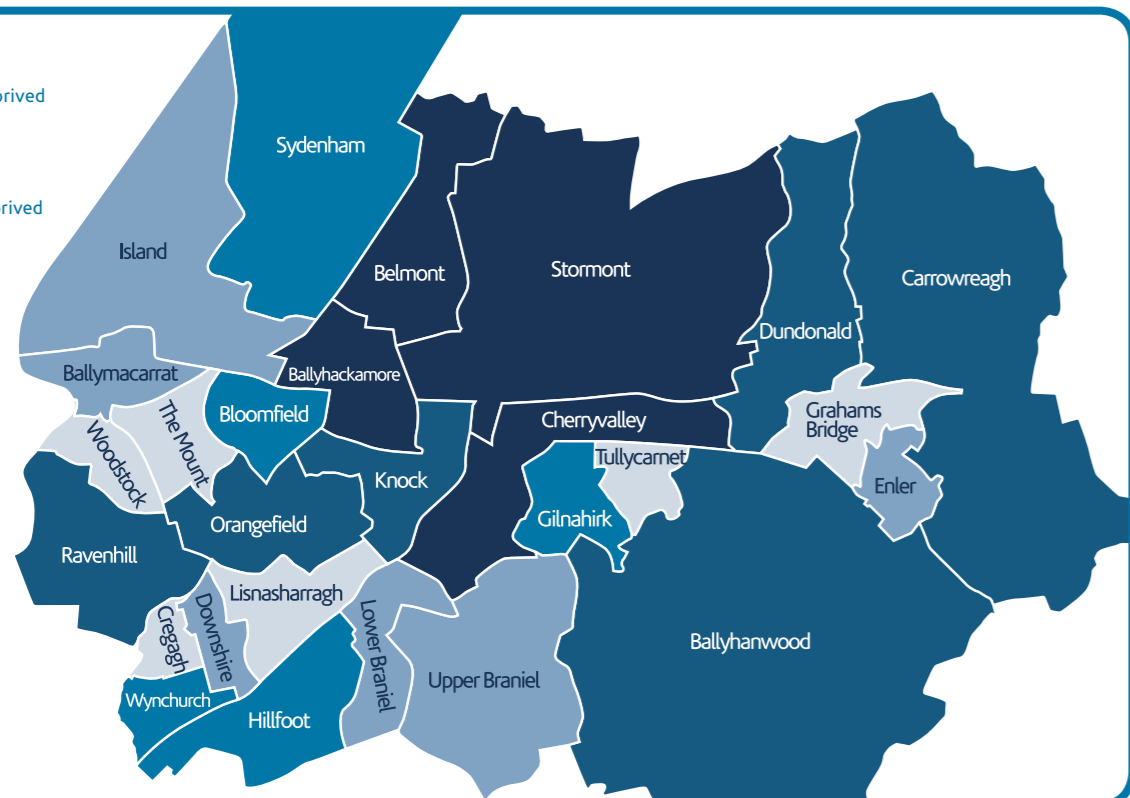


Figure 1: Educational Inequalities

How do we measure success?

NISRA

Statistical information is available for those who want to explore the extent of deprivation in education, compare educational performance across the region and look at trends in education. This is published by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) on their website www.nisra.gov.uk. This is a valuable resource for planning new services and targeting initiatives or making a case within individual schools or communities for additional investment.

Background information on Multiple Deprivation and how it is measured is also available from NISRA.

Information available on NISRA for Education:

- Key Stage 2 Results
- Key Stage 2 Results by FSME
- School Census Pupil Residence (Primary, Post Primary)
- School Census School Location (Nursery, Pre School, Reception, Primary, Post Primary, Special)
- School Leavers Survey (GCSEs, A levels, Destination After School)
- Further Education Enrolments
- Higher Education Enrolments
- Higher Education Qualifications (Country of Institution, Subject Area, Level of Study)

Range of Inequalities In Education

In 2009 East Belfast Partnership produced a Strategy for Education which set out some of the key challenges for Education in this part of the city. The four main objectives of the Strategy were to secure investment in school accommodation, highlight opportunities for partnership working, base local decision making on sound evidence and finally to raise overall standards of education and reduce inequalities. Visit www.eastbelstpartnership.org for further information.

Reducing the gap in educational performance between areas in East Belfast remains our most pressing challenge.

The East Belfast Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) identified twenty seven wards – nineteen in Belfast and eight in Castlereagh which form 'greater' East Belfast. Of these wards six fell within the top 10% of most deprived places in Northern Ireland and children living in these poor areas do less well in school; Figure 1 illustrates the range of educational inequalities across East Belfast.

What do the statistics show for East?

Overall, educational performance in East is relatively high compared to other areas of Belfast however, educational inequalities are more apparent in East Belfast than anywhere else in the city. A quarter of East Belfast wards rank within the top 10% of most disadvantaged wards in relation to education within Northern Ireland. Ballymacarrett and The Mount rank sixth and seventh respectively, compared to Gilnahirk, Hillfoot and Stormont which all rank in the top 10% most advantaged wards. This highlights a huge gap in performance.

Children living in these poor areas tend to do less well in school; this is reflected in the positive correlation between the level of multiple deprivation and education shown in Figure 2. The inequalities in East Belfast are further illustrated in Figure 3 by analysing Free School Meals Entitlement (FSME). FSME is available for children if one parent or guardian receives Income Support or earns less than £13,910 per year.

East Belfast as a whole has a relatively low number of pupils eligible for free school meals falling more than 10% below the Belfast average. However, Figure 3 illustrates that out of the twenty seven wards, five present alarmingly high levels of FSME. In The Mount, approximately 50% of primary and post primary pupils are eligible compared to 2% in Gilnahirk of primary age (no post primary pupils are entitled in this area).

The latest statistics from NISRA confirm a largely unchanged picture from 2005 between the most and least educationally disadvantaged wards. As new indicators have been added to the education domain measure, a direct comparison is not possible. With these additional indicators added (assuming a more informed analysis in 2010) the gap between the best and the worst remains wide, see Figure 4. The challenge to reduce inequalities in East Belfast is as great as ever. Educationalists, health professionals, local communities and others interested in the welfare of our children and young people need to work together to make a difference.

Figure 2: NIMDM Multiple vs. Education deprivation (2010)

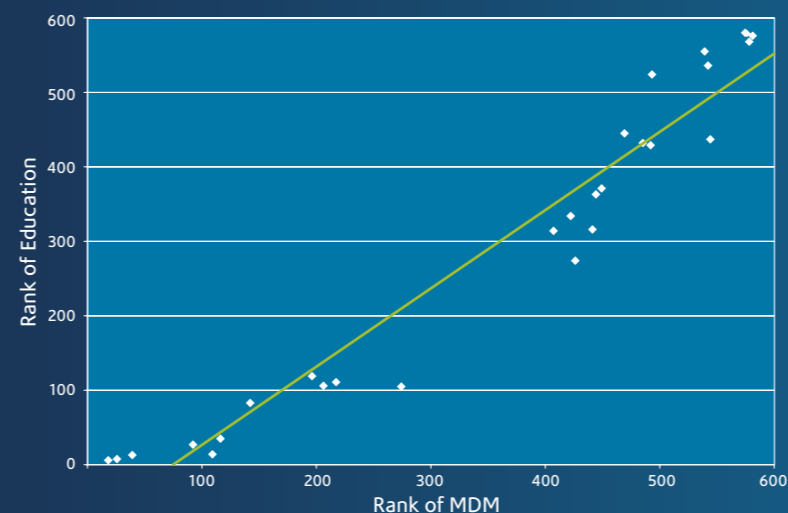


Figure 3: % of Pupils receiving FSME 2009/10 (NINIS, 2010)

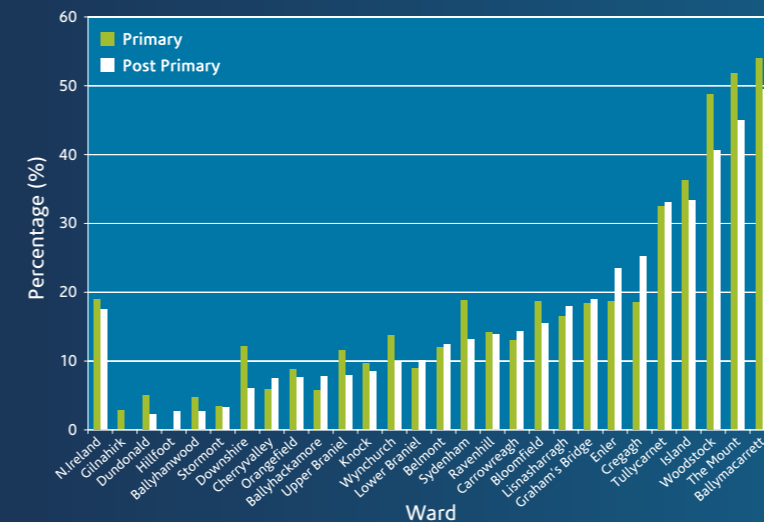
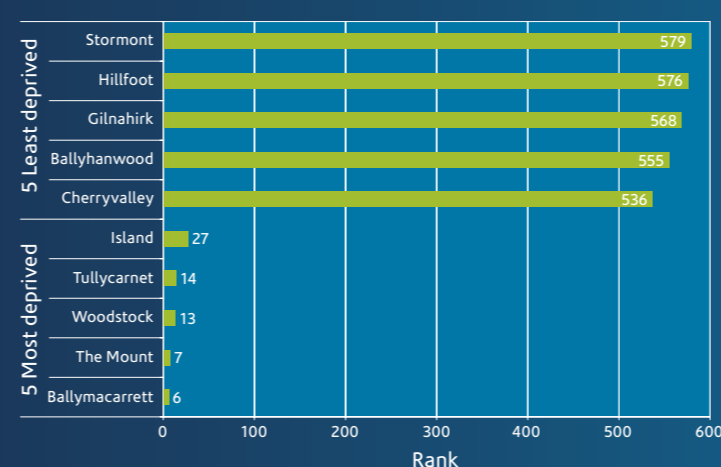


Figure 4: Most and Least deprived wards in the Education Domain (NINIS, 2010).



Primary

Figure 5 shows the performance of pupils at Key Stage 1 (aged 5-7 years) and 2 (aged 7-11 years) for both English and Maths across the Belfast area. These headline figures mask the inequalities.

Post Primary

Figure 6 illustrates the differing circumstances between post primary schools in East Belfast particularly in relation to free school meals and pupil retention between the grammar and non-grammar sectors.

School leavers

Half the wards in East Belfast fell below the Northern Ireland average (66.9%) when examining those achieving 5 or more GCSE passes (A-C grades).

Figure 7 displays the 2001 Census where only 5.3% of people in Ballymacarrett had a degree or higher level qualification, approximately one third of the equivalent percentage for Northern Ireland (15.8%). The highest proportion of no or low level qualifications also fell in Ballymacarrett, 78.9% compared with 28.2% in Stormont. Much improvement is expected in the 2011 Census.

Most school leavers in East Belfast progress on to higher or further education. There is a striking difference between those enrolling in higher education from the most and least disadvantaged wards, with only 5.3% in Ballymacarrett compared to 70.2% in Stormont.

Figure 8 illustrates the destination of school leavers. Those with fewer educational qualifications are more likely to be unemployed or in low skilled and low paid jobs. In Northern Ireland the proportion of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training (known as NEETs) is lower than most parts of the UK. In Figure 9 the NEETs category is represented by unemployed/unknown destination.

Further information on how to collect and collate your own data from NISRA is available by contacting the Partnership on (028) 9045 1900 or email info@eastbelstpartnership.org

Figure 5: Key Stage 1 and 2 results for primary schools in Belfast area (2008/09)

	KEY STAGE 1				KEY STAGE 2			
	English		Maths		English		Maths	
	Level 2	Level 3	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 4	Level 5
N. Ireland	94.5	41.7	95.2	47.7	80.1	29.1	81.3	41.9
Belfast East	92.0	48.0	94.4	58.2	79.2	35.0	82.0	49.0
Belfast North	94.4	34.1	93.7	35.7	69.3	20.5	72.6	30.3
Belfast South	93.9	57.9	94.6	62.4	80.6	40.0	82.6	52.1
Belfast West	94.3	32.3	95.0	34.8	67.5	16.3	67.6	24.9

Figure 6: FSME, SEN and pupil retention for post primary schools in East Belfast (DENI School Census, 2010). * denotes fewer than 5 cases

School name	Type	Enrolment 2009/10	% FSME	% Statement of Special Education	% Pupils retained into Year 13
Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School	Grammar	810	3.3	4.9	94.0
Bloomfield Collegiate	Grammar	712	5.2	*	99.0
Campbell College	Grammar	913	0.9	0.9	95.7
Grosvenor Grammar School	Grammar	1,087	3.1	1.1	90.1
Our Lady and St Patrick's College	Grammar	1,268	1.0	1.0	96.8
Strathern School	Grammar	749	2.1	*	89.5
Ashfield Boys' High School	Secondary	647	19.6	4.2	40.8
Ashfield Girls' High School	Secondary	672	19.6	2.7	55.9
Dundonald High School	Secondary	302	34.1	21.5	N/A
Knockbrea High School	Secondary	526	33.3	4.8	3.5
Lagan College	Secondary	1,229	12.6	2.9	52.7
Orangefield High School	Secondary	297	50.5	6.4	69.7
St Joseph's College	Secondary	587	33.1	8.0	48.6

Figure 8: Levels of Adult Qualifications (NINIS, Census 2001)

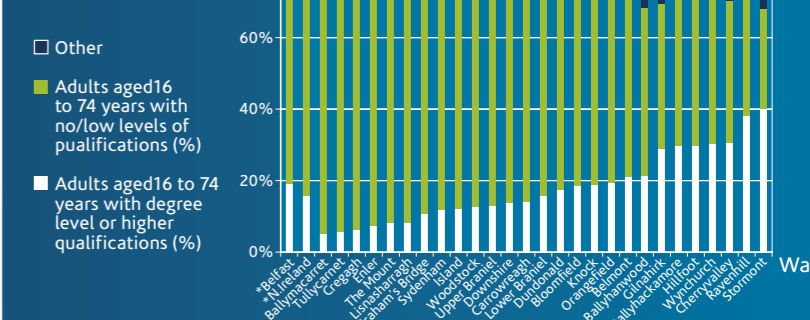


Figure 9: Destination of School Leavers 2008/09 (DENI School Leavers Survey, 2009)

