

DALRIADA SCHOOL

Reference No. 3420012



Draft Development Proposal

Notice is hereby given that under Article 79 of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 the Board of Governors of Dalriada School has submitted a proposal to the Education Authority as follows:

“To increase Dalriada School’s admission number from 125 to 130 pupils (in Year 8) with an increase in enrolment number from 815 to 897 pupils, starting from September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.”

Identification of Need

Background

Dalriada is a long established, successful and sustainable Voluntary Grammar School which is heavily over-subscribed.

Current accommodation

The School is currently undergoing a £1.7 million refurbishment including a new gymnasium and associated facilities extension fully funded by the School Enhancement Programme.

The School is scheduled for a complete electrical rewiring programme to take place in the Summer of 2016. A minor works application for a new Drama Suite has been lodged with the Department of Education. An additional minor works application has also been completed for an extension of the School canteen facilities.

The School meets the requirements of the Sustainable Schools Policy with a current admission number of 125 pupils and an enrolment number of 815 pupils.

Rationale for Proposal

What is the reason for change?

Our current enrolment number is 815 pupils. However, due to the continued demand for places in the School, particularly at post-16 level, we have to apply for a temporary variation in enrolment on an annual basis to accommodate our returning sixth form pupils and also allow us to admit pupils from schools in the Ballymoney Learning Community and beyond, who meet our Admissions Criteria at post-16, and who cannot access their chosen courses elsewhere.

Dalriada is a high achieving school with high quality teaching and learning affirmed in numerous Education & Training Inspection Reports. The latest, in May 2014 stated “Dalriada School continues to demonstrate its capacity for sustained self-improvement”.

Over the last five years, an annual temporary variation in enrolment has been granted to accommodate the following pupil numbers:

2012	862
2013	871
2014	880
2015	872
2016	870

Due to outstanding external examination results achieved at GCSE and A level by our students in 2015, Dalriada is currently placed in the top 100 state secondary schools in the UK.

Dalriada is currently working with Ballymoney High School and Our Lady of Lourdes School in Ballymoney as Ballymoney Area Learning Community, to examine joint provision at post-16 for all the pupils in the Ballymoney Area. This would result in best use being made of our joint resources and allow pupils in Ballymoney to continue their post-16 education in the Ballymoney area.

At present Dalriada offer post-16 courses in partnership with Northern Regional College on their Coleraine and Ballymena campuses. We currently do not access any courses offered by NRC on their Ballymoney campus. By “pooling” the resources of the three schools at post-16 Ballymoney pupils would not have to travel to other towns to meet their educational needs.

Dalriada is heavily oversubscribed at post-primary entrance level (Year 8) on an annual basis as evidenced by application and admission statistics over the last 5 years.

	1st Preference Admissions applications	
2011/12	165	125
2012/13	177	125
2013/14	172	126 (1 SEN)
2014/15	214	128 (3 SEN)
2015/16	175	128 (3 SEN)

These statistics demonstrate that Dalriada remains an extremely popular school attracting pupils from a wide range of religious, cultural and social backgrounds. The School currently attracts pupils from over 50 feeder primary schools.

The proposed increase in admission numbers from 125 – 130 pupils in Year 8 would not adversely affect the educational provision at Dalriada. At present the School operates with five Year 8 classes of 25 pupils. By increasing to 130 pupils each form class would increase by one pupil to 26. This would result in no additional teacher or classroom requirements.

The modest increase in admissions number from 125-130 will have little or no input on the intake over the other two post-primary schools in the Ballymoney Learning Community, namely Ballymoney High School and Our Lady of Lourdes School.

The amalgamation of Coleraine High School and Coleraine Academical Institution in September 2015 as Coleraine Grammar School has resulted in 95 fewer grammar school places in Year 8 in the Causeway Coast Area. This has, and will, result in greater demand for admission into Year 8 in Dalriada.

The Ballymoney area is one of the few areas in the Province where there is a stable primary school population which will result in a sustained high demand for post-primary places in Ballymoney Schools.

Dalriada has the capacity regarding staffing and accommodation levels, to adequately accommodate an enrolment of 897 pupils, without any additional expenditure.

In keeping within the spirit of Area Based Planning, there is currently an excellent relationship between the three schools in Ballymoney Area Learning Community with a number of collaborative courses shared at GCSE level. Our joint application to the Shared Education Programme Signature Project has been successful and exciting collaborative activities has been drawn up for 2016-17 including:

- (i) Joint activities for all Year 8 pupils across the three schools.
- (ii) Joint student council in Year 9.
- (iii) Induction activities for pupils across the three schools studying collaborative subjects.
- (iv) A joint Careers Convention.
- (v) Joint Sixth Form provision with all three schools submitting individual development proposals which complement each other and meet the needs of all pupils in the Ballymoney Area. An expected outcome would be that post-16 students in any of the three schools could have access to subjects offered across the three schools. This would enable all three schools to meet the demand of the Entitlement Framework.

Educational Impact

The educational benefits of this proposal are as follows:

- (i) Each year five more children could access a grammar school place in Year 8 and benefit from the high quality teaching and learning in Dalriada School.
- (ii) At post-16 level there would be greater opportunities for pupils to gain a place in Dalriada where all their subject choices could be met.
- (iii) From an Area Based Planning context, the development proposals for Sixth Form provision at Ballymoney High School, Our Lady of Lourdes School and Dalriada would result in post-16 students at Dalriada being able to access a greater range of courses locally. The proposals would also allow post-16 students from Ballymoney High School and Our Lady of Lourdes to access additional courses in Dalriada, building on the successful collaborative courses which are currently delivered at GCSE level across the three schools.

Statutory Consultation

I confirm that the following consultations took place:

1. Board of Governors – consultation took place at Governors’ meeting on 25 February 2016.
2. Staff – consultation took place with staff on 12 February 2016. Consultation Response form attached.
3. Pupils – consultation took place with School’s Council (pupil body) on 29 February 2016.
4. Parents – consultation held in the school on the evening of 27 June 2016.

Consultation Summary

Staff Consultation

Consultation took place with staff on 12 February 2016 during an Exceptional Closure Day. Following a Powerpoint presentation by the Headmaster concern was expressed regarding class sizes in Year 8. The Headmaster clarified that by increasing the Year 8 number by only five pupils, each form class would consist of 26 pupils instead of 25. Staff was satisfied by this response.

Governors Consultation

Consultation took place at the Board of Governors' meeting on 25 February 2016. Following a Powerpoint presentation by the Headmaster, Governors were assured that an increase in admission numbers from 125 to 130 would not have a negative impact on the academic ability of pupils admitted. The Headmaster stated that, due to the School being heavily oversubscribed each year, the impact would be negligible.

Parents Consultation

Consultation took place with parents on 27 June 2016. Copies of a Consultation Response paper outlining the rationale behind the Development Proposal. A number of parents expressed a desire to see an increased enrolment at the school. Parents are very aware of the demand for places and often express concern about not being able to enrol their child as a result of oversubscription.

Pupil Consultation

The School's Council group of pupils were extremely supportive of the Development Proposal and would like to see more pupils gain entry to Dalriada at Year 8 and Sixth Form.

Summary and assessment of views

Staff, governors, parents and pupils strongly believe that Dalriada School's admission number should increase from 125 to 130 pupils (in Year 8) with an increase in enrolment number from 815 to 897 pupils. Such a small increase would not adversely impact the academic intake of the School at Year 8. By increasing the enrolment number to 897 pupils, the School would not have to apply each year for a temporary variation in enrolment, thus ensuring the sustainability of the School. The small increases in admission and enrolment numbers requested would have a minimal effect on the intake of other post-primary schools in the surrounding area.

Appendices Attached:

Appendix 1: Overview presentation for Parents, Staff and Governors.

Appendix 2: Consultation Response Booklet

CASE FOR CHANGE - Supporting Information

Summary / Overview

BOARD AREA	Education Authority, North East Region
DP NUMBER	
PROPOSER	Board of Governors, Dalriada School Mr. Tom Skelton (Headmaster) 028 2766 3066
SCHOOL(S) NAME	Dalriada School
SCHOOL REFERENCE	3420012
TYPE	Post Primary
MANAGEMENT	Voluntary Grammar
DP PUBLICATION DATE	
PROPOSAL	To increase Dalriada School's admission number from 125 to 130 pupils (in Year 8) with an increase in enrolment number from 815 to 897 pupils, starting from September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.