



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Education

Minutes of Proceedings

23 September 2026

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

In attendance: Ms Aoibhinn Treanor (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Claire Milliken (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Jonathan Lamont (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Mark McQuade (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Jim Nulty (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Aisling Willighan (Clerical Officer)

Attended via teleconference facilities:

Mr Danny Baker MLA
Ms Cara Hunter MLA



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The meeting commenced at 2.00pm in public session.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr Jon Burrows MLA, Julie Middleton MLA and Cathy Mason MLA.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Committee considered correspondence from National Education Union to the Minister for Education regarding the basis for dispute.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Education to establish the current position, a breakdown of the outstanding issues and to ensure that he is doing all that is within his power to address the relationship between teachers and management.

The Committee considered correspondence from Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists Northern Ireland regarding the 'Behaviour in Schools' call for evidence.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Minister of Education seeking assurances that all pupils can participate in the call for evidence survey and to ask for an extension to the engagement period.

The Committee considered Queen's University Belfast reports on Exploring Academic Selection and Grammar Schools in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from the authors of the reports.



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3. Declaration of Interest

None.

4. Matters Arising

The Committee noted a Committee Office memo regarding a Stakeholder Engagement event on 29 September 2026.

The Committee considered the issue of school use of Richhill AFC facilities.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to return to this issue at the briefing with the Permanent Secretary.

5. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 16 September 2026.

6. Curriculum Consultation briefing and Collective Worship – oral briefing from Department of Education

The following officials joined the meeting at 2.16pm

Dr Suzanne Kingon, Deputy Secretary for Policy, Delivery and Infrastructure,
Department of Education

Peter Hutchinson, Director of Curriculum Reform and TransformED Implementation,
Department of Education



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Lucy Crehan, Deputy Chairperson Curriculum Taskforce, Department of Education

The officials advised that they were not prepared for a Collective Worship briefing at this time and briefed the Committee on Curriculum Consultation only.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

The Committee moved to closed session at 2.55pm

Michelle Guy MLA left the meeting at 3.08pm

Michelle Guy MLA rejoined the meeting at 3.11pm

The Committee returned to public session at 3.21pm

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department of Education for its spend to date on consultants for the TransformED programme and the overall spend to date on TransformED.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Head of Northern Ireland Civil Service to seek clarification regarding the Code of Ethics for departmental officials using social media.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from Foundation Stage experts.

7. 16-18 Legislation – written update from Department of Education

The Committee considered a written update from the Department of Education regarding the development of its 16-18 legislation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education to seek a date for introduction of this Bill.

8. Education Inspections Bill – briefing from RalSe

The following officials joined the meeting at 4.20pm

Niamh Devlin, Research Officer, RalSe



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Nathan Mulholland, Research Officer, RalSe

Glenn Williams, Research Officer, RalSe

The officials briefed the Committee on Education Inspections Bill.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

Danny Baker MLA left the meeting at 4.42pm

Agreed: The Committee agreed to send RalSe scrutiny points to Department of Education for answer.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Further Education and CAFRE colleges to establish if they have any comments on the Bill.

This agenda item was reported by Hansard.

9. Relationship and Sexuality Education Inquiry – Agreement of Motion

The Committee considered the Motion for the Relationship and Sexuality Education Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the content of the Motion and for the Motion to be laid in the Business Office.

10. Strategic Review of Current SEN Provision and Transformation Agenda – consideration of draft Report

The Committee considered the Strategic Review of Current SEN Provision and Transformation Agenda Report.

Powers and Membership and List of Abbreviations:

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with this section as drafted.

Executive Summary and Summary of Recommendations:



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Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with paragraphs 1 to 13 as drafted.

Introduction and Terms of Reference:

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with paragraphs 14 to 32 as drafted.

Main Body of Report:

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with paragraphs 33 to 56 as drafted.

Stakeholder Event:

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with paragraphs 57 to 60 as drafted.

Written Submissions:

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with paragraphs 61 to 100 as drafted.

Committee Conclusions:

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with paragraphs 101 to 142 as drafted.

Key Committee Recommendations:

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with paragraphs 143 as drafted.

Appendices:

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with this section as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the content of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the content of the draft press release.



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Agreed: The Committee agreed that an electronic copy of the report be published on the Committee's webpage and a link to the webpage sent to all organisations that provided oral evidence to the Committee; and that this was the publication date.

This agenda item was reported by Hansard.

11. Committee End of Session draft Report

The Committee considered a draft End of Session Report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the content of the End of Session report.

12. Correspondence

1 The Committee noted an index of correspondence.

2 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education regarding Review of Behaviour Policy and Practice.

3 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office regarding the Education (Holiday Meal Payments) Bill and the Irish-medium (Workforce Plan) Bill.

4 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the General Teaching Council Bill.

5 The Committee considered correspondence from NI Environment Link regarding extreme weather impacts on education in Northern Ireland



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Agreed: The Committee agreed to return to this issue at its briefing on curriculum issues.

6 The Committee noted an invitation from Education Authority to join a meeting of the Consultative Forum.

7 The Committee noted an invitation from the Northern Ireland Childminding Association to NICMA conference and extended this to all members for reply.

8 The Committee considered correspondence from We Deserve Better NI regarding access to rights education and capacity building.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Committee for Executive Office to reply directly.

9 The Committee noted correspondence from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council regarding a rural affairs research paper.

10 The Committee noted an invitation from Northern Ireland Youth Forum to Your Voice, Our Future survey results event.

11 The Committee considered correspondence from Maths Buddy regarding TransformED proposals for English and Mathematics.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an oral briefing from Maths Buddy.

12 The Committee considered correspondence from Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists Northern Ireland regarding Behaviour in Schools Review



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Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Minister of Education seeking assurances that all pupils can participate in the call for evidence survey and to ask for an extension to the engagement period.

13 The Committee noted correspondence from Committee for Finance regarding revised Section 59 and Section 7 authorisation letters.

14 The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Executive Office regarding the Northern Ireland Survivor Council recommendations on RSE

Agreed: The Committee agreed to return to this issue at its RSE briefing.

15 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding costs associated with the application of provisions of Bills.

16 The Committee noted correspondence from the Assembly and Executive Review Committee regarding Westminster Statutory Instruments RalSe paper.

17 The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office regarding the Prevalence and Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences in Northern Ireland report

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department to reply.

18 The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the Education (Holiday Meal Payments) Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to include the correspondence in the Education (Holiday Meal Payments) Bill papers.



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19 The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the Irish-medium (Workforce Plan) Bill

Agreed: The Committee agreed to include the correspondence in the Irish-medium (Workforce Plan) Bill papers.

20 The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding the withdrawal of GCSE German by CCEA.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to return to this issue at its curriculum briefing.

21 The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding the withdrawal of GCSE German by CCEA.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to return to this issue at its curriculum briefing.

22 The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding the withdrawal of GCSE German by CCEA.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to return to this issue at its curriculum briefing.

23 The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding integrated education.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to refer to this correspondence at the meeting on 30 September 2026.

24 The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding Education Authority procedural issues.



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25 The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding SEN statement deadlines.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to Education Authority to contact the individual.

13. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered and agreed its forward work programme.

14. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

15. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next Committee for Education meeting will be held on Wednesday 30 September 2026 at 2:00pm in room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.01pm.

Nick Mathison MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Education
30 September 2026