



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Education

Minutes of Proceedings

13 November 2024

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Mr Nick Mathison MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Pat Sheehan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr David Brooks MLA
Mrs Michelle Guy MLA
Ms Cara Hunter MLA
Mr Peter Martin MLA
Mrs Cathy Mason MLA

Ms Aoibhinn Treanor (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Mark McQuade (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Jim Nulty (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Thomas McConville (Clerical Officer)

Present via teleconference:

Mr Danny Baker MLA

Apologies:

Mr Colin Crawford MLA



The meeting commenced at 2:00pm in public session.

1. Apologies

An apology was received from Mr Crawford.

2. Chairperson's Business

2.1 Correspondence from the Institute of Physics

The Committee considered an invitation for the Chairperson to meet the Chief Executive of the Institute of Physics.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson take part in the meeting.

3. Declaration of Interests

There were no Declarations of Interests.

4. Matters Arising

The Committee considered an oral statement by the Minister of Finance on the Public Expenditure 2024-25 October Monitoring.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister of Education seeking:

- An update on when he anticipates decisions will be taken further to the new allocations; and
- An update on negotiations with regard to the teachers' pay award.

The Committee discussed online protection for Children and Young People.



Northern Ireland Assembly

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education asking what children and young people are being taught to allow them to remain safe in online environments.

The Committee discussed a pilot project being carried out at Rossmar special school, Limavady to provide support for pupils up to the age of 25.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education for an update on the pilot on post-19 support for pupils with Special Educational Needs.

5. Minutes of Proceedings

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 6 November 2024.

6. Committee Inquiry into Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) - Oral briefing from Dr Sophie King-Hill

The Committee noted briefing papers from Dr King-Hill.

The following witness joined the meeting at 2:06pm via teleconference:

Dr Sophie King-Hill, University of Birmingham

The witness provided the Committee with a briefing on Relationships and Sexuality Education.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

7. Committee Inquiry into Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) - Oral Briefing from Professor Maria Lohan

The Committee noted a briefing paper from Professor Maria Lohan.



Northern Ireland Assembly

The following witness joined the meeting at 2.55pm:

Professor Maria Lohan, Queen's University Belfast

The witness provided the Committee with a briefing on Relationships and Sexuality Education.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

The Committee adjourned at 3:27pm.

The Committee resumed at 3:38pm.

8. Early Years and Childcare - Oral Briefing from Department of Education Officials

The Committee noted a briefing paper on Early Years and Childcare.

The following witnesses joined the meeting at 3:38pm.

Mr Paul Brush, Director of Early Years, Childcare & Children & Young People's Strategy, Department of Education

Ms Christine Leacock, Head of Pre-School Education Team and lead on standardisation, Department of Education

Mrs Linda Drysdale, Head of Early Years - Intervention Programmes Team, Department of Education

Ms Tina Dempster, Head of Early Learning and Childcare Strategy Team, Department of Education

The witnesses provided the Committee with a briefing on Early Years and Childcare.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

Mr Brooks left the meeting at 4:24pm.

Ms Hunter left the meeting at 4:24pm.

Mr Baker left the meeting at 4:39pm.



Northern Ireland Assembly

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking:

- An update on the SEN implications in the childcare sector of the fair play grant;
- A List of tranche 3 projects;
- A list of the 22 new super output areas for Surestart; and
- A list of the groups impacted by the Pathway Fund.

Mrs Mason left the meeting at 4:49pm.

Quorum was lost and the meeting was adjourned at 4:49pm.

Nick Mathison MLA

**Chairperson, Committee for Education
20 November 2024**