

# Specialist Schools Application Guidance: Year 2



Department of  
**Education**

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Introduction .....	1
Application Checklist .....	2
Who should be involved in planning an application? .....	4
Sources of support .....	5
How your application will be assessed .....	6
Application Form Section:	
B: General Case .....	7
C: School Plan .....	8
C.1 School plan audit .....	8
C.2 School plan objectives and targets .....	9
Implementation of the school plan .....	13
C.3 Outline of use of annual grant for 1st year .....	14
D: Community Plan .....	14
Partnerships .....	15
Key principles for the community plan .....	16
D.1 Community Plan Audit .....	18
D.2 Community Plan objectives and targets .....	18
Implementation of the Community Plan .....	19
D.3 Outline of use of grant for 1st year .....	20
E: Monitoring and Evaluation of School and Community Plan ..	20

F:	Funding .....	21
	Specialist Support Year One Grant .....	21
	Recurrent Funding .....	22
G:	Sponsorship .....	23
	Eligibility .....	23
	Supporting evidence .....	25
	Receipt of sponsorship: verification process .....	26
Annex A:	Guidance for joint applications .....	27
Annex B:	e2s Development Officers .....	30

## INTRODUCTION

Copies of the booklet “Specialist Schools Concept in the Northern Ireland Context: Year 2” are available from the Specialist Schools Team at the address below, or can be downloaded from the Department’s website at

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/pprb/index.htm>

A number of changes have been made to the application process for the second year of the pilot and the aforementioned booklet outlines what these are and the rationale behind them. Schools should familiarise themselves with this document before beginning their application. Schools wishing to submit a joint application should also refer to Annex A.

**Schools wishing to complete an application should contact the Department at the address below. A copy of the application form will then be forwarded to you by e-mail.**

**Specialist Schools Pilot  
14-19 Team  
Department of Education  
Rathgael House  
Bangor  
BT19 7PR**

**Email: [14-19team@deni.gov.uk](mailto:14-19team@deni.gov.uk)**

If you have any particular requirements (such as different formats) around the guidance or application form please contact the 14-19 Team at the address above, or tel: 91279850.

THE CLOSING DATE FOR SPECIALIST SCHOOL APPLICATIONS WILL BE:

**NOON ON FRIDAY 30 MARCH 2007**

## **APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

Please organise your application in two parts:

Part I) Completed application form;

Part II) Schools are required to submit the following supporting information with their application:

- Sponsorship declaration letter signed by the Principal and Chair of the Board of Governors;
- Signed pledge letters from all sponsors. Applications must be supported at the time of application with evidence of at least £25,000 of unconditional private sector sponsorship. Where this is not possible, schools will be required to produce evidence of the steps that have been taken to access private sponsorship, along with how the school intends to secure this before designation as a Specialist School.

Please submit **one printed copy of the application form and the supporting information** requested and **one electronic version of your application form**. Printed copies should be sent to the 14-19 Team address. Electronic forms should be emailed to: [14-19team@deni.gov.uk](mailto:14-19team@deni.gov.uk)

Electronic copies of supporting information are not required. All supporting material must be with the Department by the specified deadline.

**Please note:** individual applications or parts of applications, including details of sponsors, could be made public at any time in response to requests under Freedom of Information legislation.

**PLEASE DO NOT SEND ANY OTHER ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.**

## **Who should be involved in planning an application?**

In addition to your **Senior Management Team** and the **specialist departments**, successful applications for specialist school designation will involve input from **teachers and other departments across the school**. You should also discuss your application at an early stage with your **Board of Governors**. It is equally important that you consult **parents and pupils** during the application process and that they are kept informed throughout.

Your application for specialist status should fit in with other strategies/partnerships relating to planned provision for your local area and this will be assessed in the case your school makes. In particular, **there will be procedures regarding capital expenditure that are particular to your school sector and these should be clearly followed in drawing up your plans**. Details of the relevant bodies who should be consulted for schools in each sector are detailed in Section F of this guidance ("Funding").

Schools are strongly advised to use and develop their links to other local schools as part of the application process, particularly when identifying **partner schools**. You will also want to consider the learning and skills needs of your **local community**. For example, schools will wish to discuss with their local schools, FE College and training organisations links between their specialism and available provision.

Six new employer-led **Workforce Development Forums** (WDF) will be established in early 2007 in each of the new FE college areas to identify local skills training needs and to articulate a strategic response to those needs. Schools are strongly advised to make contact with the relevant WDF, where possible, to discuss the school's links to business and the community and how their specialist application will fit into plans being developed for their area. Contact details for the WDFs can be obtained from [claire.beattie@delni.gov.uk](mailto:claire.beattie@delni.gov.uk)

## SOURCES OF SUPPORT

### The Regional Training Unit

The RTU will be your principal source of support in completing your application. Feedback from schools taking part in the first year of the pilot highlighted the value of this support and the Department strongly recommend that your school makes use of this resource.

### e2s Development Officers

The e2s Development officers in the Education and Library Boards, CCMS, NICIE and CnaG are currently working to help schools develop collaborative arrangements and increase pupil access in preparation for the introduction of the Entitlement Framework. Contact details for these officers are attached at Annex B. **The relevant e2s Development officer(s) should be contacted during the application process, particularly when looking at how your specialist application will fit into the developing collaborative arrangements in your area, as this will be a key factor in how your application is assessed.**

On receipt of your request for an application form, the Department will pass your contact details to the RTU and the relevant e2s Development Officer.

### Statutory and admissions implications

**NB: DESIGNATION AS A SPECIALIST SCHOOL IS NOT A STATUTORY PROCESS AND DOES NOT RESULT IN ANY CHANGE IN A SCHOOL'S ADMISSIONS CRITERIA.**

**DECISIONS ON APPLICATIONS WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN MAY 2007.** Schools will be informed about the details of the assessment process and the timing of this announcement, in due course.

## **How your application will be assessed**

**The School and Community Development Plan sections of your application will carry equal weight, for assessment purposes.** The School Plan must set out convincing approaches to raising standards in the specialist subjects and using these approaches to drive whole school improvement. The Community Plan must demonstrate how you will use your specialism for the benefit of your partner schools and the local community.

## APPLICATION FORM SECTION

### **B. GENERAL CASE**

You should use this section of the application to explain:

- how the chosen specialism will be used to raise attainment and what you aim to achieve in four years' time, should your school be designated;
- how you intend to use your specialism in the implementation of the revised curriculum, particularly in relation to Learning for Life and Work;
- how specialist status will fit in to your plans to offer access to the full Entitlement Framework in due course, including the one third of applied courses<sup>1</sup>. Where appropriate, you should also demonstrate how specialist designation will fit in with your school's ongoing collaboration, particularly the Vocational Enhancement Programme (VEP) and/or your school's involvement in funded school/school collaborative initiatives;
- how specialist status will be used to enhance Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance;
- how you will use ICT to help you achieve the goals in your specialist plans, including its role as a tool to enhance teaching and learning in your specialist plans; and

*1 For further guidance, see DE circular 2005/18 "Entitlement Framework - Initial Guidance" and 2006/20 "Entitlement Framework - Further Guidance"*

- how you will use the specialism to develop links with other schools, FE colleges and the wider community (including business and industry) to share effective practice through collaboration and to make best use of the existing resources in the local area.

You should use the General Case section to outline how your specialist status will link into your work on other Government policies and initiatives such as *A Shared Future* and/or *Extended Schools*.

## **C. SCHOOL PLAN**

### **C.1 School plan audit**

Your school plan will be based on a crucial first stage: a comprehensive audit of the school's current position in the specialist subject(s) and any areas for development. Your current School Development Plan<sup>2</sup>, together with any supporting documentation will be particularly relevant. This audit will entail analysing data and reviewing existing strengths and areas for development in each subject relating to your proposed specialism in each of the areas below.

Section **C.1.a**:

- i) Current **attainment** in Key Stages 3<sup>3</sup> and 4 and, where appropriate, post-16 in the specialist subject(s); and how this contributes to the proportion of pupils gaining 5+ A\*-C GCSE grades or equivalent.
- ii) The quality of **teaching and learning** in specialist subject(s).

<sup>2</sup> For further guidance, see "School Development Planning", DE, June 2005. Schools will also find the ETI's "Together Towards Improvement" and the "Evaluating Schools" and "Improving ..." series helpful.

<sup>3</sup> Please contact the Department through RTU if you are unsure whether directly relevant KS3 targets can be set for the subjects covered by your specialism.

- iii) The quality of **curriculum provision** in Key Stages 3 and 4 and, where appropriate, post-16: the range of relevant courses (please list all pre- and post-16 exams/other awards), curriculum enrichment, time given to the subjects and out-of-hours learning.
- iv) Current **uptake** in specialist subject(s) in Key Stage 4 and post-16, including outside lesson time where appropriate.
- v) **Resources** for the specialist subject(s) including accommodation.
- vi) The role of **ICT** in supporting teaching and learning in the subject(s) covered by your proposed specialism and in supporting any other relevant areas for development.
- vii) **Quality of management**, including target setting; monitoring and evaluation; management of resources and; success of staff development policy/practice.

Section **C.1.b** of the application form should be used to indicate how your school currently shares effective teaching and learning between subject areas (specialist and non-specialist).

Section **C.1.c** allows your school to outline existing links with post-primary partners and any plans for extending these. These may include links in subjects other than those associated with the specialism.

## **C.2 School plan objectives and targets<sup>4</sup>**

Based on the school plan audit, the main part of the school plan will set out your objectives, targets and implementation strategies, which are intended to both raise standards in the specialist subject(s) and deliver whole school improvement. All

<sup>4</sup> Further guidance on target setting can be found in DE Circular 2006/16 "Target-Setting and Benchmarking" issued in June 2006.

objectives and their associated targets should address an issue identified in the audit and reflect the Specialist Schools pilot's aims and principles. If the audit has raised a significant number of issues, you should look to prioritise these (explaining the rationale for which issues are to be addressed) so as to set a realistic scope for the use of the specialist funding. You should also include any issues concerning underachievement and address issues of inclusion.

You will be expected to set a number of broad objectives in the school plan: one for each subject within your specialist area and one for whole school improvement.

You will also be required to set a "Learning for Life and Work" objective demonstrating how you plan to use the good practice and transferable strengths of your specialism to help the implementation of **Education for Employability** as an integral element of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) provision within your school. As the revised curriculum is implemented, your school will be expected to provide appropriate learning and teaching experiences so that pupils have the opportunity to:

- explore the employment opportunities available, including work in the local and global economy;
- engage in progressive career planning;
- develop of their employability skills and capabilities for work; and
- identify and experience work related-learning opportunities to include Enterprise and Entrepreneurship.

For more details on Education for Employability in the curriculum and the link to specialist schools, please see "**Specialist Schools Concept in the Northern Ireland Context: Year 2**"<sup>5</sup>.

*5 Further information on Learning for Life and Work and all other aspects of the Revised Curriculum can be obtained from the CCEA website at [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk)*

You may wish to use an optional objective that can be used flexibly to cover other issues from the school plan audit. Each objective needs to briefly and broadly cover the issues that the associated targets will pick up on e.g. attainment, provision/uptake, enrichment and (where appropriate) post-16 provision.

Using the grids in the application form, you will need to set a range of outcome targets against which to measure progress in each objective. These should take account of your current School Development Plan and, where appropriate, demonstrate the additional improvement and progress that the specialist resources would deliver. The assessment of your application will look closely at whether the targets state a clear base-line/starting point and are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound – to ensure that progress against targets/objectives can be measured.

## Objectives and targets

For the specialist subject objectives, the targets will reflect how (and how far) you are planning to raise attainment, increase provision/uptake and expand enrichment opportunities. Applied/vocational<sup>6</sup> and work-related learning should be included in this.

- i) Attainment should be the key driver of the whole plan – which is why targets are required here for each specialist subject in each of the four years of the designation phase. You should cover, as part of overall attainment targets, any areas/groups of pupils for particular attention e.g. *‘To raise A\*-Cs from a% to b%, in particular by raising under-achieving boys’ attainment from x% to y%’*.
- ii) Targets on provision/uptake and enrichment are required for Years 1 and 2 of designation.
- iii) Where appropriate, you should also set post-16 targets for attainment and provision/uptake in the first two years of designation.

<sup>6</sup> For further information on applied/vocational courses, see DE Circular 2006/24

A range of targets is also required for the **whole school improvement objective**, reflecting various key elements:

- i) You should set detailed **whole school attainment** targets for each year of the phase and explain how you will use your specialism to drive up attainment across the school. In particular, targets focusing on raising attainment in English and Maths should be a priority.
- ii) Qualitative targets are required in terms of how **teaching and learning** in the subject(s) relating to your proposed specialism will both draw on and help improve standards in other departments.
- iii) You will also need to set targets for the **involvement of businesses/employers** – which should go beyond contributions to initial sponsorship, towards e.g. innovative curriculum delivery, vocational experiences, management involvement, work-shadowing and mentoring.

Targets are also required for **Education for Employability** in three key areas:

- i) **Pupil-based** targets, which might relate to the development of an awareness of Employability opportunities within your specialist subjects, increased participation in enterprise activities, increased individual guidance for all pupils and/or discrete time allocated to Education for Employability as part of the Careers Education element of the school's CEIAG policy.
- ii) **Sharing best practice** targets, for example strategically planning and integrating the Education for Employability programme within the schools CEIAG provision, co-ordinating and managing meaningful and relevant work-related learning opportunities, developing an accessible careers advice and guidance provision and the integration and use of the progress file to strengthen whole school Employability programmes.

- iii) **Work-related learning** targets, such as special events supported by your partner/sponsors, or participation in other activities such as work experience, enterprise programmes or expanding/enriching your schools applied/vocational offer.

For all the areas above, (apart from **attainment** in the specialist and whole school targets), explicit targets are only required for Years 1 and 2 of designation, where your planning will be most advanced and detailed, but will need to be complemented by outline plans for the second half of the phase. You will need to update and record new targets for Years 3 and 4 of designation as part of your own monitoring and review processes.

An **optional objective** can be used to cover other issues arising from the school plan audit, such as issues that cut across all the specialist subjects, and must be accompanied by appropriate, outcome-based targets.

### Implementation of the School Plan

In the final column of the grid, you will need to briefly set out an overview of the actions to be taken to deliver your targets – **taking care to pick up on the issues identified in the School-Plan audit**. Your proposed actions will be expected to reflect some key principles for personalised and effective teaching and learning:

- setting high expectations for all;
- ensuring every pupil is working to explicit targets in each subject;
- making learning relevant, stimulating and challenging;
- matching teaching techniques to a range of learning styles; and
- using assessment, diagnosis and data to maximise progress.

**Your proposed actions must also demonstrate how Information and Communication Technology will be used to provide opportunities for pupils and promote quality teaching and learning both in the specialism and across the school as a whole.**

### **C.3 Outline of use of annual grant for 1st year on School Plan**

In this section, you should give a breakdown under the indicated headings of how you intend to spend the specialist grant to meet targets for Year 1 of the plan. The school plan should involve around 50% of the overall specialist recurrent funds. Although similar breakdowns are not required for Years 2 to 4 of the plan, the Department will examine how the money has been spent during the ongoing evaluation of the pilot. Your own monitoring and evaluation plans will also focus on the detail of your financial plans as they develop.

## **D. COMMUNITY PLAN**

In addition to proposals for using your specialism within your school, you will need to develop a community dimension to your specialist plan and this element of the application process is of particular importance in advancing the aims and objectives of the wider “Entitled to Succeed” programme. The Community Plan should focus on the quality and effectiveness of this engagement, to develop teaching and learning through its specialism(s) in support of the core aims of the Specialist Schools Programme. This will involve partnerships with:

- at least **five** other schools, at least **two** of which must be post-primary. Partnerships with special schools are welcomed and, where they have post-primary age pupils, they can ‘count’ as post-primary partners. High performing schools are encouraged to partner lower attaining schools; and
- wider community groups including local businesses/employers, Youth groups and the public sector.

**Key factors in successful partnerships with other schools are likely to be:**

- a sense of shared ownership;
- trusting relationships based on challenge and support;
- creating a climate of continuous evaluation; and
- a rigorous analysis of development needs, aligned to effective use of resource.

**Partnerships are also more likely to be successful if they focus on one or two very specific projects with each partner school.**

Your plan will be about building excellence and expertise in your specialist subjects across and for your local area. **In doing so, you must respond to needs not currently met by your school or others. Applications which clearly duplicate existing provision will not be successful.** You should demonstrate that you are planning to develop co-operation with local schools and with FE colleges, making best use of the existing resources available in the local area. This will involve close consultation with all your intended partners and more widely. You should take account of any specialist provision available at local FE colleges and Higher Education (HE) institutions, adult/community learning centres etc, in order to avoid duplication. You should also consult with relevant local community organisations for their perspective on outstanding needs. The degree to which you have consulted in drawing up your Community Plan will be assessed as part of your application. Your school's engagement with employers/businesses should also be clearly seen within the context of ongoing initiatives in this area, principally the *NI Skills Strategy*.

Where possible, schools should make contact with the relevant Workforce Development Forums (WDF). See the earlier section; "Who should be involved in planning an application?" (p4).

**Key principles for the community plan and how it will be assessed:**

- objectives and targets should involve **up to two** of the subjects covered by your specialism in any one year. Proposals that relate to other parts of the curriculum will **not** 'count' in your specialist plans – though you may separately decide to develop such wider community services and facilities along 'extended school' lines;
- you will need to demonstrate that work with, for example, local theatre groups (as part of an arts specialist plan), is clearly additional to their existing activities – similarly, proposed work with partner schools must complement and go beyond existing partnership arrangements and/or funded collaborative programmes such as the Vocational Enhancement Programme (VEP);
- your school/wider community partners need to understand the aims of the programme, and that your school cannot meet all their needs. The community plan audit may identify many issues amongst which you might need to prioritise – the quality/impact of activities are more important than the quantity and the assessment of your application will consider how realistic your plans are;
- you can be flexible, focusing either on different subjects within your specialism, or on different partner schools/wider community groups, over the four year phase; and
- your choice of partners and your objectives/targets should demonstrate a commitment to social inclusion, equal opportunities and cultural diversity. This might involve helping partner schools to address under-performance of particular groups of pupils (by gender, socio-economic background, pupils with SEN or English as an additional language, gifted and talented pupils etc).

In drawing up your Community Plan, you will be expected to demonstrate a clear understanding of the context of the Specialist Schools Programme within Northern

Ireland. In terms of activities for work with partner schools, **applicant schools will be expected to focus on:**

- a. **Primary Partners:** Key Stage 2-3 transfer and transition, focusing particularly on ensuring robust curriculum continuity and learning progression.
- b. **Post-Primary Partners:** Expanding access to applied/vocational provision in the local area without duplicating what already exists, linking the Community Plan to the school's and partner's plans to offer the full Entitlement Framework.
- c. Learning for Life and Work: how will work with partner schools assist the implementation of the Education for Employability strand of the revised curriculum? Please note that this may apply to primary partners; within three years of leaving primary school, children will begin to discuss course choices. While primary aged children will not, of course, be expected to be thinking about career choices, children are receptive and responsive at an early age to learning about the world of work.
- d. Tackling underperformance – helping local schools that are struggling in a particular curriculum area.
- e. Inclusion and children's issues – helping partner schools to ensure inclusion issues are managed effectively in a context where every child is achieving, healthy and safe.

In drawing up your Community Plan, your school should also ensure that regard is paid to the aims and objectives of *“A Shared Future - Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland”*<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, March 2005

### **D.1. Community Plan Audit**

Like the School Plan, the Community Plan is based on a comprehensive audit of the current position – in this case, of the school’s existing partnerships with the selected partner schools and wider community groups. You should:

- a. identify your intended partner schools and highlight current activities and areas for development/priority needs in your existing work with them – focusing on teaching and learning in, and resources for, the specialist subjects. You will need to consider and record your existing involvement in school-to-school collaborative arrangements. **An assessment should also be made of how links to partner schools are supported by ICT;** and
- b. research and identify wider community groups and specify areas for development in relation to existing learning provision (by your school or others) in the specialist subjects. You do not need to review every community link you have but you should clearly identify what support you provide/facilitate and what established links with other providers you could use to extend specialist provision further for these groups.

### **D.2. Community Plan objectives and targets**

Based on the audit, the main part of your specialist Community Plan will set out your objectives, targets and implementation strategies for partnership working between your school and your partner schools/wider community partners. All objectives and their associated targets should address an issue identified in the audit and reflect the Specialist Schools pilot’s community aims and principles.

You will be expected to set **5 objectives** – on your work with primary partner (or other) schools, with your post-primary partners and with wider community groups, plus a further, **optional objective** that you can use to cover/focus on other issues identified in the audit.

Using the grids in the application form, you will need to set a range of outcome targets against which to measure progress in achievement of each objective. The assessment will look closely at whether the targets state a clear base-line/starting point and are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound – to ensure that progress against targets/objectives can be identified. Targets are required for Years 1 and 2 of the phase only, where your planning will be most advanced and detailed, but will need to be complemented by outline plans for the second half of the phase. You will need to update and record new targets for Years 3 and 4 as part of your own monitoring and review processes.

Targets for your work with partner schools should describe specific learning outcomes and fit with the schools' own development priorities. Targets do not have to be expressed in terms of directly raising attainment in partner schools but should clearly specify learning standards, to be delivered by providing, supporting or facilitating well-defined activities in the specialist subjects to address the learning needs of defined groups of pupils/teachers (e.g. Year 6 pupils, gifted and talented pupils, under-achieving boys).

Targets for your work with wider community groups must set out the intended learning outcomes of specialist subject related activities that your school will provide or facilitate for defined groups.

You should demonstrate how the use of ICT will add value to relevant objectives in your Community Plan.

### **Implementation of the Community Plan**

In the final column of the grid, you should briefly set out the actions you will take to deliver each target. An effective way to manage and monitor the plan may be to identify link staff with specific responsibility for co-ordinating activities and sharing good practice. Implementation plans should help ensure that activities, especially with/in partner schools, are sustainable and could be continued independently in due course.

### **D.3 Outline of use of grant for 1st year on Community Plan**

In this section, you will give a breakdown under the indicated headings of how you intend to spend the specialist grant to meet targets for Year 1 of the plan. The Community Plan should involve around 50% of the overall specialist recurrent funds. Although similar breakdowns are not required for Years 2 to 4 of the plan, the Department will examine how the money has been spent during the ongoing evaluation of the pilot. Your own monitoring and evaluation plans will also focus on the detail of your financial plans as they develop.

### **E. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PLAN<sup>8</sup>**

Outline monitoring and evaluation strategies should answer the following:

- a. How will you monitor progress against targets at subject and individual levels and evaluate the quality and impact of teaching and learning? What tools will you use to track individual performance e.g. pupil data? If targets are not being met, what remedial action will be taken?
- b. How are governors and sponsors involved in monitoring and evaluation? Are there plans to involve external agencies? What are the accountability structures? What representation from outside the school will there be on monitoring and evaluation groups?
- c. How are beneficiaries of the community plan involved in monitoring and evaluation? How will account be taken of their views?
- d. What data and other evidence do you need to collect to be able to tell how well targets are being met?

<sup>8</sup> For guidance on monitoring and evaluation, see "School Development Planning", DE, June 2005. Schools will also find the ETI's "Together Towards Improvement" and the "Evaluating Schools" and "Improving Schools" series helpful.

You will also need to indicate how you will approach refining and updating, where appropriate, targets for the second half of the phase.

## **F. FUNDING**

**Spending of funds associated with Specialist Schools designation should be separate and distinct from those of other initiatives, such as VEP or Extended Schools. In the later case, where a proposed activity is also covered in your school's Extended Schools action plan your action plan should indicate that this activity is being funded through the Specialist Schools programme.**

### **Specialist Support Year One Grant**

In addition to your recurrent funding, a specialist grant of up to £100,000 can be used, together with the sponsorship raised, to enhance the school's facilities for the teaching of your specialist subjects in the first year of designation.

An outline of the use of the support grant should be included in your application. This should reflect the needs identified in the audit by addressing any accommodation issues in the specialist subject areas to the extent allowed by the available capital sum. Should there be any additional costs associated with the Project, the school must identify these and indicate how they are to be met.

The support grant is made up of 2 parts; a **capital** and a **recurrent** element. **Up to** £80,000 of the support grant should be used for those elements of your plan requiring capital expenditure and **up to** £20,000 should be use on those items classed as recurrent. In general, capital expenditure is defined as the purchase of an asset with a useful working lifespan of greater than one year, including the purchase of buildings, construction costs for new build or expenditure on minor improvement works. Recurrent expenditure relates to the purchase of goods or services where your schools will receive the benefits over a short period of time. **It is extremely important that your proposed use of the Specialist Support Grant is discussed as part of the application process with:**

- i) **Your Education and Library Board in the case of controlled schools;**
- ii) **The Department of Education for Maintained, Irish-Medium, Grant-Maintained Integrated and Voluntary Grammar schools.**

**These discussions should reflect the relevant existing accounting policies which determine capital/recurrent categorisation. Failure to do so could lead to delays in funding becoming available or your application may be deemed ineligible.**

This is particularly important in respect of schools operating (or planning to do so) under a PPP procurement as it will be essential to understand the implications under the contract, the change order process and ramifications for the school's LMS budget.

### **Recurrent Funding**

Specialist schools receive extra annual grant to support the on-going implementation of the specialist school and community plans. All the funding must be spent on the implementation of the School and Community Plans and must be additional to funding that would normally be available. This funding cannot be used to cover school budget shortfalls.

The amount of grant is based on pupil numbers taken from the annual school Census figure for the September preceding the school year for which payment is being made. The flat rate of grant for schools is calculated at a rate of £100 per pupil. Grant is paid on a school-year basis (funding for the first year of the Year 2 pilot will begin in September 2007).

## **G. SPONSORSHIP**

This section gives a brief overview of the rules governing sponsorship. Specialist schools are required to raise a minimum of £25,000 in unconditional sponsorship.

### **Eligibility**

The four guiding principles on the eligibility of this sponsorship are that:

- a. it must be raised for the purpose of the application;
- b. it must be unconditional;
- c. it must be from the private sector; and
- d. it must be relevant to the School and Community plan and also support the use of the Year One support grant.

Details of eligible and ineligible sponsorship are shown overleaf;

## SPECIALIST SCHOOLS APPLICATION GUIDANCE: YEAR 2

ELIGIBLE SPONSORSHIP	CRITERIA
Cash donations	The preferred form of sponsorship - must reflect the four guiding principles.
Goods/equipment	Must be relevant to the School Plan and contribute to the capital project and ICT resources should be compatible with/extend the C2k managed service.
Free overseas travel	£5,000 maximum.
School monies (fund raising; School Foundations; PTA funds; donations from parents, past pupils diocese etc)	Such monies can account for up to £10,000. PTA and Foundation monies must have been raised before applying for specialist status.
Gift Aid on sponsorship pledges	
Private Finance Initiative providers/Public Private Partnerships	

INELIGIBLE SPONSORSHIP	EXCEPTIONS (if any)
Supplier sponsors, i.e. companies who have or may have a commercial interest in the school. This includes discounts on purchases. If unsure what "supplier" means, contact the RTU.	Companies who are part of ELB wide contracts or who sign a non-supplier declaration.  Donations may also be made via approved stakeholders.
Funding from local authorities/public sector bodies	Organisations with private sector funds who confirm sponsorship is from such streams
Donations from school staff, their partners or spouses and those in partner schools	
Services	Architectural/professional services in connection with capital bid. The whole fee must be donated
Other school monies - profits from vending machines, tuck shops, school photo/uniform sales, trading activities, room lettings etc	

Unconditional pledges (not payment) of sponsorship are required at the point of application. Where this is not possible, schools will be required to produce evidence of the steps that they have taken to access private sponsorship to date, along with how the school intends to secure this before designation as a Specialist School. It is acceptable for sponsors to make the actual donation at this stage if the money is separately identifiable and held until required.

If your school already has links with companies or other organisations which provide sponsorship on an on-going basis, it may be possible to count one year's worth of this towards the sponsorship requirement.

Sponsorship must have been received by the end of the first year of designation, with the exception of PTA/fundraising monies which must have been received at the point of application.

### **Supporting evidence**

The following supporting evidence is required:-

- a. statements by the Principal and the Chair of the Board of Governors, on school headed paper, to the effect that all sponsorship is unconditional; and
- b. original letters for all amounts of sponsorship pledged.

On the application form please list all sponsors separately, except where the sponsorship is from fund-raising activities or parental donations and/or covenanting schemes which can be included as one line. Original letters from all sponsors are required, except in the case of individual parental donations and/or covenanting schemes where a list of all parents and the amounts donated should be attached.

### **Receipt of sponsorship: verification process**

Some or all of the designated schools will be required to provide copies of bank statements or other finance related documentation, providing evidence of receipt of all funding by the end of the first year of operation. Acceptance of such checks is one of the conditions of funding prior to the announcement of designation.

**For further information on any of the contents of this Guidance, or other aspects of the specialist schools application process, please contact;**

John Reid  
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**Annex A**

## GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS WISHING TO SUBMIT A JOINT APPLICATION

1. In certain circumstances joint applications from two schools are welcome, for example, from an 11 to 14 and 14 to 18 school. Applications would need to be supported by sponsorship of £25,000 for the joint application, and will receive a single package of support from the Department.
2. Such applications are required to relate to one specialist area, and **both** applicant schools will be expected to clearly demonstrate existing curricular strength in the chosen specialism.
3. Schools should consider very carefully whether they wish to submit a joint application, particularly where two schools do not have a previous history of working together. Where this is the case schools are discouraged from making joint applications unless their application is clearly part of a wider and coherent strategy to bring about overall improvement in standards of achievement at both schools.
4. There will be a funding differential compared with two solo applications (because the financial support package is shared), and this may affect progress towards targets. In effect the resources available for a joint designation are the same as those for a solo application. It follows that joint applicants will not be able to be as ambitious as two schools making solo applications and schools should take this into account.
5. **An application consisting of a self-contained development plan from each school, with little evidence of joint planning, will not be successful.**

## Partnership

6. Successful joint applications will be based on genuine partnership between both schools. It must be evident from the application why both partners consider it beneficial to be applying jointly. The case for a joint application should give details of any history of collaboration between the schools.
7. A joint application must be more than just two school development plans put together and called a joint application. The specialist school plan of both partners should be one integrated plan. Some objectives and targets will obviously relate only to one of the partners but in other instances both schools should share objectives and targets.
8. For the purpose of the community development plan, joint specialist schools must still work with at least **five** other schools, at least **two** of which must be post-primary.

## Issues for consideration when formulating the development plan of a joint application

9. Joint applicants are therefore unlikely to be successful **unless they provide evidence** of the following:
  - a. existing collaboration which is purposeful and can demonstrate that a **genuine partnership already exists**;
  - b. joint agreement at governing body and school management levels about **how their new status will be communicated** to the wider community and local schools;
  - c. joint planning at senior and middle management levels which results in a **cohesive and well co-ordinated approach** to implementing the various components of the development plan;

- d. the development of **significant strengths and improvements at both schools in the specialist subjects;**
- e. a development plan which capitalises on the complementary strengths of both schools and ensures that **each will benefit from the other in terms of plans for joint working;**
- f. a joint management structure and system for the implementation of the community programme.

## Funding

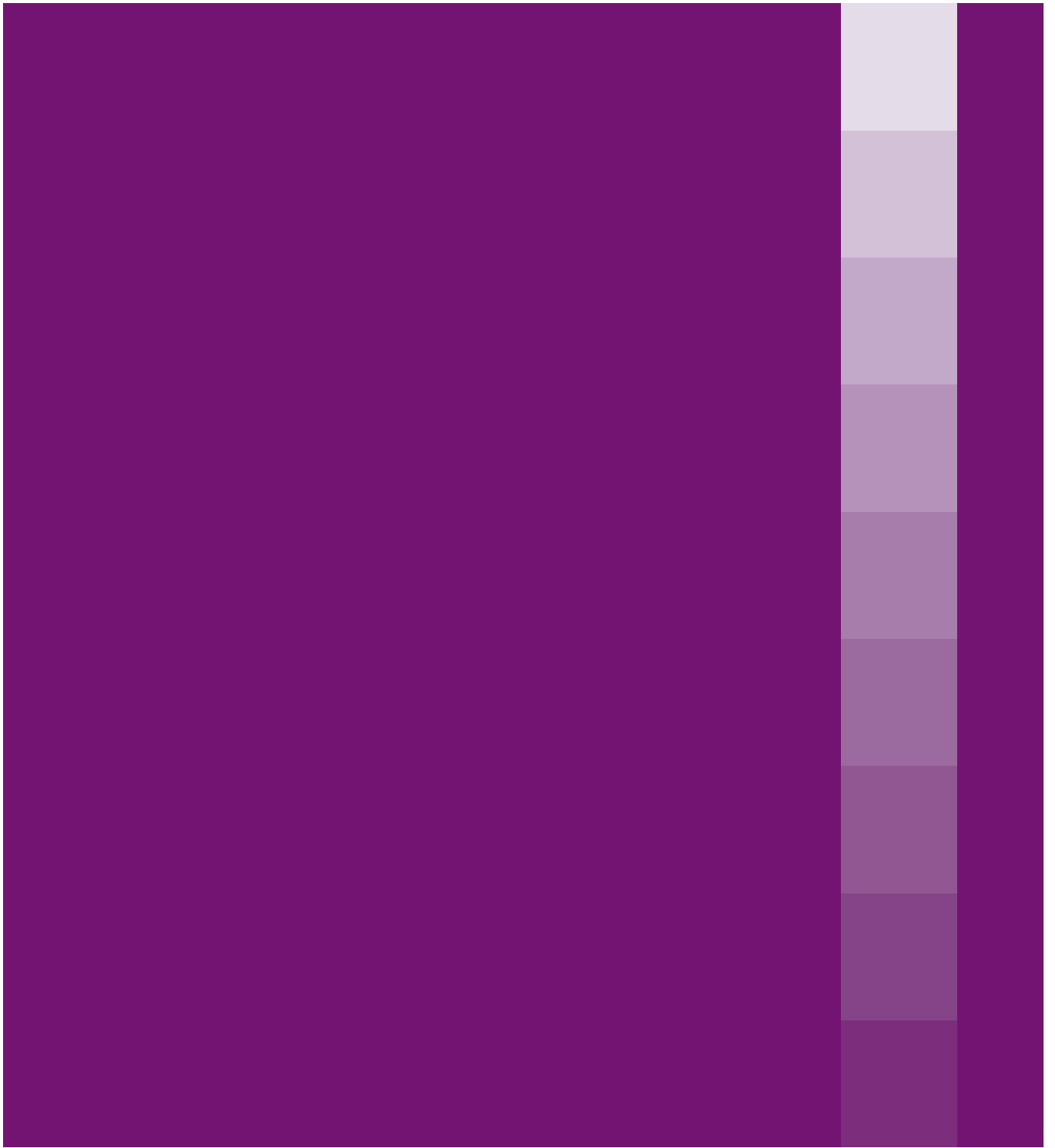
Schools in a joint application will receive a single funding package calculated at £100 per pupil for the total number of pupils in both schools. **How these funds are spent should relate to clearly defined needs and priorities as identified in the School and Community Plans. They should not be simply an equal division between the schools.** Schools in a joint designation will receive an annual additional payment of £10,000 (again for division between the schools according to need) in recognition of the particular circumstances inherent in a joint designation.

A one-of Specialist Support Grant will be available in the first year of designation to joint applicant schools. This will total up to £100K maximum to be spent between the schools in the first financial year of designation.

## E2S FUNDED DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

BELB 40 Academy Street BELFAST BT1 2NQ	Margaret Watson Tel: 9056 4049 MargaretW@belb.co.uk
WELB Omagh Teachers' Centre1 Spillars Place OMAGH BT78 1HL	Alison Smyth Tel: 8225 3666 alison_smyth@welbni.org
NEELB Antrim Board Centre 17 Lough Road ANTRIM BT41 4DH	Verona Hassan Tel: 9448 2298 verona.hassan@neelb.org.uk  Heather Thompson Tel: 9448 2298 heather.thompson@neelb.org.uk
SEELB Grahamsbridge Road DUNDONALD BT16 0HS	Bill Swann Tel: 9056 6598 bill.swann@seelb.org.uk  Uel Dougherty Tel: 9056 6593 uel.dougherty@seelb.org.uk
SELB 3 Charlemont Place ARMAGH BT61 9AX	Aidan McCormick Tel: 3751 2482 aidan.mccormick@selb.org
CCMS 160 High Street HOLYWOOD BT18 9HT	Jim Clarke Tel: 9039 3880 PA: alisonrussell@ccmsschools.com  Jim to be approached as an initial point of contact, to identify the relevant officer according to the nature of the request.
NICIE Aldersgate House 3-19 University Road BELFAST BT7 1NA	Ivan Arbuthnot Tel: 9023 6200 iarbuthnot@nicie.org.uk
Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta Teach an Gheata Thiar 4 Sráid na Banríona Béal Feirste BT1 6ED	Réamaí Mathers Tel: 9032 1475 rmathers@comhairle.org  Liam Mac Giolla Mheana Tel: 9032 1475 lmgmheana@comhairle.org





Year 2  
Specialist Schools Application Guidance

