Queen's University Belfast

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Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation (ILiAD)

Main Technical Report

(Volume 1)

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Queen's University Belfast

OFMDFM/QUB Research Project:

Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation (ILiAD)

Main Technical Report
Volume 1

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Executive Summary

(i) Introduction

This report presents the findings of the 'Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation' (ILiAD) research study, which was conducted by a team of researchers from the School of Education and the School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology at Queen's University Belfast, Stranmillis University College, and with independent research consultants. The study was funded by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) between 2012 and 2015. The main goal of the study was to explore and understand the factors (individual, school, home, community and structural factors) behind significant differential educational achievement in areas of high deprivation within Northern Ireland (i.e., those within the top 20% for multiple deprivation according to the Northern Ireland multiple deprivation measure).

Previous studies carried out within the UK and globally have concluded that there is a positive correlation between deprivation and educational underachievement. Notwithstanding this correlation, a preliminary analysis of Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service data suggested that the factors involved in educational achievement within deprived areas may be more complex than is suggested by quantitative analysis - there are areas of high deprivation where achievement is higher than in areas of less deprivation, and there are areas of less deprivation where achievement is lower than areas of high deprivation. This study is timely and important in order to ensure targeted, informed, policy interventions, strategies and support measures at a time when the N.I Executive/OFMDFM are trying to consolidate a peaceful Northern Ireland in the context of cohesion, sharing and integration.

This research forms part of a programme of independent research commissioned by the then Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) – now the Executive Office (TEO) - to inform the policy development process. Consequently, the views expressed and conclusions drawn are those of the authors and not necessarily those of OFMDFM / TEO.

(ii) Research objectives

The research adopted a case study approach to explore and understand the factors behind significant differential educational achievement:

- between Electoral Wards with high level deprivation who perform better educationally than Wards with lower level deprivation;
- between Catholic and Protestant deprived areas;
- between similarly deprived Catholic deprived areas;
- between similarly deprived Protestant areas;
- within areas of mixed housing.

Broader aims were to contextualise and contribute to a more holistic understanding of the relationship between differential educational achievement and multiple deprivation.

The study specifically aimed to investigate the following questions:
- Why do children and young people in some Wards with high level deprivation perform well educationally, relative to their counterparts in similar or less deprived Wards?

- How can differential educational attainment be explained between Wards that are very closely matched as regards multiple deprivation?
- What contributory factors can be identified to help explain why Protestant Wards appear to be over-represented within the top twenty Wards for educational underachievement, relative to their multiple deprivation ranks?
- Why do children and young people in high deprivation areas of mixed religion/shared housing appear to perform relatively poorly educationally?
- What contributory factors may be identified to help explain any differences in educational achievement across gender within areas of multiple deprivation?

(iii) Methodology and theoretical framework

The research was designed as a three-year case study, combining statistical and in-depth qualitative data. The approach was community-centred and, as such, was iterative and developmental. Thus, data derived in the early stages informed subsequent data collection among community participants and stakeholders. Each Ward area in the sample was investigated as an individual case study.

The design was novel within this topic of educational research as it combined statistical interrogation of exiting data sets with case study understandings at Ward level, in order to 'drill down', determine and map holistically what factors are seen as contributing to the various identifiable (statistical) patterns of achievement in these neighbourhoods, with a view to improvement. However, since qualitative, in-depth case study approach generates different kinds of insights from that of quantitative studies, no inferences or population-based recommendations are being made to other Wards or Northern Ireland as a whole. The aspiration was that the findings might be of interest to those concerned with understanding and improving educational achievement in other areas of high deprivation by offering some lessons on how certain Ward areas, despite adverse conditions, are managing to defy statistical expectations and improve the educational chances of many of their young people.

The seven case study Electoral Wards (and their composite Super Output Areas) chosen for the sample were:

- **Whiterock** (Whiterock 1; Whiterock 2; Whiterock 3)
- **The Diamond** (The Diamond)
- **Rosemount** (Rosemount)
- **Dunclug** (Dunclug)
- **Duncairn** (Duncairn 1; Duncairn 2)
- **Woodstock** (Woodstock 1; Woodstock 2; Woodstock 3)
- **Tullycarnet** (Tullycarnet)

The study began with the **analysis of existing secondary data** (Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service/Census/Department of Education data), including geo-social, community and educational services mapping to describe the characteristics of the target areas and to explore change over time in relation to education and a series of social and demographic factors.

The qualitative case study data were collected through a variety of fit-for-purpose methods. This mostly comprised **semi-structured, individual, face-to-face interviews and focus group interviews.** A purposive sample was chosen from key criteria for selection in an attempt to access a range of relevant stakeholder voices within the timeframe of the research. The sample comprised participants at the community and school-levels, including: children and young people; parents; teachers; principals; community leaders; education

welfare officers; and other stakeholders (e.g. members of residents' associations) in the case study Wards. **Creative methods** were also used to collect visual data (drawings) from young people during some of the focus groups, to stimulate discussion around education and community issues and aspirations for the future.

Social capital theory provided a theoretical framework against which to interpret and analyse the findings. The specific requirements of the ILiAD study dictated that the social capital theoretical framework should enable examination of:

1. Micro (immediate/grassroots), meso (school-level), and macro (structural/policy-level) social capital formations.
2. Cross cutting themes (across the seven Wards) such as: value placed on education; parental capacity; school-home-community engagement; academic selection.
3. The discourses regarding achievement, low attainment and appropriate interventions.
4. The enablers and inhibitors of academic achievement within each Ward.
5. The ways in which these enablers and inhibitors work themselves through micro, meso and macro levels in each Ward.
6. Trends, comparisons and contrasts within and between the Wards.

To meet these requirements, the framework developed for the ILiAD study (see Figure 6) adopts the key elements from the CENI (2003) model to categorise germane proxy indicators. In other words, the projected outcomes from the CENI model (i.e. empowerment, infrastructure, and connectedness (bonding); engagement, horizontal accessibility, and innovation (bridging); and resources, vertical accessibility, and influence (linking)) have being applied to the specific context of this study. For example, parental support is categorised within the bonding proxy of empowerment; and positive triangular relationship between school, home and community is categorised within the bridging proxy of engagement. The selection of these sub-proxies (as outlined below) was based on (a) the scope of this study; and (b) the broader literature on social capital and factors which impact educational attainment.

Bonding Social Capital (micro- immediate/ grass roots level)
- **Empowerment –** i.e. high local value on education; parental / familial / peer support; stable home environment; and individual resilience;
- **Infrastructure –** i.e. accessibility / visibility of schools / school seen as in and of community; effective local community and youth work input; and visible pathways to FE, HE, and work;
- **Connectedness –** i.e. positive community influences; a sense of community cohesion; and unifying factors and traditions i.e. role of the Church and other shared socio-political / cultural associations (e.g. sporting associations or flute bands).

Bridging capital (meso - school level)
- **Engagement –** i.e. positive triangular relationship between school, home and community; and effective school leadership re discipline, standards and expectations;
- **Accessibility (horizontal) –** i.e. effective and accessible home-school-community linkages; supportive teachers / pupil-centred schools / social mixing; and inter-school / inter-agency collaboration;
- **Innovation –** i.e. flexible curricula / alternative measures of success / vocational placement opportunities; opportunities for parental learning; and effective provision of SEN support, extended schools, pastoral care, and support during (primary to post-primary) transition.

Linking capital (macro - structural / policy level)

- **Resources –** i.e. relevant policies / power structures; and decision-making processes;
- **Accessibility (vertical) –** i.e. access to external institutions with power and resources; and access to decision making processes;
- **Influence –** i.e. ability to influence policy; and ability to affect decision-making processes.

However, to meet aims of this study, the negative consequences of social capital, or what Rubio (1997)[1] refers to as 'perverse social capital' also needed to be examined. To address these concerns, the social capital framework for the ILiAD study was also guided by Portes' (1998)[2] counter thesis on social capital, which encompasses the following three examples of negative social capital:

- **Exclusion of outsiders –** i.e. exclusionary processes tied to the bounded solidarity of the community. For example, in the case of this study, a perceived demographic 'threat' leading to distrust/hostility towards outsiders;
- **Restriction on individual freedom –** i.e. restricted personal autonomy caused by community demands for conformity. For example, in the case of this study, spatial mobility restrictions and class-based perceptions of test preparation, selection and primary to post-primary transfers, access to Higher Education (HE) and/or job market;
- **Downward levelling of norms –** i.e. narratives and perceptions of oppression, besiegement, stigma and discrimination, which result in limiting ambition downwards. For example, in the case of this study, the influence of negative role models e.g. their impact on young people in terms of the local 'reward structure'.

(iv) Key findings (1) Answering the research questions

Research question 1: Why do children and young people in some Wards with high level deprivation perform well educationally, relative to their counterparts in similar or less deprived Wards?

What has made this project different from other studies on successful schools in areas of disadvantage is the fact that we have differentiated between disadvantaged areas, and examined the different factors that combine to lead to some young people doing very well in school (by the current educational standards). We have also outlined inter-and intra-Ward differences. Some of the challenges (and drivers of achievement) are the same across all Wards, but some factors combine to lift young people and their families up. However, each community has a unique set of circumstances – and some communities are seen to have the resources to mediate the challenges that exist. This is offered as part explanation of how achievement was so high in some of the electoral Wards investigated (particularly the Derry/Londonderry Wards), relative to their counterparts in similar or less deprived Wards.

One example which can be used to illustrate how these different factors are seen to combine in unique ways is the comparison of the Rosemount Ward (in Derry/Londonderry, which is ranked 44th out of 582 for multiple deprivation under the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010 and in which 91% of young people achieved five or more GCSEs at A*-C in 2012/13) and the Tullycarnet Ward (in Belfast, which is not as highly deprived as Rosemount – it is ranked 109th in Northern Ireland for multiple deprivation, and 43% of young people from Tullycarnet achieved five or more GCSEs in 2012/13). Firstly, in terms of structural (macro-level) factors, there were several positive drivers of achievement identified

[1] Rubio, M. (1997) 'Perverse social capital – some evidence from Colombia', Journal of Economic Issues, 31 (3), 805-816.

[2] Portes, A. (1998) 'Social capital: its origins and applications', Modern Sociology Annual Review of Sociology, Vol. 24: pp 1-24.

within Rosemount, which were absent from Tullycarnet. Within Rosemount, there was frequent reference to an enduring positive legacy of the 1947 Education Act, for Catholics especially, which includes an appreciation of the value of education and a belief in the Catholic education system. Furthermore, high-performing schools are located close to or within the Ward itself, which were reported to have a social mix within them; 30.6% of young people from the Ward attended grammar schools; and there is an effective youth service and education initiatives within the community. In contrast, within Tullycarnet, although the socially mixed composition of some of the schools that serve young people from the area was highlighted as a structural driver of achievement, there were many more inhibitors of achievement at the structural (macro) level; for example, only one in five young people attended grammar schools or schools with a grammar stream (19.3%), and only one of the nine post-primary schools serving Tullycarnet is within two miles of the Ward, making it difficult for young people to feel that their school is a part of their 'community' and viewed as reinforcing the idea that school is not a priority. There was also a reported lack of resources/inadequate provision for early years. At the meso (school) level, several enablers were identified in Tullycarnet around the recent (community-inspired) 'transformation' that has occurred in relation to improved triangular linkages between schools, the community, and parents. These enablers included the community representatives propounding an improved perception of education, along with higher expectations, increased levels of commitment on the part of teachers, new visionary school leadership locally, flexible pedagogical styles, effective transition support, and broader conceptualisations of achievement. However, it was also claimed that some schools serving this community continue to pursue inappropriate curricula, retain a 'silo' mentality, display negative teacher attitudes towards pupils from Tullycarnet, and have low expectations. In comparison, within the Rosemount Ward, the drivers of achievement at the meso/school-level have been long established, and are wide-ranging: there are close and long-standing school-parent and school-community relationships, with many young people and their families benefitting from the high-quality Extended Schools provisions and the effective school partnerships and inter-agency partnerships that have been fostered; the data also show that staff-pupil relationships are, in general, productive, friendly and respectful; pupils feel 'listened to'; and the ethos of schools combines pastoral care and academic success. In addition, the schools serving young people from the Rosemount area were found to have an average absenteeism rate of 10.2% during 2012/13, the lowest rate of the ILiAD sample Wards (in comparison, Tullycarnet had an absenteeism rate of 18.2% during 2012/13).

The micro-level (home and community-level) drivers and inhibitors of achievement that were identified from the data from both Rosemount and Tullycarnet were similar (drivers such as individual resilience, close-knit family and neighbour networks, and parental support, and inhibitors such as anti-social behaviour, low expectations, and a sense of hopelessness), although within Tullycarnet, there was the added inhibitor identified of extant negative norms around education and employment – it was frequently claimed that young people there are '*surrounded*' and influenced by a section of people, who view school as alien, secure employment as unattainable, and unemployment as inevitable.

The differences between the Wards, in terms of the factors perceived to influence achievement, we argue, have led to differences in the ways (educational) social capital is both created and utilised. The data from Rosemount provide evidence of: high stocks of bonding social capital (referring to positive familial and community norms around education, supportive and engaged parents, close-knit community networks, and a sense of community belonging); high stocks of bridging social capital in Ward (referring to schools' levels of engagement, accessibility, and innovation); and high stocks of linking social capital (referring to the structural factors, which can positively impact on attainment levels). Comparatively, within Tullycarnet, while there are substantial stocks of bonding social capital (as evidenced by the examples from the data of the community cohesively coming together to effect positive change, which has empowered people within the Ward and increased parental

support for education and young people's aspirations), bridging social capital in the Ward has only recently begun to emerge, in terms of improved school-community-home triangular relationships. The Tullycarnet data also evidence a key structural factor, which is perceived to impact negatively on local attainment levels - the lack of visibility of quality post-primary schools within the Ward. Young people are educated in establishments relatively far from where they live, and such schools are therefore generally not seen as in or of the community they serve.

However, it was also clear that Tullycarnet has, up until very lately, struggled to access and utilise the capitals, assets and resources in relation to education; and has featured regularly in the lowest deciles in the attainment indices. This has led to an intergenerational sense of hopelessness and low expectations and norms surrounding education and employment – but it was also evident that nascent community-led activism is beginning to address these concerns. This (historical) detachment from education may help explain why Rosemount has outperformed Tullycarnet despite having a higher level of deprivation. Moreover, the positive community-led response may help to explain why in Tullycarnet, there was evidence of a confidence in its future, which was less noticeable in other predominantly Protestant Wards.

Research question 2: How can differential educational attainment be explained between Wards that are very closely matched as regards multiple deprivation?

The Wards of Duncairn and The Diamond were chosen for the original sample as they gave the study predominantly Catholic and Protestant Wards which are very closely matched for deprivation but demonstrate differential performance educationally; The Diamond and Whiterock Wards were also chosen for the study as they showed substantially different educational attainment levels, yet were closely matched for multiple deprivation (and are both predominantly Catholic Wards). In both of these examples, the Diamond Ward out-performed both Duncairn and Whiterock.

Analyses of the data suggest that, in broad terms, there are two main reasons that contribute to an explanation as to why differential achievement exists between Wards that are closely matched for multiple deprivation. The first is to do with the impact of negative social capital and/or the absences of positive social capital stocks within a Ward; the second is to do with the positive influence of the 'Derry Effect' – the impact that attendance at schools in the Derry area has on key measures related to educational attainment.

Taking Duncairn and The Diamond as the first example of differential educational attainment, several key differences were found between the Wards in terms of the drivers and inhibitors of achievement that exist within them. The Diamond, a predominantly Catholic Ward (81.2% Catholic), had several drivers, which were not found to the same extent within the Duncairn Ward. These were: the high value placed on education and the Catholic school system, a legacy of the 1947 Education Act, which is linked to intergenerational engagement with schools; highly-resourced schools which are geographically close to the centre of the Ward; a high level of social mixing within the schools, and a high proportion (30%) of young people from the Ward attending grammar schools; schools characterised by high standards of pastoral care, transition support, inter-school cooperation, and high expectations; high levels of youth club involvement; and positive adult education experiences and young people's experiences of nursery and primary school. In contrast, particular barriers to achievement were found to affect the Duncairn Ward more greatly than was the case in The Diamond. These barriers were partly shaped by Duncairn's post-conflict transition: spatial mobility restrictions and insular attitudes were common; and the wider community continues to be characterised by intra- and inter-community divisions. Other barriers included the significant changes in Duncairn's demographic profile, which are seen as having created an unsettled community characterised by impermanence; a low percentage of grammar school

attendees (11.7%); the dispersed geography of the schools serving young people from the Ward (which compounds the detachment that some young people already feel towards their education); and a high absenteeism rate (16.3% on average amongst all schools serving the Ward during 2012/13).

Turning to the second comparison in the sample, The Diamond Ward and the Whiterock Ward, the macro and micrlevel drivers and inhibitors of achievement were found to be very similar. It was at the meso (i.e. school) level were the key differences emerged. Firstly, in The Diamond, approximately twice as many young people attended grammar school than was the case in Whiterock (14.1%).Secondly, notwithstanding the evident quality of many schools serving the Whiterock Ward, there were problems identified regarding the inappropriateness of the curriculum offered to many pupils; some schools and agencies were reported to be working in *'silos'*; and there were claims that some teachers are *'disinterested'* and struggle to manage classes with disruptive pupils. Meso level barriers to achievement were also observed within The Diamond Ward, although these were found to be more pronounced in the schools that served the Fountain area within the Ward. These findings, which clearly illustrate the positive impact that attending a school in Derry/Londonderry potentially has on achievement, go some way in explaining how The Diamond Ward (as one of the two Derry/Londonderry Wards in the sample) is outperforming Whiterock, one of the Belfast Wards in the sample, even though both Wards are within the top 5% of Wards in Northern Ireland for high multiple deprivation.

Research question 3: What contributory factors can be identified to help explain why Protestant Wards appear to be over-represented within the top twenty Wards for educational underachievement, relative to their multiple deprivation ranks?

The analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data presented within this report has suggested several contributory factors that help to explain the differentials in educational achievement between predominantly-Catholic and predominantly-Protestant Wards in areas of high deprivation.

Firstly, from a historical viewpoint, the political and policy context of the past century was identified as having left a positive legacy for education within the Catholic community. Evidence of this legacy was clear from many of the qualitative interviews conducted during this project. In both Rosemont and The Diamond Wards, participants spoke of the positive impact of the 1947 Education Act on the educational aspirations and attainment of the Catholic population. It was referred to as having benefited a significant number of working-class Catholics: where for the first time, a grammar school education, funded by the state, was a distinct possibility for those who passed the 11+ examination, and this in turn, opened the potential for university study. One principal of a Catholic maintained school, serving the pupils of Rosemont, spoke at length about the 'powerful' meaning of education for Catholics and the vital role this has played in promoting educational success. This principal also talked about the championing of education by nationalist leaders such as John Hume. Principals of a Catholic maintained school and a state controlled school serving the pupils of The Diamond also talked about the powerful meaning of education for Catholics living in Derry.

Historical legacy issues were also recognised in the mainly Protestant Wards. In Duncairn, one principal argued that the divergence between Catholic and Protestant communities in terms of the education-work nexus was linked to their schools' historical approaches to poverty and higher education: "*in the 1970's, when it came to poverty, the way out of it in the Catholic sector was they pushed their kids to go onto University ... here, they didn't need to because they were jobs for them. It was only when the jobs dried up that the Controlled side cottoned on to the fact that education really matters.*" In Woodstock, it was also suggested by local community workers that a contributing factor to a lost sense of community was a

long-standing perception within loyalist communities about *"having their identity erased"*. This discourse was contrasted with that of representatives of the Catholic community where, it was argued there is a *"clearer vision … about why you're doing things"; "an overarching ideology that underpins almost everything."*

Secondly a related theme in the data was the perceived problem of ineffective political representation. It must be stated that dissatisfaction with political leadership and/or a broader disengagement from politics was evident in most of the Ward areas investigated, both Catholic and Protestant, but this was more pronounced in the mainly-Protestant Wards. For example, several respondents in Duncairn claimed that community development was being hindered by ineffective political representation. Other community level respondents highlighted the contrast between some unionist politicians who were seen as *"detached"*, and nationalist politicians who were viewed as "*part of their community"*. Within Tullycarnet, one principal claimed that politicians need to properly engage with educationalists to discuss: the future of education in NI; appropriate policy interventions; and how best to develop a system that would be 'the pride of Europe'. Several principals and teachers also felt that a key factor behind underachievement and low aspirations in Tullycarnet, Woodstock and Duncairn was that: many Protestant working class boys feel very *"unconnected";* the flag protests of 2012/13 having "*deepened that feeling";* and that this disconnect intensifies perceptions of *"inevitable underachievement".*

Thirdly, there have been changes in demographics within predominantly Protestant Wards, which have led to a certain level of 'fracturing' within these communities, and a subsequent lack of community cohesiveness, which was not observed to the same extent in the data from the predominantly Catholic communities. For example, according to Census statistics, demographics within Duncairn have changed considerably over the ten-year period between 2001 and 2011, in terms of religious makeup, housing tenure, and the settling of new communities within the area. This perhaps implies that the potential for positive intergenerational influence on young people and social bonding within the community is not as likely as it is in other Wards (assuming that a settled demographic pattern enhances opportunities for this to occur). In Woodstock, similar demographic change trends were found, and the perceived loss of community cohesiveness was also observed. According to community workers and residents in Woodstock, demographic changes, which have happened over a relatively short period of time, have had a "*disruptive"* and *"unsettling"* impact, and as such have been an inhibitor of local educational attainment because such population changes indicate and promote fatalistic perceptions of *"encroachment"* and *"inevitable decline",* and that these notions are absorbed by young people who are then dissuaded from applying themselves in school. Community fracturing too had added to the notion of *"feeling hard done by"* and *"having their identity erased"*. There were also perceptions within the Tullycarnet Ward of a lack of community cohesiveness, and participants linked this to the fragmented nature of Protestantism. It was commonly reported that many Protestant communities, such as Tullycarnet are *"in drift",* primarily, because of an absence of unifying factors, such as the *"central connection of faith that binds people together".* In contrast, one resident noted that *"there are so many Protestant churches … the Catholic communities just have one which helps to hold people together."*

A fourth factor identified related to higher school absenteeism rates found within mainly Protestant areas. Secondary data analysis showed that the eight post-primary schools serving young people from Woodstock had an average high-absenteeism rate (defined as attendance below 85% during a school year) of 21.3% during 2012/13; the nine schools serving young people from Tullycarnet had an average high-absenteeism rate of 18.2% during 2012/13; and the eleven schools serving young people from Duncairn had an average high-absenteeism rate of 16.3% during 2012/13. These average high-absenteeism rates compared less favourably to the Catholic Wards within the ILiAD sample (the average high-absenteeism rates for 2012/13 in Whiterock, Rosemount and The Diamond were

13.3%, 10.2% and 11.5% respectively). This pattern suggested that differential levels of absenteeism must be factored into any explanation of why Catholic Wards of high deprivation are out-performing Protestant Wards of similarly high (or lower) deprivation.

A fifth difference between mainly Catholic and mainly Protestant Wards was the (perceived) levels of detachment or attachment of schools to the areas they served. As evidenced in the case study chapters, strong links between schools and families were consistently seen as having positive impact on a young person's academic progression. However, it is equally clear that in the absence of such links, many young people are inhibited from realising their full potential at school. Several parents spoke about some schools which serve pupils within mainly Protestant Wards as being detached from the realities of their pupils' lives, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The most frequently suggested reason for this detachment was that many teachers who work in the schools *"come from a middle-class type background"* and thus *"it's totally impossible for them to relate to what's going on"* in their homes or communities. In a focus group of recent school leavers in Duncairn, it was claimed that it *would "not matter if they were from a nationalist background"*, but *"it would have been better if they were from a working-class area".* Again, these responses were commonly framed in contrast with the Catholic community, wherein, it was argued; *"nearly all"* of teachers are working class. Indeed, in the mainly-Catholic Wards, several of the principals interviewed had grown up in and/or continued to live in the local community around the school, and pupils spoke of the positive influence of teachers with whom they had good relationships – relationships which were fostered because these teachers had also lived locally, and as such, understood them and their needs. Furthermore, as will be further examined in the sections on social capital within the case study Wards, one of the contrasts between the Catholic and Protestant Wards was the notion of Catholic parents, the local community sector, and schools having a shared responsibility for the academic progression of local young people. In several predominantly-Catholic neighbourhoods, there are well-established, collaborative learning communities, with Catholic maintained schools at the hub of these learning communities. It was clear that most Catholic maintained schools investigated here were not 'stand-alone' entities in the community – their leaders have enhanced the connectedness between the school and the community. Families in such schools were encouraged to be active participants in their children's education. The data make clear that the strength of these triangular relationships (school, home and community) is a significant factor in terms of addressing the education needs of disadvantage young people.

A further point that emerged from the qualitative data was the twofold-issue of low expectations, the low self-esteem and lack of resilience of some young people. Whilst this issue did arise amongst all Wards investigated, many respondents in the Duncairn Ward contrasted the lack of aspiration in the Protestant community with the "*confident*" Catholic community. For example, a youth worker recalled that during the times of exams, almost no Catholic children attend youth clubs because *"their parents have them in the home"; "they're studying, they're revising";* and their "*parents are being supportive".* More broadly, there was also evidence of low expectations on the part of schools; this was an important meso-level inhibitor of educational attainment, particularly within the mainly Protestant Wards. Some young people and parents claimed that during primary school, there had been little expectation or drive to get pupils to sit the 11+ or transfer tests. A number of residents thought some teachers simply give up on weaker pupils. Some teachers, it was argued, too often conclude that if parents *"don't give a monkey's",* neither should they; and that, because they think *"the majority of those kids are on a road to no town",* there was no point in bothering. These views were reinforced by parents, who claimed that some teachers took the view that in the absence of individual aptitude and parental interest, there was little point in pushing a child to achieve academically.

Our qualitative data also highlight thematic explanations for the underachievement of Protestant working class boys – which is a key factor in terms of the over-representation of Protestant Wards within the top twenty Wards for educational underachievement, relative to their multiple deprivation ranks. Many within this group were identified commonly, as not having a family tradition of academic success and the accompanying positive family/community norms around education that are a feature of middle class families/communities; their families also do not have the means to avail of private tuition or the addition costs of attending a grammar school; and in terms of comparison with Catholic working class boys, they do not share the same levels of social mixing in schools and have not benefited from the successful models in several CMS schools and communities around raising attainment in areas of high deprivation.

Research question 4: Why do children and young people in high deprivation areas of mixed religion/shared housing appear to perform relatively poorly educationally?

Drawing from the data collected within the mixed-religion Ward of Dunclug (56.5% Catholic, 35.0% Protestant - Census 2011 figures) and a Ward with a clearly defined interface, The Diamond (81.2% Catholic; most Protestant residents (364) are located with the Fountain estate area of the Ward, making up 15% of the Ward's population), there are three key inhibitors that appear to contribute to a lowering of educational attainment in areas which are not predominantly Catholic or Protestant. These are: a fractured community identity; demographic change and resultant difficulties with educational provision; and continuing division and conflict.

A fractured community identity and a lack of community cohesiveness were viewed as diminishing the strength of the home-school-community links that were identified as so important to enhancing educational attainment elsewhere. Despite the fact that different communities might be facing the same social or educational problems, and even where there is recognition that working in an integrated, coherent fashion to tackle such problems might make a positive difference, there was some evidence across stakeholders that getting divided communities to come together (perhaps the umbrella of a local school) and apply for money to serve the needs of all is a difficult process to get off the ground. This issue, however, is not confined to mixed-religion areas – the same problems of community fracturing were sometimes idetified within predominantly single-religion areas too. However, Dunclug was described by community representatives and youth workers specifically as lacking meaningful community 'spirit'. An absence of social cohesion was evidenced via accounts of: local disputes over DSD funding; the residents group being beset with in-fighting; and community facilities being routinely under-used and/or vandalised. There was also a perceived hierarchy of residential areas, which divided notions of community further. Some areas were deemed as being more desirable (affluent) to live in than others, and each was associated with particular communities. Certain areas are associated with an increasing ethnic minority and settled Traveller population (and consequently as becoming predominantly Catholic), and least affluent. As a consequence, physical division compounds social segregation in Dunclug. The fact that movement between the different areas within Dunclug is, at times, made difficult by a lack of connecting pathways and/or roads adds to this (perceived) division. The divisions and tensions that are manifest in the community were also reflected in the social dynamics of pupil interaction in school, militating against positive class interaction and learning. Young people were further aware of the negative impact of the social and cultural 'environment' of Dunclug on their own learning and educational /career aspirations, and attributed examples of educational success mainly to other factors. Nonetheless, one of the meso-level drivers of achievement within Dunclug was found to be the inter-school cooperation that existed; several respondents highlighted the role of the Ballymena Learning Together Group, which involves grammar and secondary schools sharing access to A level subjects. Collaborative education processes led by visionary

educators was identified as one of the mechanisms by which the problems of wider community division might begin to be overcome.

The demographic histories of mixed-religion areas and more recent demographic changes were other common structural reasons provided for explaining the lower patterns of achievement in mixed-religion areas of the ILiAD study. For example, the history of the demographics on the west bank of Derry/Londonderry city were referred to as a contributing factor behind the differential achievement levels of children from The Fountain compared to other parts of The Diamond area and Derry/Londonderry more generally. Falling Protestant demographics have left one state-controlled secondary school serving the city (with enrolment numbers within that school falling too). The spatial detachment of this school from pupils from The Fountain has engendered several negative consequences, which have, in turn, impacted negatively on educational achievement. Young people (and their families) have had to travel long distances to their school; as such, their school is not where their community (and perhaps their identity) is, which again detracts from the home-school-community relationships that can be built. Distance (compounded by the fact that many parents from areas of high deprivation do not have cars) make it difficult for young people to stay for afterschool activities/revision clubs, and parents indicate that they not readily able to attend evening meetings/parent courses. In sum, it may be difficult for such a school to become a central part of the young person's (or their parents') life.

The Dunclug Ward has also experienced a rapid change in its population makeup over the past five years, with a significant outward movement of Protestants. This has contributed to clashes between Protestants and Catholics in the estate and generally poor community relations. However, the greatest focus was placed on division between the majority grouping of 'local 'Irish'/'British' and the more recent incomer population of Eastern Europeans. Some participants talked about the latter experiencing hostility, sometimes open abuse, from their fellow residents. Young people described classroom tensions between the majority NI pupil population and those from ethnic minorities. In part, these tensions were based on differences in the language spoken. Teachers also identified having to cope with increasing numbers of children whose first language is not English, and parents with language barriers or different expectations and experiences of school from their countries of birth. Settled Traveller families living in the area were discussed as having particular family structures and to be frequently distrustful of outsiders. They were also considered to have relatively low self-esteem, tending not to push themselves or their children into the limelight, instead relying on fellow Travellers for help and support. School attendance of Traveller children, although improved over the recent past, was still considered comparatively poor. Where relevant additional resources had enabled targeted interventions, meaningful improvements in pupil learning and achievement had occurred. Taken collectively, the evidence suggests that changes in the macro demographic make-up of different areas have the potential to impact negatively on the educational achievement of young people, both those who are longer-term 'local' as well as those from ethnic minority populations.

The third, related inhibitor of educational achievement in the mixed-religion areas under investigation was continuing division and conflict between the two main communities in NI. Pupils and principals gave multiple examples of continuing aggressive behaviour and sectarian tensions, particularly in and around the interface area of the Fountain. This included bomb-scares, petrol bombings, bricks and glass being thrown. The children also reported a fractured relationship with neighbouring nationalist communities. Some post-primary pupils reported being unbothered about or desensitised from these types of occurrences, but one pupil explicitly stated how the disruption had affected her schoolwork. It was clear that insularism and separation of the two communities is deeply embedded and continuing legacies of the recent conflict, thus, appear to place many local children at an educational disadvantage.

Research question 5: What contributory factors may be identified to help explain any differences in educational achievement across gender within areas of multiple deprivation?

Several factors at the macro, meso and micro levels emerged from the qualitative findings, which may also help to explain why females frequently outperform males. Firstly, there was the macro/structural impact of (high-quality) single-sex school provision. To use Whiterock Ward as an example (63.2% of females in Whiterock achieved any five GCSEs at A*-C, and half that figure (31.6%) achieved five GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths; for males, the figure for any five GCSEs was 47.9%, dropping again by half (23.6%) with the inclusion of English and Maths), two secondary schools dominate the enrolment of young people from the area – one for males and one for females. The single-sex female school is frequently ranked as the top-performing non-selective school in NI at GCSE level. The school also has City and Guilds affiliation, and as such, the range of both academic and vocational subjects on offer is vast. Furthermore, this structural driver was linked to the high achievement of females through the presence of positive role models who raise their aspirations for pursuing careers in areas that would be traditionally male-dominated.

In contrast, there was also a very small variation in the performances of females and males from The Diamond across the period 2008-2012. Looking specifically at female school leavers, 62.5% achieved any five GCSEs at A*-C (the third highest amongst the ILiAD Wards, after Rosemount and Whiterock), and 50.0% achieved five GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths. For males, the pass rate for any five GCSEs was 62.0% (the highest performance rate out of the ILiAD sample), dropping to 52.0% with the inclusion of English and Maths. An explanation provided for this was that an equal number of grammar school avenues exists for females and males: although L/Derry has a large number of single sex schools (which previously disadvantaged females who wanted a grammar education), both sexes are now offered the same number of grammar places.

At the meso (school) level, explanations for females' achievement included the formal structure of the educational system itself – some participants made comments that '*for some boys, just getting them to sit down with a pen and a book is a major achievement.*' Other principals alluded to males and females having different learning styles and learning motivations, which resulted in females being rewarded by the current system. There was also evidence that differences in cultural expectations between males and females in regard to achievement were viewed as a factor in females outperforming males*: 'I have always found that girls want to do it right, want to please, or want to be seen to be producing good work.'* Some pupils felt that boys who were capable but were not into sports were sometimes disadvantaged at school; it was the ones who were good at both, who were valued and pushed the most.

There was also evidence in secondary data analyses that absenteeism rates are higher in all-boys schools serving Ward areas of high deprivation in comparison to all-girls schools. This is also suggested as an explanatory factor behind the differential achievement rates of males and females from many of these Ward areas. Additionally, some interviewees suggested that teachers need extra support to know how to help pupils who are coming from particularly difficult backgrounds, specifically males with social problems or who are coming from adverse circumstances.

Lastly, there were some common micro-level inhibitors of achievement arising from the qualitative data that related directly to males. Some female young people were of the opinion that some male peers just '*didn't care'* which school they went to nor were motivated to engage in any school and community initiatives. Young males endorsed this view, indicating that much of education and schooling was all '*too boring'* and '*useless'.* A number of principals also pointed to the impact of low self-esteem (particularly since the ending of the conflict and a subsequent '*loss of status'* in the community) and a lack of local positive role

model for young males as being contributory factors in the lower attainment levels of males. While these patterns indicate gender divisions in the way that education is perceived and valued, a number of pastoral teachers highlighted that some young females are increasingly engaging in destructive, defiant behaviours in school that are effecting their schooling.

(v) Key findings (2) - Social Capital and the deprivation - low attainment nexus

The ILiAD social capital model developed for the study comprises four elements: bonding social capital to examine the (micro-level) individual-home-community factors which impact on educational achievement; bridging social capital to outline the school-level (meso) factors; linking social capital to determine the influence of policy/structural (macro-level) factors; and negative social capital to highlight the less desirable outcomes associated with the concept. The key findings in relation to these four social capital constructs are categorised below. This section concludes with some brief observations around the role of social capital in terms of addressing the deprivation – low attainment nexus. Please also note that in Chapter 5 of this report a more comprehensive overview of the social capital findings are presented and include some key messages and observations for policy, practice and future research.

Bonding social capital: conceptualisations of empowerment, infrastructure and connectedness

Empowerment
The data from the ILiAD case studies attest that immediate, home-based influences have a significant impact on a young person's education attainment prospects. Across the seven Wards, the most important of these micro-level factors were: a high local value on education; familial / peer support; a stable home environment; and individual resilience. However, the data also make clear that many young people from the most disadvantaged families are (often totally) bereft of these attributes and support structures and, as a consequence, are highly unlikely to flourish in the current education system without meaningful individual / family / area-specific interventions.

Infrastructure
The seven case studies evidence the importance of community infrastructure in terms of creating the conditions most conducive to raising local attainment levels. The data here highlight that the most significant of these relate to: the accessibility and visibility of schools; effective community and youth work; and the provision of visible pathways to Further / Higher Education and employment opportunities. The propinquity of high performing schools is a critical factor in terms of local attainment levels. In such communities: pupils face less logistical / transportation barriers; attendance is improved and more easily managed; parents are more likely to attend parents' evenings and other school-based events; and, crucially, the school is seen as in and of the community, education becomes seen as a community priority, and young people (literally) see learning as a constant in their lived environment. Similarly, the data are littered with positive examples of youth and community work interventions targeted at addressing the educational needs of the most disadvantage young people. This data show that local youth and community workers are trusted by and uniquely placed to engage positively with the 'hardest to reach' families; and that these interventions and the relationships developed and role models offered by workers are particularly important for the many young people who have little or no consistent parental / familial support. It is also clear from the data that young people respond positively when they can envision that their application at school can lead to college, university and/or employment opportunities.

The ILiAD data attest that, in many cases, positive community norms around education are contingent on: positive local influences (role models); a sense of community cohesion; and unifying factors and traditions such as the role of the Catholic maintained sector and other shared socio-political / cultural associations (e.g. the GAA or sports associations or dance groups or flute bands). Notwithstanding generalisations, the data suggested that there is a contrast between the connectedness evident in many Catholic communities and the fragmentation experienced in some Protestant ones. The relatively recent arrival of ethnic minorities also appears to have created more challenges for working class Protestant communities and schools than Catholic ones in the ILiAD study. It is also clear that the rapidly increasing private rented sector has caused difficulties in certain communities, where transitory tenures, perceptions of community as a 'dumping ground', and the creation of a 'landlord culture' (such as Duncairn, Woodstock and Rosemount) have done little to enhance community cohesion.

Similarly, many teachers in the Catholic schools (serving Whiterock, Rosemount and The Diamond) were born and continue to live locally. This perhaps explains, in part, the closeness of their relationships with pupils. However, this was not the case in some Protestant Wards where, it was claimed by parents and community representatives that some teachers are perceived as 'middle class', 'detached' and don't have the 'same connection' or, possibly, 'long-term commitment' to the community from which their pupils derive.

Bridging social capital: schools' levels of engagement, accessibility and innovation

Engagement

In terms of school level engagement, the ILiAD data show that the most important factors are: positive triangular relationships between school, home and community; inter-school and inter-agency collaboration and sharing (the provision of holistic support services between the school, the local community, and pupils' homes through integrated service delivery by schools, statutory agencies and local voluntary and community organisations); and effective (especially visionary and outward-looking) school leadership. Where this support was in place from the early years, the beneficial effects were most apparent – for example, pupils received support during key transitions; parents were provided with support not only in helping their child at school but in their own learning and development; and EWO officers helped to decrease levels of absenteeism; all of which combined to aid pupils' achievement.

Accessibility (horizontal)

Across the seven ILiAD Wards, schools' accessibility was seen as a significant factor in terms of raising pupils' aspirations and attainment levels; encouraging parental involvement; and allowing schools to develop a greater understanding of the challenges experienced by the most disadvantaged families and communities. These data also showed that young people are most likely to succeed in education when: they are taught by empathetic and supportive teachers; attend schools with a pupil-centred ethos; and learn alongside other young people from different backgrounds.

Innovation

The ILiAD data attest to the fact that innovative and practices on the part of schools are essential in terms of improving attainment and addressing underachievement. The most important of these practices were identified as: the adoption of flexible curricula and

alternative measures of success; monitoring of internal-school and individual-level data; the provision of vocational placement opportunities for young people; Extended Schools; programmes for parents around supporting their child's education and addressing their own learning deficits; imaginative, effective provision for SEN; bespoke pastoral care, and support during transition stages.

Linking social capital: structural factors such as education policy and the ability of schools and communities to access resources and affect decision making processes

Two important findings to emerge from the data in terms of linking social capital were that: (a) neighbourhoods with a vibrant community sector that are collaboratively engaged with schools and external agencies are significantly more successful at securing additional targeted support; and (b) the size, traditions, attainment performance and lobbying power of the Catholic and grammar sectors have created substantial stocks of social capital. Moreover, and in their own ways, this capital is seen to make a positive contribution to the educational prospects of each sector's pupils.

The ILiAD data also highlight a number of policy issues around: the need to redefine understandings of 'education' and 'achievement'; inter-school competition and a lack of collaborative practice; the need for outward-looking and transformative leadership; the problems associated with short-termism; a focus on literacy and numeracy at transition stages; early years provision; recognition of the continuing impact of the conflict; the indicators used around poverty and deprivation in Northern Ireland; and the negative impact of academic selection.

The data here evidence that GCSEs are perceived as a crude measure of achievement and there needs to be a more nuanced approach that recognises that an outcome that is minor for one child may be a huge achievement for another. Many educationists talked of the deep contradiction in our current system whereby children are assessed at 11 on academic standards, but still, even after they are deemed high performing (or not) in these academic standards, we assess and measure them by the same academic standards as each other at age 16. The current system is seen as privileging young people, who are academic by the standards being used; with its narrow focus, it does not recognise the gifts and talents of all of our children and young people.

Furthermore, this study highlighted that the focus on the GCSE Maths and English targets means that some schools may be leaving out 'borderline' students from higher-tier classes. In terms of inter-school competition, the data confirm a view that grammar schools, in particular, are, often, driven on an individual basis. In other words, there is competition to be the best, to have the highest academic results and league table position. As a consequence, the arguments go that there is little real incentive to work collaboratively with other schools. The ILiAD data also make clear that the funding for support programmes from government Departments (including the Department of Education) is often contingent on linear measurement and meeting numerical targets. This was widely felt by many secondary school sector and community representatives to be problematic as certain achievements are qualitative and very difficult to measure.

The final sub-theme in terms of structural (policy) factors relates to the processes and impacts of academic selection. To be clear, while it is obvious that academic selection and subsequent entry to a grammar school gives some young people in the Wards an opportunity to realise their educational potential, the same system often prevents the most disadvantaged young people (in terms of social class and positive familial traditions and norms around education) from realising theirs. Whilst some young people from these disadvantaged Ward areas do succeed against the odds, the percentage is small. The

current system does not work for many of the young people. Indeed, the current transition between primary and post-primary school is seen to create a range of problems, such as: a palpable sense of failure among those who fail or do not sit the test; perceived social hierarchies; and the fact that (due to falling enrolments) the grammar sector is viewed as increasingly 'creaming' pupils who would likely be high-achieving, positive role models in non-grammar schools.

Negative social capital: the wrong kind of capital and unproductive networks

Social capital produces negative outcomes as well as positive ones. In some ILiAD Wards, close-knit networks, a shared sense of adversity, and a shared experience of stigmatisation and besiegement have created strong immediate ties. However, these kinds of bonds often create the wrong kind of social capital and in some communities, these factors have conspired to engender: **bounded solidarity**; hostility towards outsiders; restrictions on individual freedoms; a downward levelling of social norms; and negative role models.

In other words, the bonding capital in some communities is, to an extent, informed by legacies of the recent conflict and hostility towards outsiders. In such ways, a form of negative social capital is created in these communities because this exclusion of 'others' dissuades the creation of inter-community bridging ties and reinforces inward-looking, and often fatalistic, tendencies.

Restrictions on individual freedoms were evident in some areas. For example, the disruption to schooling in some Protestant communities caused by young people participating, for example, in recent flag protests was, to an extent, due to community-level conformity pressures; the spatial mobility limitations experience by some young people are similarly informed by community norms; and negative attitudes towards 'out-groups' such as migrant workers can be seen as neighbourhood-level expressions of threatened homogeneity.

A downward levelling of norms and aspiration were also evident in some of the most deprived communities, particularly, those with historically low levels of attainment and those whose bonds have developed through collective experience of adversity.

In some Wards, individual success stories such as grammar school entry or University offers were 'unwelcome' because they are seen to undermine community solidarity. This is a common phenomenon in the most deprived communities because this solidarity is, often, premised on the 'alleged impossibility of such occurrences' and an 'acquired schemata' of continual 'shared adversity and inevitable collective failure' (Portes, 1998 p. 17-18)[3].

Many young people from the most disadvantaged communities perceive that the only individuals who do succeed do so through nefarious means. Criminal activity in some sections of the case study Wards have created negative role models and many young people interviewed indicated that they routinely witness individuals 'succeeding' outside the regular channels of education (Rubio, 1997)[4].

Socially unproductive networks are another aspect of negative social capital. According to Field (2010: 91-93), it is important to distinguish between 'productive networks' which generate 'favourable outcomes' to members and the wider community, and 'unproductive networks' which provide benefits for members but produce negative outcomes for the wider community. It was frequently argued in the case study transcripts that the policy of academic selection is seen to create 'socially unproductive networks' in the case study

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[3] Portes, A. (1998) 'Social capital: its origins and applications', Modern Sociology Annual Review of Sociology, Vol. 24: pp 1-24.

[4] Rubio, M. (1997) 'Perverse social capital – some evidence from Colombia', Journal of Economic Issues, 31 (3), 805–816

Wards. Within these areas, it was argued that: (a) the current transfer system creates a range of problems for those young people who fail or do not sit the test; (b) deprives non-grammar schools of positive role models and likely high achievers; and (c) that the actual benefits of the educational social capital created by academic selection are disproportionately accrued by the most privileged i.e. those families with positive educational norms, a family tradition of academic success and sufficient income (e.g. to pay for private tutors).

Social capital and the deprivation – low attainment nexus

The ILiAD data have shown that bonding, bridging, and linking social capital (as conceptualised above) can play a critical role in terms of educational attainment. In each form, the capital that is created is seen to make a significant difference in terms of: promoting the value of education; raising attainment levels; and widening the learning opportunities of young people. Furthermore, the data attest to the fact that appropriate interventions at individual, familial, community, or school-level, can replenish social capital stocks where deficits occur. Indeed, a persuasive case can be made that social capital (as conceptualised in this study) can help address the deprivation – low attainment nexus. However, this is entirely contingent on the kind of social capital that is created and its accessibility in the social structure. For example, some of the social capital that was identified in the most disadvantaged communities was of a negative variety and was seen to engender distrust of outsiders, a downward levelling of norms around education, and a host of negative role models. Similarly, the current primary to post-primary transfer system has created a situation where the distribution of the current system's resultant social capital (i.e. entry to the best schools) is, to a very large extent, determined by class, income, and family norms around education.

In conclusion, we argue that these conceptualisations of social capital can help us better understand and address the complex inter-play between social deprivation and low attainment. However, this can only be achieved if: there is an understanding that social capital engenders different impacts in working class communities than it does in middle class ones; there is cognisance that social capital produces negative as well as positive outcomes; there is an appreciation of the limitations of social capital in terms of addressing structural inequality; and, more broadly, there is a determined effort to address such structural inequality by, for example, explicitly linking the above outlined inequities in education and the equalising effect of appropriate interventions to the equality agenda. In other words, social capital may be part of the answer to underachievement in the Northern Ireland education system but inequality is the problem.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This report presents the findings of the 'Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation' (ILiAD) research study, which was conducted by a team of researchers from the School of Education and the School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology at Queen's University Belfast, Stranmillis University College, and with independent research consultants. The study was funded by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) between 2012 and 2015. The main goal of the study was to explore and understand the factors (individual, school, home, community and structural factors) behind significant differential educational achievement in areas of high deprivation within Northern Ireland (i.e., those within the top 20% for multiple deprivation according to the Northern Ireland multiple deprivation measure). The research took a community-centred case study approach, which combined statistical and in-depth, qualitative data. Methods included interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders and secondary data analysis of official data. Social capital theory provided a framework against which to interpret and analyse the findings. The aim was to produce research outcomes, which could subsequently stimulate thought that could inform policy development and strategic planning regarding educational performance, thereby reducing inequality and the gap between achievers and non-achievers in areas of multiple deprivation.

This introductory chapter provides:

1. A rationale for the research by showing the historical trends in the relationship between deprivation and achievement in Northern Ireland;

2. Aims of the current research and the research questions;

3. Relevant government policies that influenced the research design;

4. Short literature review of the different perspectives on the issue of educational achievement and associated factors. A full and detailed Literature Review is available)

1.1. Rationale for the current research

Previous studies carried out within the UK and globally have concluded that there is a positive correlation between deprivation and educational underachievement (e.g. Demie et al, 2002[5]; Cooper et al, 2003[6]; McNally & Blanden, 2006[7]; Cassen & Kingdon, 2007[8]; Raffo et al, 2007[9]; Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009[10]; Welsh Assembly, 2009[11]; Campbell, 2010[12]; INTO, 2011[13]). Many of these studies have utilized large-scale, quantitative methodologies which have produced overall, 'broad brush', macro results.

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[5] Demie, F; Butler, R & Taplin, A (2002): 'Educational Achievement and the Disadvantage Factor: Empirical evidence': Educational Studies: Vol. 28, Issue 2

[6] Cooper, M; Lloyd-Reason, L & Wall, S (2003): 'Social deprivation and educational underachievement: Lessons from London': Education and Training: Vol. 45 (2): pp.79-88

[7] McNally, S & Blanden, J (2006): 'Child poverty and educational outcomes': Poverty 123, Winter 2006: Child Poverty Action Group.

[8] Cassen, R. and Kingdon, G. (2007). Tackling low educational achievement. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

[9] Raffo, C; Dyson, A; Gunter, H; Hall, D; Jones, L & Kalambouka, A (2007): Education and poverty - A critical review of theory, policy and practice. Joseph Rowntree Foundation & University of Manchester.

[10] Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009): 'Deprivation and education: The evidence on students in England, Foundation Stage to Key Stage 4': Schools Analysis and Research Division, Department for Children, Schools and Families: March 2009.

[11] Welsh Assembly (2009): Working with children, young people and families – Tackling child poverty: Guidance for Communities First Partnerships: Welsh Assembly Government: http://www.childpovertysolutions.org.uk/UserFiles/file/Com1stguiden.pdf: Accessed 26th July 2011.

[12] Campbell, A. (2010). Correlation of Education Underachievement and Socio-economic Deprivation in the Greater Belfast Area, South Eastern Regional College and Land Property Services

However, notwithstanding the above correlation, a preliminary analysis of Northern Ireland NINIS[14] data suggested that the factors involved in educational achievement within deprived areas may be more complex than is suggested by quantitative analysis. From scrutinizing the existing data, various examples of significant anomalies and trends were identified which challenged existing assumptions and beliefs and which appeared to be counterintuitive. For example:

Although 70% of the top 20 most deprived Wards in Northern Ireland (NINIS multiple deprivation measure) are Catholic (20% are Protestant and 10% are mixed religion), the top 20 Wards for educational underachievement comprise 35% Catholic, 55% Protestant and 10% mixed religion.

The patterns identified suggested that there are influences on educational performance that go beyond multiple deprivation alone because:

- There are areas of high deprivation where achievement is higher than in areas of less deprivation
 - There are areas of less deprivation where achievement is lower than areas of high deprivation

1.1.1 Aims of the current study

The research adopted a case study approach to explore and understand the factors behind significant differential educational achievement:

- between Wards with high level deprivation who perform better educationally than Wards with lower level deprivation;
- between Catholic and Protestant deprived areas;
- between similarly deprived Catholic deprived areas;
- between similarly deprived Protestant areas;
- within areas of mixed housing.

A broader aim was to contextualise and stimulate wider debate on the relationship between differential educational achievement and multiple deprivation in Northern Ireland. However due to the qualitative nature of case study research, based as it is on observations, secondary data analysis and stakeholders' perceptions, there was no intention of generalising findings to the wider population of Wards in NI.

1.1.2. Research questions

The study specifically aimed to investigate the following questions:
- Why do children and young people in some Wards with high level deprivation perform well educationally, relative to their counterparts in similar or less deprived Wards?
- How can differential educational attainment be explained between those Wards that are very closely matched as regards multiple deprivation?

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http://www.serc.ac.uk/downloads/General%20Downloads/Correlation%20of%20Education%20and%20Deprivation.pdf. Accessed August 2011.
[13] INTO (2011): Impact Report, March 2011: http://www.intouniversity.org/sites/all/files/
userfiles/files/Impact%20Briefing%20March%202011.pdf
[14]   Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service

- What contributory factors can be identified to help explain why Protestant Wards appear to be over-represented within the top twenty Wards for educational underachievement, relative to their multiple deprivation ranks?
- Why do children and young people in high deprivation areas of mixed religion/shared housing appear to perform relatively poorly educationally?
- What contributory factors may be identified to help explain any differences in educational achievement across gender within areas of multiple deprivation?

1.2. Government policy in relation to achievement and deprivation

This study was considered timely and important in order to ensure targeted, informed, policy interventions, strategies and support measures at a time when the N.I Executive/OFMDFM (now TEO) are trying to consolidate a peaceful Northern Ireland in the context of cohesion, sharing and integration. The ILiAD study aimed provide a greater understanding of why there are better outcomes for children and young people in some deprived Wards, as opposed to others. There are several government strategies and policies that this research might help inform, in terms of future development and strategic planning necessary to address particular challenges:

- The Executive's *10 Year Strategy for Children and Young People* which aims to deliver improved outcomes in six key areas, one of which is 'enjoying, learning and achieving'.
- '*Improving Children's Life Chances – The Child Poverty Strategy [NI Executive, 2011]* sets out the actions proposed by the Northern Ireland Executive to address the issue of child poverty, and it recognises that there are two strands of work relevant to breaking the cyclical nature of poverty: supporting parents into better paid work, and increasing future prospects for the child. Education is one of the strategy's priority policy areas; specific strategic priorities include 'ensur[ing], as far as possible, that poverty in childhood does not translate into poor outcomes for children as they move into adult life', and 'ensur[ing] that the child's environment supports them to thrive.'
- *Lifetime Opportunities [OFMDFM, 2007],* the N.I Executive's Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland, aims to promote social inclusion and increasing the learning and skills of individuals. It recognizes that low educational attainment in mainly urban areas poses particular challenges for government and it sets, as one of its goals, that children and young people aged 5-16 can 'experience a happy and fulfilling childhood, while equipping them with the education, skills and experience to achieve their potential to be citizens of tomorrow'.
- *Every School A Good School [Department of Education, 2009]* - The proposed project focuses upon exploring and understanding the factors behind differential educational achievement within deprived Wards. The focus is designed to provide further understanding of "links between schools and their local communities", as identified within the key targets of the 'Every School A Good School' policy for school improvement.
- *Literacy and Numeracy Strategy [Department of Education, 2011]* - This strategy aims to raise overall standards in literacy and numeracy and to close the gaps in achievement between the highest and lowest achieving pupils and schools, between the most and least disadvantaged and between males and females.
- *Families Matter Strategy [Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2009]* – this strategy provides the recognised priority needed in respect of early intervention and prevention services to support all families to parent confidently and responsibly and help give their children the best start in life and to realize their potential.

- Within the *Government's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy*, it is intended that Extended Schools "make a significant contribution to reducing differentials and improving the quality of life for children and young people particularly from disadvantaged areas".
- Draft Programme for *Cohesion, Sharing and Integration [OFMDFM, 2010]* - The aim of this programme is to bring about positive changes for people of all ages throughout Northern Ireland. These changes will include providing and expanding safe and shared spaces; creating a society where cultural diversity is celebrated; and tackling the conditions that lead to division and segregation. Empowering the next generation is a key aspect of the document and the Programme aims to address those issues that impact most on young people within the community.

Furthermore, the Department of Education's corporate plan sets out its key priorities and objectives during the period from 2012 to 2015; the two overarching goals are:

1. Raising standards for all – through high quality teaching and learning, ensuring that all young people enjoy and do well in their education and that their progress is assessed and their attainment recognised, including through qualifications.

2. Closing the performance gap, increasing access and equality – addressing the underachievement that exists in our education system; ensuring that young people who face barriers or are at risk of social exclusion are supported to achieve to their full potential; and ensuring that our education service is planned effectively on an area basis to provide pupils with full access to the curriculum and Entitlement Framework.

The ILiAD project has the potential to assist directly in understanding causes of educational inequality and failure and thus provide feedback and recommendations for these policies and concurrent actions aimed at improving educational opportunities for those affected.

1.3. Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review was to further inform the research design and to operationalise key constructs of the ILiAD study. An extensive literature review was completed by the research team (extending to over 28,000 words). This encompassed a range of important perspectives on the issue of educational achievement and the types of factors, which tend to make a difference as regards differential attainment. The review looked at individual, family and school factors, together with community-level influences and the concept of social capital. From this, the ILiAD research team developed a preliminary conceptual model to facilitate research design and data collection in the case study Wards (see Figure 1 below):

Potential factors re differential educational achievement

Individual factors:
- Resilience
- Identity
- Self-esteem
- Self-efficacy/locus of control
- Motivation
- Mental health
- Experience of trauma
- Level of ability

Social and community factors:
- Social capital
- Cohesion
- Infrastructure
- Community safety/ paramilitary input
- Peer influence
- Environment
- Population movement
- +ve/-ve role models

School factors:
- Leadership & governance
- Teaching quality
- Home/school links
- Early years provision
- Teacher stress/burn-out
- Dull, irrelevant curriculum
- School environment
- Quality of information, guidance & advice (e.g. re pathways)

Family factors:
- Stability/continuity/ security
- Degree of support/ encouragement
- Parents' experience of education/confidence
- Cynicism/negativity re employment prospects
- Resources/stimulation
- Wider family networks
- Benefit dependency
- Drug & alcohol use
- Patterns of communication
- Mental health

Aspirations & expectations

Attitudes & beliefs

Individual educational achievement

Figure 1: Mapping of potential factors influencing differential educational achievement

Below is a summary of the main, relevant issues arising from the literature. Each thematic area (individual, family, school and community factors) will be considered in turn.

1.3.1 Individual factors

- Alongside measures of intelligence, personality factors, resilience and wellbeing contribute strongly as determinants of academic achievement. Personality would appear to play a greater role in academic achievement by children than intelligence (Infante & Troyano, 2002[15]; Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2009[16]).

- Whereas cognitive ability reflects what an individual *can* do, personality traits reflect what an individual *will* do (O'Connor & Paunonen, 2007[17]).

- Non-ability, personality traits are most likely to be associated with: (a) the student's academic behaviours outside of the classroom (e.g., when completing independent study or doing homework); (b) in the decisions made by students about subject choice; (c) in the pursuit of academically oriented activities as a hobby or leisure activity (e.g., reading for pleasure or attending cultural/intellectual events); (d) knowledge accumulated over a

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[15] Infante, M.M & Troyano, Y (2002): 'Psychosocial profile of unsuccessful university students – Personality and motivational factors revisited': Social Behavior & Personality – An International Journal: Vol. 3 (29): pp. 299-306.

[16] Chamorro-Premuzic, T., & Furnham, A. (2009): The psychology of personnel selection: New York: Cambridge University Press.

[17] O'Connor, M. C., & Paunonen, S. V. (2007): 'Big Five personality predictors of post-secondary academic performance': Personality and Individual Differences: Vol.43: pp. 971–990.

lifetime of school and non-school investment of time and effort; and (e) career choice and success after full-time education (Ackerman et al, 2011[18]).

- Pupil conscientiousness is a particularly important personality factor contributing to academic success and this is one of the things that differentiate achieving disadvantaged pupils from similarly disadvantaged peers.

- Pupil well-being is strongly linked with academic attainment (Quinn & Duckworth, 2007[19]; Payton et al, 2008[20]; Gullotta et al, 2009[21]; Dawson & Singh-Dhesi, 2010[22]).

- Aspects of well-being that impact positively on academic attainment include social-emotional competence (Ashdown & Bernard, 2011[23]); high life satisfaction (Gilman & Huebner, 2006[24]); hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem and optimism (Marques et al, 2011[25]).

- Emotional and social competencies have been shown to be more influential than cognitive abilities for educational attainment. Students who are angry, anxious or depressed do not learn and cannot take in/retain information efficiently when emotions overwhelm their concentration and their normal intelligent thinking is interrupted (Jackins, 1982[26]; Goleman, 1996[27]; Infante & Troyano, 2002; DfES, 2005[28]).

- Children with emotional problems will be prone to, among other things, low educational achievement (Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009[29]).

- Resilience has been defined as doing better than expected in difficult circumstances (Daniel & Wassell, 2002[30]); the ability to bounce back from adversity (Strand & Peacock, 2004[31]); competence and success despite adversity and disadvantage (Cefai, 2012[32]); higher self-efficacy (Borman & Overman, 2004[33]; Shumow et al., 1999[34]) and a greater sense of control over success and failure in school than non-resilient counterparts (Connell et al., 1994[35]).

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[18] Ackerman, P.L; Chamorro-Premuzic, T & Furnham, A (2011): 'Trait complexes and academic achievement - Old and new ways of examining personality in educational contexts': British Journal of Educational Psychology: Vol. 81: pp. 27–40.

[19] Quinn, P.D. & Duckworth, A.L. (2007). 'Happiness and academic achievement: Evidence for reciprocal causality': Poster session presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Psychological Science: Washington, DC.

[20] Payton, J. W.; Weissberg, R. P.; Durlak, J. A.; Dymnicki, A. B.; Taylor, R. D & Schellinger, K. B. (2008): 'The positive impact of social and emotional learning for kindergarten to eighth-grade students: Findings from three scientific reviews': . Chicago, IL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.

[21] Gullotta, T.P; Bloom, M; Gullotta, C.F & Messina, J.C [Eds] (2009): A blueprint for promoting academic and social competence in after-school programs: New York: Springer.

[22] Dawson, J & Singh-Dhesi, D (2010): 'Educational psychology working to improve psychological well-being: an example': Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties: Vol. 15 (4): 295-310.

[23] Ashdown, D. M & Bernard, M.E (2011): 'Can explicit instruction in social and emotional learning skills benefit the social-emotional development, well-being, and academic achievement of young children?': Early Childhood Education Journal: Vol. 39 (6): 397–405

[24] Gilman, R & Huebner, E.S (2006) 'Characteristics of adolescents who report very high life satisfaction': Journal of Youth and Adolescence: Vol 35 (3): 311-319.

[25] Marques, S.C; Pais-Ribeiro, J.L & Lopez, S.J (2011): 'The Role of Positive Psychology Constructs in Predicting Mental Health and Academic Achievement in Children and Adolescents: A Two-Year Longitudinal Study': Journal of Happiness Studies: December 2011: Vol. 12 (6): 1049-1062.

[26] Jackins, H (1982): The Human Side of Human Beings - The Theory of Re-Evaluation Counseling: Seattle: Rational Island Publishers.

[27] Goleman, D. (1996): Emotional Intelligence: Why it can Matter More than IQ: London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

[28] OfStED (2005): Healthy minds: promoting emotional health and well-being in schools: 21st July 2005: London: OfStED

[29] Ecclestone, K & Hayes, D (2009): 'Changing the subject: the educational implications of developing emotional wellbeing': Oxford Review of Education: Vol. 35 (3): 371-389: Oxford Brookes University.

[30] Daniel, B & Wassell, S (2002): The early years – Assessing and promoting resilience in vulnerable children: London: Jessica Kingsley.

[31] Strand, J & Peacock, T (2004): 'Nurturing resilience and school success in American Indian and Alaska Native Students': ERIC Digest: www.ericdigests.org/2003-4/native-students.html: Accessed 19th September 2012.

[32] Cefai, C (2012): 'Pupil resilience in the classroom – A teacher's framework': Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties: Vol. 9 (3): pp.149-170.

[33] Borman, G.D., & Overman, L.T. (2004): 'Academic resilience in mathematics among poor and minority students: Elementary School Journal: Vol.104: pp.177-195.

[34] Shumow, L; Vandell, D.L & Posner, J (1999): 'Risk and Resilience in the Urban Neighborhood - Predictors of Academic Performance Among Low-Income Elementary School Children: Merrill-Palmer Quarterly: Vol. 45 (2): pp. 309-331.

[35] Connell, J.P; Spencer, M.B & Aber, J.L (1994): 'Educational Risk and Resilience in African-American Youth: Context, Self, Action, and Outcomes in School': Child Development: Vol. 65: pp. 493-506.

- Resilience is important not only as an outcome in its own right but also as having a key role in promoting other outcomes such as improvements in behaviour, school attendance, learning, employability and wellbeing (DCSF, 2008[36]).

- The OECD has concluded that the factor which makes the biggest difference in terms of disadvantaged students who succeed and those that do not is resilience. About three out of every ten young people from poorer families are resilient. Resilient students are more motivated, more engaged and more self-confident than their low-achieving, disadvantaged peers. These are students who believe in themselves and who have a positive attitude towards school work (OECD, 2011[37]).

- Individual resilience is a dynamic process, changing over time and situations, teachers, and families alike have key roles in promoting the development of this quality in pupils (Cefai, 2012). Schools have an important opportunity to promote resilience and helping pupils to overcome their social disadvantage to become high performers, by developing activities, classroom practices and modes of instruction that foster disadvantaged students' motivation and confidence in their abilities (OECD, 2011).

1.3.2 Family factors

- Various studies have found that family background is the most important and most weighty factor in determining academic performance by students (Schiefelbaum & Simmons, 2003[38]).

- The influence of parental involvement largely transcends socioeconomic factors (Jeynes, 2007[39]).

- As correlates of positive academic outcomes for pupils, parental involvement takes many forms including the provision of a secure and stable home environment; parents' emotional responsiveness to children's developmental needs; intellectual stimulation/structure and support for learning in the home; parent-child discussion; good models of constructive social and educational values; high aspirations relating to personal fulfilment; contact with schools and teachers; participation in the work of the school and events (Fan & Chen, 2001[40]; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003[41]).

- Many parents are not aware of the importance they play in their child's education and have a limited understanding of their role in supporting and promoting their children's learning (DCSF, 2009[42]; Kintrea et al, 2011[43]).

- Some parents in disadvantaged areas are put off by feeling 'put down' by schools and teachers (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003[44]).

[36] Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009): 'Deprivation and education: The evidence on students in England, Foundation Stage to Key Stage 4': Schools Analysis and Research Division, Department for Children, Schools and Families: March 2009.

[37] OECD (2011): How do some students overcome their socio-economic background? PISA in Focus, 2011/5 (June). Available at http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisaproducts/pisainfocus/48165173.pdf

[38] Schiefelbaum & Simmons (2003): 'Vinculacion familiar en el mundo': Revista Bordon: Vol. 50 (2): pp. 171-185.

[39] Jeynes, W H. (2007): 'The Relationship between Parental Involvement and Urban Secondary School Student Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analysis: Urban Education: Vol. 42 (1): pp82-110.

[40] Fan, X & Chen, M (2001): 'Parental involvement in students' academic achievement – a meta-analysis': Educational Psychology Review: Vol. 13 (1): pp. 1-22.

[41] Desforges, C & Abouchaar, A (2003): The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment: A literature review. DES Research Report RR 433.

[42] Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009): 'Deprivation and education: The evidence on students in England, Foundation Stage to Key Stage 4': Schools Analysis and Research Division, Department for Children, Schools and Families: March 2009.

[43] Kintrea, K; St.Clair, R & Houston, M (2011): The influence of parents, places and poverty on educational attitudes and aspirations: York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

[44] Desforges, C & Abouchaar, A (2003): The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment: A literature review. DES Research Report RR 433.

- Parents' own experience of education, educational self-confidence, contact and engagement with teachers and schools, parental beliefs and attitudes about the value and utility of education are all important predictors of children's school attainment (Davis-Kean, 2005[45]; Brown & Iyengar, 2008[46]).

- Mothers' previous experience of education is particularly influential (Pishghadam & Zabihi, 2011[47]) as is maternal psycho-social health (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003).

- Parental aspirations and expectations on their children's achievements have a strong impact on children's school results (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Kintrea et al, 2011).

- Children from non-intact families reported lower educational expectations on the part of their parents and less monitoring of school. Children from single-parent families and stepparent families are more likely to exhibit signs of early disengagement from school and have lower academic achievement compared to children who came from two-parent homes (Schlee et al, 2009[48]).

- Even when single parents were enthusiastic about supporting their child's education, they were sometimes hesitant because they perceived that the teachers saw them negatively (Drummond & Stipek, 2004[49]).

- A useful conceptual model of the relationship between parental factors and academic outcomes for children has been developed by Taylor et al (2004)[50].

- Parental involvement is strongly and positively influenced by the child's level of attainment. In other words, this is a cyclical dynamic in which the lower the level of attainment, the less parental involvement ensues, leading to yet lower attainment (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003).

1.3.3 School factors

- Teacher characteristics influence student behaviour and learning only if and when they affect teaching performance or behaviour, and school conditions such as the school size or mean teacher salary can be expected to influence students largely through teacher characteristics, or through within-school conditions. Thus, the way in which teacher characteristics affect student learning is not to be presumed as constant across all school types (Aslam & Kingdon, 2008[51]).

- While much of the research on the effect of school or teacher factors on achievement focus on the acquirement of basic literacy and mathematical skills, it is likely that different teaching skills are required for different types of learning achievements – teaching self-reliance or empathy, for example (non-cognitive measures), is quite different from teaching mathematics (Centra & Potter, 1980[52])

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[45] Davis-Kean, P. E (2005): 'The influence of parent education and family income on child achievement - the indirect role of parental expectations and the home environment': Journal of Family Psychology: Vol. 19 (2): pp. 294–304

[46] Brown, L & Iyengar, S (2008): 'Parenting Styles: The Impact on Student Achievement': Marriage & Family Review: Vol. 43 (1/2): pp. 14-38.

[47] Pishghadam, R & Zabihi, R (2011): 'Parental Education and Social and Cultural Capital in Academic Achievement': International Journal of English Linguistics: 1 (2): September 2011: pp. 50-57.

[48] Schlee, B.M; Mullis, A.K & Shriner, M (2009): 'Parents' social and resource capital: Predictors of academic achievement during early childhood': Children and Youth Services Review: 31: pp. 227-234

[49] Drummond, K.V. & Stipek, D (2004): 'Low-income parents' beliefs about their role in children's academic learning': The Elementary School Journal: Vol. 104 (3): pp. 197-212.

[50] Taylor, L.C; Clayton, J.D & Rowley, S.J (2004): 'Academic socialization - understanding parental influences on children's school-related development in the early years': Review of General Psychology: Vol. 8 (3): pp. 163–178.

[51] Aslam, M., and Kingdon, G. (2008) *Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes and Poverty WP19/08, RECOUP Working Paper No. 19: What can Teachers do to Raise Pupil Achievement?* Department of Economics University of Oxford.

[52] Centra, J.A., and Potter, D. A. (1980) School and Teacher Effects: An Interrelational Model. *Review of Educational Research, Summer 1980, 50,* pp. 273-291

- Teaching effectiveness is closely related to the issue of targets and what counts as 'achievement' in a school. Cassen & Kingdon (2007)[53] argue that for teachers working in areas of severe socio-economic deprivation, it is essentially unfair to judge their professional expertise against the standard government target of achievement, if, for them, a successful lesson is one in which none of the pupils walks out of the classroom.

- The consensus from the review of studies carried out by Aslam & Kingdon (2008) is that many teacher characteristics such as certification level, training or experience do not matter to pupil achievement, but other studies have found that years of experience, level of education and subject area knowledge has a positive effect on children's attainment during the upper years of their schooling (Ehrenberg & Brewer, 1995[54]; Ferguson, 1991[55]; PPIC, 2003[56]). Summers and Wolfe (1975)[57] found that high-achieving pupils do best with teachers who are more experienced, but that low-achieving students do better with relatively new, inexperienced teachers. The authors suggest that this pattern of results could be a result of newer teachers' fresh enthusiasm for teaching those who are less engaged in learning.

- Positive teacher reinforcement, higher-order questioning techniques, and productive pedagogies that include a supportive classroom environment, inclusivity, and a sense of connectedness of the learning to the outside world can facilitate achievement (Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study, 2002[58]; Younger et al, 2005[59]).

- Individual target setting and peer mentoring can reap many educational benefits if it is done correctly, especially for boys and lower-achieving pupils (Younger et al, 2005).

- Larger school enrolments are associated with better outcomes, especially the presence of a sixth form in post-primary schools. This may be due to teacher effects or the positive peer role model effects (Borooah and Knox, 2014[60]; Eide & Showalter, 1998[61])

- The physical school environment can enhance students' engagement if they have been involved in the design of the space. Classroom layouts and furniture can also affect student engagement (Higgins et al, 2005[62]; Moore & Glynn, 1984[63])

- Well-organised teachers who have specific and consistent procedures for everyday tasks and who monitor their class regularly are more likely to produce learning gains (Younger et al, 2005[64]).

- Absenteeism is a strong negative predictor of a pupil's gain in achievement in mathematics and literacy (PPIC, 2003[65]; Wiley and Harnischfeger, 1974[66]).

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[53] Cassen, R. and Kingdon, G. (2007). Tackling low educational achievement. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

[54] Ehrenberg, R. G. and Brewer, D. J. (1995). Did teachers' verbal ability and race matter in the 1960s? Coleman revisited. Economics of Education Review, 14, 1-21

[55] Ferguson, R. F. (1991). Paying for Public Education: new evidence on how and why money matters. Harvard Journal of Legislation, 28, 465-497

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[58] Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (2002) A guide to ...Productive Pedagogies: Classroom reflection manual. Brisbane: Teaching and Curriculum Branch.

[59] Younger, M. and Warrington, M. (2005). Raising Boys' Achievement. Cambridge: Department for Education and Skills.

[60] Borooah, V. and Knox, C. (2014). Access and performance inequalities: post-primary education in Northern Ireland. *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice*, 22(2), pp.111-35

[61] Eide, E. and Showalter, M. H. (1998). The effect of school quality on student performance: A quantile regression approach. *Economics Letters, 58* (1998) 345–350

[62] Higgins, S., Hall, E., Wall, K., Woolner, P., and McCaughey, C. (2005). *The Impact of School Environments: A Literature Review.* Design Council/Centre for Learning and Teaching, University of Newcastle.

[63] Moore, W. and Glynn, T. (1984). Variation in Question Rate as a Function of Position in the Classroom, *Educational Psychology, 4,* 3, 233-248.

[64] Younger, M. and Warrington, M. (2005). Raising Boys' Achievement. Cambridge: Department for Education and Skills.

[65] Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) (2003). New Insights into School and Classroom Factors Affecting Student Achievement: Research Brief. San Diego: PPIC.

- Younger et al (2005) found evidence to support single-sex classes for some classes – boys were found to perform better in single-sex languages classes, while girls performed better in girls-only sciences and mathematics classes. Borooah and Knox (2014)[67] found that in Northern Ireland, female-only secondary schools perform significantly better than co-educational or male-only secondary schools. At the grammar level, male-only schools performed worse at GCSE achievement level than co-educational or female-only schools.

- Decentralised leadership systems have been shown to work well in areas of deprivation. Principals of inner-city schools mentioned teacher involvement in decision making as an important approach for increasing effectiveness in Seeley et al's (1990)[68] and Piontek et al's (1998)[69] studies.

- Gale and Densmore (2003)[70] argue that school leaders need to be politically informed leaders as well as educators, who can adjust, adapt and deal with the changing socio-economic conditions they face. The involvement of community members in school improvement decisions can also lead to lasting transformation.

- In their study of improving the effectiveness of schools in deprived areas of Massachusetts, Piontek et al. (1998) found that teamwork and positive communication were present in all effective schools. In areas of deprivation, staff turnover is often a problem, and has been associated with lower achievement rates and a negative impact on the development and maintenance of a school culture (Hughes, 1995)[71].

- There is documented success in the effectiveness of Catholic schools in terms of promoting educational attainment (Borooah and Knox, 2014; Sander, 1997[72]; Sander, 2000[73]).

- There are mixed results on the impact of pupil-teacher ratios and per pupil resources on achievement (Wilson, 2003[74]; PPIC, 2003; Eide and Showalter, 1998[75]).

- There is no evidence that GCSE or A Level grades are affected by the presence of children with special educational needs (Borooah and Knox, 2014[76]; Dyson et al, 2004[77]).

- There is evidence to suggest that less well-off families are particularly affected by the current school selection system; according to Atkinson et al (2006)[78] – children who receive free school meals (FSM) with the same Key Stage 2 scores as children from more affluent families are far less likely to be selected for grammar schools. Achievement is also affected by transfers and transitions between schools and year

[66] Wiley, D. E., & Harnischfeger, A. Explosion of a myth: Quantity of schooling and exposure
to instruction, major educational vehicles. Educational Researcher, 1974, 3, 7-12.

[67] Borooah, V. and Knox, C. (2014). Access and performance inequalities: post-primary education in Northern Ireland. Journal of Poverty and Social Justice, 22(2), pp.111-35

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[74] Wilson, V. (2003). All in Together? An overview of the literature on composite classes. University of Glasgow/The SCRE Centre.

[75] Eide, E. and Showalter, M. H. (1998). The effect of school quality on student performance: A quantile regression approach. Economics Letters, 58 (1998) 345–350

[76] Borooah, V. and Knox, C. (2014). Access and performance inequalities: post-primary education in Northern Ireland. *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice,* 22(2), pp.111-35

[77] Dyson, A., Farrell, P., Polat, F., Hutcheson, G., and Gallannaugh, F. (2004). *Inclusion and Pupil Achievement. Research Report RR578*. Department for Education and Skills, UK.

[78] Atkinson A., Gregg, P. and McConnell, B. (2006) *The Result of 11+ Selection: An Investigation into Opportunities and Outcomes for Pupils in Selective LEAs, CMPO Working Paper No. 06/150.* Bristol: Centre for Market and Public Organisation, University of Bristol

groups (Galton et al, 1999)[79]; in Year 8 many schools put most of their energy and money into smoothing the transfer process, rather than ensuring pupils' engagement and progress.

- Extended school provision is viewed as desirable in many studies, with possible benefits including enhanced social cohesion and reduced vandalism (Younger et al, 2005)[80]. Others have found that increased parental involvement and extra-curricular activities were indicators of school success.

1.3.4. Community factors

- Rufrano (1999)[81] argues that the local community is a powerful influence and plays a major role in shaping what happens at the school. He further indicates that school failures and successes happen within the context of community standards and expectations, the uniqueness of each community's traditions, expectations and belief systems and that all these types of factors influence pupil achievement.

- The results of a study by Gibbons (2002)[82] show that neighbourhoods do influence outcomes, regardless of family resources, that the association between community attainments and child attainments is robust since children's educational achievement is sensitive to the adult educational composition of their neighbourhood.

- Jencks and Mayer (1990)[83] elucidate a contagion or epidemic model of neighbourhood effects which stresses the significant influence of peer group behaviour for sustaining community-wide norms that either fail to reward and reinforce, or completely devalue, educational and academic success. This is a view supported by others (Wilson, 1987[84]; Crane, 1991[85]; Jensen & Seltzer, 2000[86]; Biddulph et al, 2003[87]). In terms of improving educational outcomes for young people, South et al (2003: 32)[88] suggest that 'because youth tend to adopt the educational attitudes and behaviours of their peers, small investments in improving educational attitudes and behaviours are likely to reverberate throughout disadvantaged communities'.

- A variant of the contagion model described above which links community disadvantage to the educational attainment of young people emphasizes adolescents' educational aspirations formed by adult role models. In this regard, a specific issue is that 'in economically distressed and socially disorganised neighbourhoods, successful parenting is thought to be particularly difficult (South et al, 2003)[89]. For instance, in such economically distressed environments, children are more often exposed to opportunities that make parental supervision difficult and that conflict with educational success

[79] Galton, M., Gray, J., and Ruddock, J. (1999). *The impact of school transitions and transfers on pupil progress and attainment*. Homerton College, Cambridge.

[80] Younger, M. and Warrington, M. (2005). Raising Boys' Achievement. Cambridge: Department for Education and Skills.

[81] Rufrano, R.J (1999): 'A study of academic press, sense of community, and community influence on school achievement in selected school cultures': Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences: Vol. 60(1-A), Jul, 1999.

[82] Gibbons, S. (2002): 'Neighbourhood Effects on Educational Achievement: Evidence from the Census and National Child Development Study: Centre for the Economics of Education: London School of Economics and Political Science

[83] Jencks, C & Mayer, S.E (1990): 'The social consequences of growing up in a poor neighborhood': In L.E Lynn Jr. & M.G.H McGeary [Eds]: Inner-city poverty in the United States: Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

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[85] Crane, J (1991): 'The epidemic theory of ghettos and neighborhood effects on dropping out and teenage childbearing': American Journal of Sociology: Vol. 96: pp. 1226-1259

[86] Jensen, B & Seltzer, A (2000): 'Neighbourhood and family effects in educational progress': The Australian Economic Review: Vol. 33 (1): pp. 17–31.

[87] Biddulph, F; Biddulph, J & Biddulph, C (2003): 'The Complexity of Community and Family Influences on Children's Achievement in New Zealand: Best Evidence Synthesis': Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education.

[88] Smith, T.J; Jacobs, K & Soares, M.M (2012): 'Integrating community ergonomics with educational ergonomics – designing community systems to support classroom learning': Work: Vol. 41, pp. 3676-3684.

[89] South, S.J; Baumer, E.P & Lutz, A (2003): 'Interpreting Community Effects on Youth Educational Attainment': Youth Society: Vol. 35 (3): pp.3-35.

(Connell & Halpern-Felsher, 1997)[90]. Wilson (1996)[91] claims that neighbourhoods where most adults have steady jobs foster behaviours and attitudes that are conducive to success in both school and work. Wilson (1991)[92] suggests that in neighbourhoods where many adults do not work 'life can become incoherent for youth because of the lack of structuring norms modelled by working adults'. As Kao and Tienda (1998)[93] argue, youth in these neighbourhoods have lower educational aspirations because they do not expect educational success to equate to economic success.

- Entwisle et al (1997)[94] suggest that higher rates of residential mobility and school changes among students in economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods might account for adverse educational outcomes in these communities; a perspective endorsed by many other studies (Hagan et al, 1996[95]; Teachman et al., 1996[96]; Pribesh & Downey, 1999[97]; Swanson & Schneider, 1999[98]). According to Coleman (1988)[99] these effects have been interpreted by some as evidence that residential mobility and migration detracts from the social capital available to children and adolescents. Coleman (1990: 300)[100] further asserts that social capital consists of connections between actors that 'inhere in family relations and in community organization and that are useful for the cognitive and social development of a child'. The closer-knit a community, the greater the social capital and therefore the greater the positive effect on educational outcomes (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987)[101].

- In reference to social capital, Israel and Beaulieu (2004: 283)[102] confirm that 'youths' academic success stands on a three-legged stool – families, schools and communities'. Stockard and Mayberry (1992: 74)[103] make an attempt at a definition of social capital by stating that 'the very essence of social capital is evident in relations that exist among people. It embraces obligations, behavioural expectations and trust that develop from strong ties among individuals in a group, channels of information that help individuals be more informed and norms and sanctions that facilitate and constrain certain actions'. Putnam (2000) reviewed the evidence on the impact of social capital on education in the United States and found a strong and significant correlation between measures of social capital and quality of learning outcomes. This view is echoed by various authors (Sun, 1999[104]; OECD, 2001[105]; Davis, 2004[106]; Green, 2006[107]; Woolley, 2008[108])

[90] Connell, J.P & Halpern-Felsher, B.L (1997): 'How Neighborhoods Affect Educational Outcomes in Middle Childhood and Adolescence: Conceptual Issues and an Empirical Example': Neighborhood Poverty: Vol. 1: pp. 174-199.

[91] Wilson, W. J. (1996): When work disappears: The world of the new urban poor: New York: Vintage.

[92] Wilson, W. J. (1991): 'Studying inner-city social dislocations – The challenge of public agenda research': American Sociological Review: Vol. 56: pp. 1-14.

[93] Kao, G., and Tienda, M. (1998) Educational aspirations of youth. *American Journal of Education* 106:349–384

[94] Entwistle, D.R; Alexander, K.L & Olson, L.S (1997): Children schools and inequality: Boulder, CO: Westview

[95] Hagan, J.; MacMillan, R. & Wheaton, B. (1996): 'New kid in town: Social capital and the life course effects of family migration on children': American Sociological Review: Vol. 61: pp.368-385.

[96] Teachman, J. D.; Paasch, K. M. & Carver, K. P: (1996): 'Social capital and dropping out of school early': Journal of Marriage & the Family: Vol. 58: pp. 773-783.

[97] Pribesh, S. & Downey, D. B. (1999): 'Why are residential and school moves associated with poor school performance?': Demography: Vol. 36: pp. 521-534.

[98] Swanson, C. B. &Schneider, B: (1999): 'Students on the move: Residential and educational mobility in America's schools': Sociology of Education: Vol. 72: pp. 54-67.

[99] Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. The American Journal of Sociology, 94, pp. S95-S120.

[100] Coleman, J. S. (1990). Foundations of Social Theory. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

[101] Coleman, J. and Hoffer, T. (1987): Public and Private High Schools – The Impact of Communities: New York: Basic Books.

[102] Israel, G.D & Beaulieu, L.J (2004): 'Laying the foundation for employment – the role of social capital in educational achievement': The Review of Regional Studies: Vol. 34 (3): pp. 260-287.

[103] Stockard, J & Mayberry, M (1992): Effective educational environments: Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press Inc.

[104] Sun, Y.M (1999): 'The Contextual Effects of Community Social Capital on Academic Performance': Social Science Research: Vol. 28: pp. 403–26.

[105] OECD (2001): The Wellbeing of Nations - The Role of Human and Social Capital, Education and Skills: OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation: Paris: France.

[106] Davis, E (2004): A National Approach to Measuring Social Capital: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australia: http://www.engagingcommunities2005.org/abstracts/Davis-Elisabeth-final.pdf: Accessed 22nd March 2013.

[107] Green, M (2006): When people care enough to act: Toronto: Inclusion Press.

- An investigation by Korbin and Coulton (1995)[109] concluded that not all poor neighbourhoods are alike and the features that characterise the neighbourhoods where better-functioning families reside are features of social capital, namely community investment, trust and organisational affiliation. Deprived communities do vary in the kinds of support they give their residents and supportive neighbourhoods characterised by strong social capital can mitigate the harmful effects of economic disadvantage on student achievement (Bickel et al 2002[110]; Holloway, 2004[111]).

Given that there have been relatively few useful theoretical lenses through which we might better understand the relationship between deprivation and various patterns of achievement and underachievement, social capital was chosen as the theoretical framework for conceptualising the ILiAD study, as it highlights the value of social relations and the role of cooperation, confidence and cohesiveness to attain collective, economic or educational results. This theoretical framework is presented in more depth in Chapter 3 of this report.

[108] Woolley, M.E; Grogan-Kaylor, A; Gilster, M.E; Karb, R.A; Gant, L.M; Reischl, T.M & Alaimo, K (2008): 'Neighborhood social capital, poor physical conditions, and school achievement': Children & Schools: Vol. 30 (3): pp. 133-45.

[109] Korbin, J. and Coulton, C. (1995): 'Neighborhood impact on child abuse and neglect – Final Report on Grant #90CA-1994': Washington, DC: National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect.

[110] Bickel, R.; Smith, C. & Eagle, T. (2002): 'Poor, rural neighborhoods and early school achievement': Journal of Poverty: Vol. 6: pp. 89–108.

[111] Holloway, J.H (2004): 'How the Community Influences Achievement': Schools as Learning Communities: Vol. 61 (8): pp. 89-90.

Chapter 2: Methodology

This chapter outlines the methods used in the 'Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation' study. The methods were chosen on the basis of the core aims and research questions of the study. Answering this range of research questions required a mixed-methods approach. The chapter will firstly present a detailed overview of the research design and methodologies employed.

2.1 Research design

The research was designed as a three-year case study, combining statistical and in-depth qualitative data. The approach was community-centred and, as such, was iterative and developmental. Thus, data derived in the early stages informed subsequent data collection among community participants and stakeholders. Each Ward area in the sample was investigated as an individual case study.

The design was novel within this topic of educational research as it combined statistical interrogation of exiting data sets with case study understandings at Ward level, in order to 'drill down', determine and map more holistically what factors are seen to be contributing to the various identifiable (statistical) patterns of achievement in these neighbourhoods, all with a view to improvement.

2.2 Methods: Case studies

The research team identified that the best approach to extending current knowledge and understanding of the complex relationship between educational achievement and levels of multiple deprivation in Northern Ireland was a case study approach. Case study is a form of qualitative research that refers to the collection and presentation of detailed information about a particular unit or small group, frequently including the accounts of participants themselves. Yin (1984, p. 23)[112] defines the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. This is precisely why the method was chosen, in order to yield the best understandings of the factors contributing to differential educational achievement, especially when this approach incorporates a range of relevant statistical analyses, alongside in-depth, qualitative data relating to the identified geographical contexts.

Data types

The case studies provided three types of data, which were combined to contribute to a final synthesis of understanding of why significant differentials exist regarding educational performance and measures of multiple deprivation in areas of Northern Ireland, namely:

Interrogation and mapping of secondary data, including:

- Multiple deprivation 2010 domain statistics (such as crime, employment and so on) at Ward and lower spatial levels;

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[112] Yin, R. K. (1984). *Case study research: Design and methods.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

- 2001 and 2011 Census data, to explore the temporal continuity of these geographical areas over the decade and to examine change (e.g. in demographics and housing tenure) through time;

- Department of Education and Education and Library Board data at the Ward level, including data on enrolment (at nursery level through to post-primary level); achievement levels and destinations of school leavers; absenteeism; Free School Meals entitlement; Special Educational Needs registrations; and assessments of school provision based on school inspection reports from the Education and Training Inspectorate.

Interpretation of qualitative data which:

- Provided a synthesis of key stakeholder views and responses in relation to the issue of differential achievement specific to each of the case study locations;

- Provided in-depth, comparative, interpretation of experiences arising from consultation with groups of children and young people (at key educational, decision-making stages) in each of the case study areas, in relation to key indicators such as social capital, community cohesion and educational aspiration;

- Identified specific contributory indicators (historical and current) of the impact of structural factors, social and community issues, schooling, alternative education, youth and training provisions; and individual and family-level factors regarding differential educational achievement.

2.3. Case study sample – seven Electoral Ward areas

The study used a case study approach based on seven Wards (and their composite Super Output Areas). These were:

Whiterock	(Whiterock 1; Whiterock 2; Whiterock 3)
The Diamond	(The Diamond)
Rosemount	(Rosemount)
Dunclug	(Dunclug)
Duncairn	(Duncairn 1; Duncairn 2)
Woodstock	(Woodstock 1; Woodstock 2; Woodstock 3)
Tullycarnet	(Tullycarnet)

The Wards are illustrated in Figure 2 below, showing their ranking on the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010 by the percentage of school leavers who achieved five or more GCSEs at A*-C in 2012/13. Figure 3 below shows historical trends in relation to the percentage of pupils in each of the seven target Wards who achieved five GCSEs A*-C over the period 1996-2013.
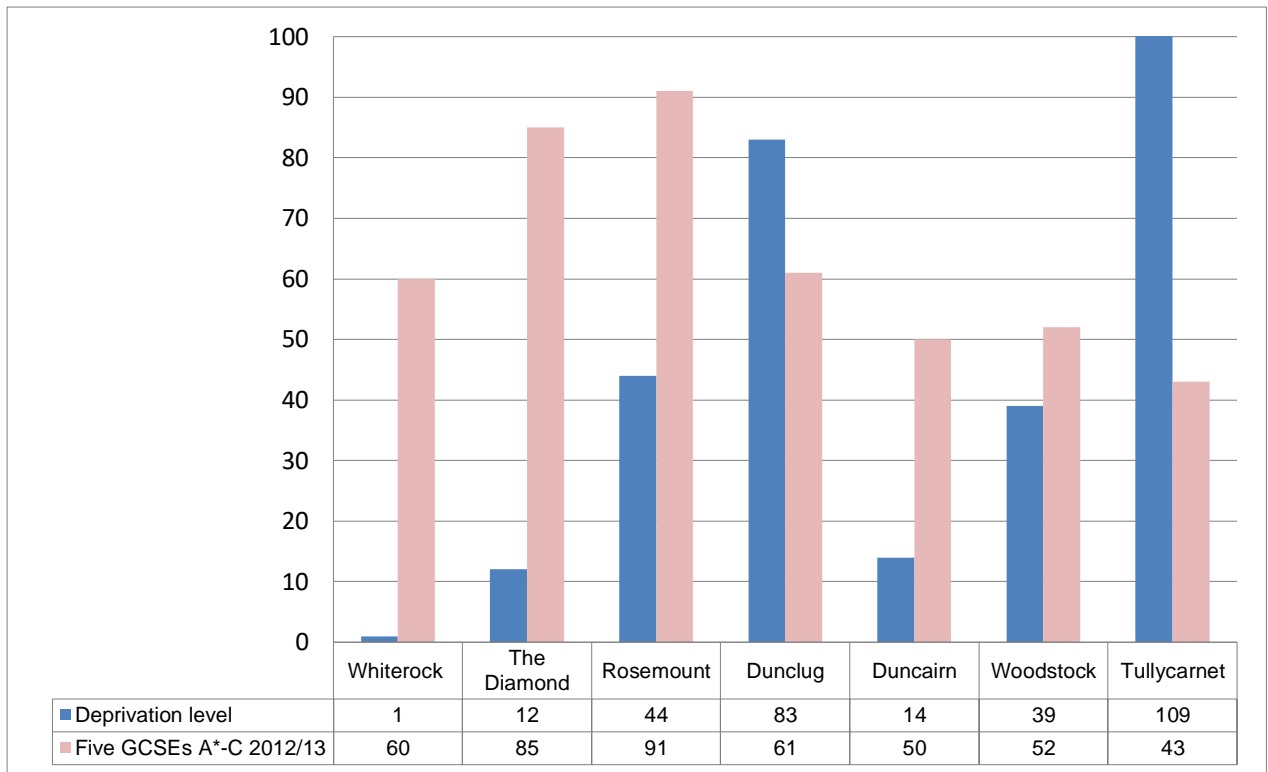
Figure 2: Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE passes at Grade C or above (2012/13) by Multiple Deprivation Level 2010

	Whiterock	The Diamond	Rosemount	Dunclug	Duncairn	Woodstock	Tullycarnet
Deprivation level	1	12	44	83	14	39	109
Five GCSEs A*-C 2012/13	60	85	91	61	50	52	43
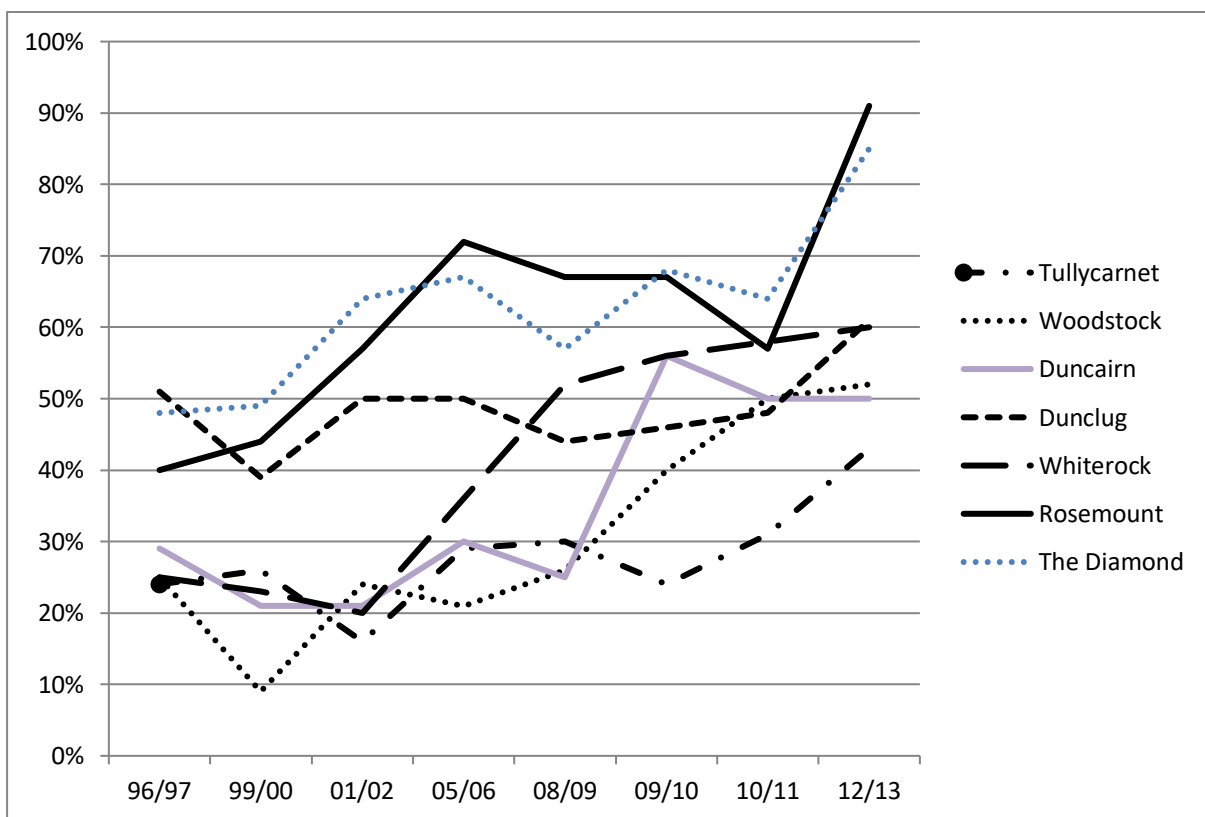
Figure 3: Historical trends in GCSE attainment (5 passes at A*-C) in each Ward

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2.4. Sampling/selection of case study locations

The rationale for including these particular seven Wards in the study, as examples of differential educational achievement, was as follows:

- **Whiterock** because it is the most deprived Ward in Northern Ireland and it has significantly different educational achievement levels compared with **The Diamond** (which is also a predominantly Catholic Ward and closely matched for multiple deprivation).
- **The Diamond** and **Duncairn** because this gave the study predominantly Catholic and Protestant Wards which are very closely matched for deprivation but demonstrate differential performance educationally. Duncairn has experienced a spike in educational attainment since approximately 2008/09 (see Figure 2.2.), and is now performing at similar levels as **Woodstock**, another predominantly Protestant Ward, even though Duncairn is more highly deprived. Regarding the GCSE indicator, **The Diamond** appears to be a particular anomaly because it has high deprivation and strong educational performance.
- **Rosemount** and **Tullycarnet** because Rosemount provides a predominantly Catholic Ward with relatively high deprivation but good educational performance, whereas Tullycarnet, predominantly Protestant, provides the opposite profile (i.e. a Ward with relatively low deprivation and poor educational performance).
- **Woodstock** because it is more highly ranked for deprivation than **Tullycarnet,** and yet has better educational outcomes. Both are predominantly Protestant, so they offer a comparative view within the Protestant group.
- **Dunclug** because it is a mixed-religion Ward and it has an average GCSE performance level in the sample.

In terms of **symmetry**, 3 predominantly Catholic Wards, 3 predominantly Protestant Wards and 1 mixed Ward were chosen.

2.5. Methods of data collection

The study began with the **analysis of existing secondary data** (Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service/Census/Department of Education data), including geo-social, community and educational services mapping to describe the characteristics of the target areas and to explore change over time in relation to education and a series of social and demographic factors.

The qualitative case study data was collected through a variety of fit-for-purpose methods. This mostly comprised **semi-structured, individual, face-to-face interviews and focus group interviews.** A purposive sample was chosen from key criteria in an attempt to access a range of relevant stakeholder voices within the timeframe of the research. The sample comprised participants at the community and school-levels, including: children and young people; parents; teachers; principals; community leaders; education welfare officers; and other stakeholders (e.g. members of residents' associations) in the case study Wards (specific details are listed in Figure 4). Focus group and interview guides were developed for each grouping to explore their responses to a series of social and educational indicators. These schedules were designed to be used flexibly in order to allow specific issues of individual or local interest to arise spontaneously. **Creative methods** were also used to collect visual data (drawings) from young people during some of the focus groups, to stimulate discussion around education and community issues and aspirations for the future.

2.6. Data analysis

Quantitative analysis of secondary data was undertaken using SPSS software (version 19; IBM) and in consultation with the DENI. Qualitative data from the focus groups and interviews were transcribed and analysed through a two-step process:

(i) inductively analysed using an adapted form of thematic analysis, based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to determine the key drivers and inhibitors to achievement for each Ward area followed by

(ii) analysis through a bespoke Social Capital analytic framework, based on the CENI (2003) model, Schuller's (2007) matrix, Portes' (1998) typology and Bourdieu's (1989) conceptualisations of capitals, field and habitus. (See Pages 21-26 for fuller explanation).

The full research team met on a regular basis thus enabling a comparative analysis of all qualitative data to reveal meta-themes, which were combined with the statistical analysis of secondary data to provide a more holistic picture of each case study site and ultimately a critical contrast of cases across the study sample, relevant to the research questions.

Figure 4: Specific details of the range of qualitative data collected within each case study Ward

Ward	Community-level data	School-level data
Whiterock	Education welfare officer focus group x1 Community representative interview x 1 Community partnership focus group x 1 Parents focus group x 1 Detached young people focus group x 2	Senior teacher interviews x 2 Education and Library Board representative interview x1 Nursery school principal interview x 1 Primary school principal interview x 1 Special school principal interview x1 Post-primary principal interview x 4 Post-primary pupil focus group x 2
The Diamond	Community worker interview x 4 Parent of high-achieving child interview x 1 Parent focus group x 2 Youth workers focus group x 1	Nursery school principal interview x 1 Primary school principal interview x 2 Post-primary principal interview x 4 Post-primary pupil focus group x 4 Primary pupil focus group x 1
Rosemount	Education welfare officer focus group x 1 Youth worker interview x 2 Young people forum focus group x 1 Parents focus group x1	Nursery school principal interview x 1 Post-primary principal interview x 4 Post-primary pupil focus group x 5
Dunclug	Education welfare officer focus group x 1 Community worker interview x 2 Community leaders focus group x 1 Youth workers focus group x 1 Young people focus group x 3 Parent interviews x 2 High achiever interview x 1	Nursery/primary school principal interview x 1 Post-primary principal interview x 3 Teacher interview x 2 Post-primary pupil focus groups x 4
Duncairn	Education welfare officer focus group x 1 Community representative interview x 1 Youth/community worker interview x 2 Young people's focus group x 1 Parents focus group x 1 Residents association focus group x 1	Nursery/primary school principal interview x 1 Post-primary principal interview x 4 Post-primary vice-principal interview x 1 Post-primary senior teacher interview x 2 Alternative education pupil focus group x 2
Woodstock	Education welfare officer focus group x 1 Parents focus group x 1 Community representative interview x 2 Youth and community workers focus group x 1 Residents focus group x 1 Young people focus group (residents) x 1 Neighbourhood Partnership personnel focus group x 1	Post-primary principal interview x 3 Post-primary vice-principal interview x 2 Post-primary senor teacher interview x 4
Tullycarnet	Education welfare officer focus group x 1 Community worker interview x 4 High achiever interview x 4 Parent focus group x 1 Neighbourhood forum focus group x 1	Nursery school principal interview x 1 Primary school principal interview x 1 Post-primary principal/teacher interview x 6 Primary pupil focus group x 1 Alternative education pupil interviews x 3

2.7. Ethical approval

The study was granted ethical approval by the Queen's University Ethics committee through the School of Education and the research team took guidance from the BERA Ethical Guidelines (2011)[113]. Particular ethical issues relevant to this study included voluntary informed consent; right to withdraw; entitlement to privacy and anonymity of participants' data; incentives; legal compliance; minimal bureaucratic or emotional burden and responsibility to the sponsor.

Various levels of informed consent were required for this research (individual, schools, organisations, children, and parents), which required developing and tailoring appropriate communications for the differing respondents to ensure clarity of expectations, forms of agreement and right to withdraw at any time. As with all forms of ethnographic studies with children and 'seldom heard' young people, the notion of informed consent can be problematic, but in former studies (Leitch et al, 2007[114], Leitch & Mitchell, 2007[115]) this process had been effective in a manner that is sensitive to children's rights, and this has included the use of creative and visual methods, such as those used in this study.

2.8. Advisory Group

An Advisory Group (AAG) was established at the outset of the inquiry comprising a broad range of representatives from the political, community, statutory and voluntary sectors, and its core membership (9 stakeholders) evolved through building new, and extending existing, relationships with key gatekeepers /community leaders for each neighbourhood area. The group met on six occasions, and gave the research team a strong platform on which to proceed, in terms of their connections within the case study areas and their experience and knowledge of relevant structural policies and initiatives. They also advised on the content and format of the research methodology, agreed on ethical protocols, and provided interpretations of emergent data and findings. The final meeting of the AAG was widened to include a larger group of stakeholders (36 in total) from the political, community, statutory and voluntary sectors, who had the opportunity to comment and give feedback upon the preliminary findings of the research. This final meeting therefore acted as both data collection and early dissemination of the results.

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[113] The British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research; available at: https://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/BERA-Ethical-Guidelines-2011.pdf?noredirect=1
[114] Leitch, R. et al. (2007) Consulting pupils in Assessment for Learning classrooms: the twists and turns of working with students as co-researchers. *Educational Action Research*, Vol. 15, 3, 459-478.
[115] Leitch, R. & Mitchell, S. (2007) Caged birds and cloning machines: how student imagery 'speaks' to us about cultures of schooling and student participation. *Improving Schools*, 10(1), 53-71.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework of the ILiAD Study – Social Capital

3.1 Introduction

Put simply, social capital describes the quality and quantity of the connections within and between people, communities and social networks (Fine, 2010).[116] More generally, social capital is regarded as an important informer of policies which aim to minimise social exclusion. However, in more critical interpretations, the concept is viewed as little more than a 'convenient justification for a retreat from expensive welfare spending' (Campbell, 2000: 184).[117] Similarly, Field (2010:160)[118] argues that policy makers are keen to adopt social capital as a social panacea because the concept 'subordinates the social to the economic', justifies an increased role for the private sector and a decreased role for the state, and 'redirects civic activism into safe, depoliticised channels'. In the context of Northern Ireland's divided society, social capital has a particular draw for the potential it offers to strengthen the peace process and to bridge the societal divides that compelled the violence of the 'Troubles'. A number of government departments, statutory agencies and NGOs based in Northern Ireland have thus adopted the concept as a key indicator of societal progression by making explicit commitments to accrue and increase levels of social capital, the concept thus featuring in interventions around health (HPA, 2005),[119] the community and voluntary sector (CENI, 2003),[120] and housing (NIHE, 2008).[121]

In social capital theory, the role of education is seen as absolutely central. For example, Coleman (1988)[122] (whose academic background was the sociology of education) held that social capital was a significant enabler of a child's cognitive and social development. More broadly, he posited that a child's 'connectedness' to their family members, wider community, and school was an important precursor of higher academic attainment (Meier, 1999: 1-3).[123] In the context of the ILiAD study, i.e. Northern Ireland's deeply segregated school system, it is also necessary to examine the connections between religious commitment and academic achievement. Several international studies have reported a positive correlation between levels of 'religious capital' and educational attainment (e.g. Al-Fadhli & Kersen 2010).[124] Glanville et al (2008: 111)[125] argue that this positive correlation is due to the 'pro-education attitudes and resources' children in religious structures regularly come into contact with. In other studies, it is claimed that religious activity encourages 'conventional' behaviour that facilitates better integration into school systems (Gerwitz et al., 2005).[126] Moreover, it is further argued that the discipline provided by religious commitment boosts levels of individual resilience (Etzioni, 2004)[127] and encourages children to respect authority (Arum, 2003).[128]

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[116] Fine, B. (2010) Theories of Social Capital: researchers behaving badly, London: Pluto Press.

[117] Campbell, C. (2000) 'Social Capital and Health: contextualising health promotion within local community networks', in S. Baron, J. Field and T. Schuller (eds), Social Capital: critical perspectives, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[118] Field, J. (2010) Social Capital, (2nd ed) London: Routledge.

[119] Health Promotion Agency (2005) Connections for Health – A Report on the Social Capital Impact of the Ageing Well Initiative on Community and Older People's Health, Health Promotion Agency in partnership with Age Concern.

[120] CENI (2003), Report on Research into Evaluating Community-Based and Voluntary Activity in Northern Ireland, Belfast. Available from www.dsdni.gov.uk

[121] Northern Ireland Housing Executive (2008) Community Involvement Strategy 2008 – 2011, Housing Community Network.

[122] Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. The American Journal of Sociology, 94, pp. S95-S120

[123] Meier, A. (1999) 'Social Capital and School Achievement among Adolescents'. CDE Working Paper: 1–53. Accessed online on 12/02/15 at: http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/cde/cdewp/99-18.pdf

[124] Al-Fadhli, H.M. and Kersen, T.M. (2010) 'How Religious, Social and Cultural Capital Factors Influence Educational Aspirations of African American Adolescents', The Journal of Negro Education 79:3, pp.380-389.

[125] Glanville, J., Sikkink, D. and Hernández, E.I. (2008), 'Religious Involvement and Educational Outcomes: The Role of Social Capital and Extracurricular Participation', The Sociological Quarterly 49:1, pp.105-137.

[126] Gewirtz, S., Dickson, M., Power, S., Halpin, D. and Whitty, G. (2005) 'The Deployment of Social Capital Theory in Educational Policy and Provision: the Case of Education Action Zones in England', British Educational Research Journal 31:6, pp.651-673.

[127] Etzioni, A. (1994) The Spirit of Community: The Reinvention of American Society, New York: Simon & Schuster.

[128] Arum, R. (2003). *Judging school discipline: The crisis of moral authority*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

The specific requirements of the ILiAD study dictated that the social capital framework should enable examination of:

1. Micro (grassroots), meso (school-level), and macro (policy-level) social capital formations.
2. Cross cutting themes (across the seven Wards) such as: value placed on education; parental capacity; school-home-community engagement; academic selection.
3. The discourses regarding achievement, low attainment and appropriate interventions.
4. The enablers and inhibitors of academic achievement within each Ward.
5. The ways in which these enablers and inhibitors work themselves through micro, meso and macro levels in each Ward.
6. Trends, comparisons and contrasts within and between the Wards.

To meet these requirements, the framework developed for the ILiAD study (see Figure 6) adopted the key elements from the CENI (2003) model to categorise germane proxy indicators. In other words, the projected outcomes from the CENI model (i.e. empowerment, infrastructure, and connectedness (bonding); engagement, horizontal accessibility, and innovation (bridging); and resources, vertical accessibility, and influence (linking)) have being applied to the specific context of this study. For example, parental support is categorised within the bonding proxy of empowerment; and positive triangular relationship between school, home and community is categorised within the bridging proxy of engagement. The selection of these sub-proxies (as outlined below) was based on (a) the scope of this study; and (b) the broader literature on social capital and factors which impact educational attainment.

Bonding Social Capital (micro / grass roots level)

- **Empowerment –** i.e. high local value on education; parental / familial / peer support; stable home environment; and individual resilience;
- **Infrastructure –** i.e. accessibility / visibility of schools / school seen as in and of community; effective local community and youth work input; and visible pathways to FE, HE, and work;
- **Connectedness –** i.e. positive community influences; a sense of community cohesion; and unifying factors and traditions i.e. role of the Church and other shared socio-political / cultural associations (e.g. the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), or flute bands).

Bridging capital (meso / school level)

- **Engagement –** i.e. positive triangular relationship between school, home and community; and effective school leadership re discipline, standards and expectations;
- **Accessibility (horizontal) –** i.e. effective and accessible home-school-community linkages; supportive teachers / pupil-centred schools / social mixing; and inter-school / inter-agency collaboration;
- **Innovation –** i.e. flexible curricula / alternative measures of success / vocational placement opportunities; opportunities for parental learning; and effective provision of SEN support, extended schools, pastoral care, and support during (primary to post-primary) transition.

Linking capital (macro / policy level)

- **Resources –** i.e. relevant policies / power structures; and decision-making processes;
- **Accessibility (vertical) –** i.e. access to external institutions with power and resources; and access to decision making processes;
- **Influence –** i.e. ability to influence policy; and ability to affect decision making processes.

However, as indicated earlier, to meet the specific aims of this study, the negative consequences of social capital, or what Rubio (1997)[129] refers to as 'perverse social capital' also needed to be examined. To address these concerns, the social capital framework for the ILiAD study was also guided by Portes' (1998)[130] counter thesis on social capital which encompasses the following three examples of negative social capital:

- **Exclusion of outsiders –** i.e. exclusionary processes tied to the bounded solidarity of the community. For example, in the case of this study, a perceived demographic 'threat' leading to distrust/hostility towards outsiders;
- **Restriction on individual freedom –** i.e. restricted personal autonomy caused by community demands for conformity. For example, in the case of this study, spatial mobility restrictions and class-based perceptions of testing, selection and primary to post-primary transfers;
- **Downward levelling of norms –** i.e. narratives and perceptions of oppression, besiegement, stigma and discrimination which result in limiting ambition downwards. For example, in the case of this study, the influence of negative role models e.g. their impact on young people in terms of the local 'reward structure'.

3.2. Optimal forms of social capital

To supplement the ILiAD framework and to examine the interplay between bonding, bridging and linking capital, Schuller's (2007)[131] matrix (see Figure 5) was also applied to the seven Wards. Notwithstanding the difficulties in distinguishing between the bonding and bridging forms, it is important that a complementary balance between the two forms is achieved (Field, 2010). Defining such a balance is both highly problematic and entirely dependent on the context in which the social capital is generated. However, Schuller (2007: 16) has helpfully constructed a simple matrix, which serves to illustrate how the forms interact with each other to create networks and influence dynamics of social units:
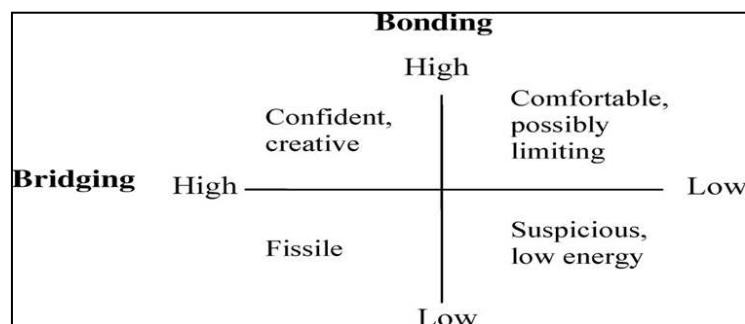
Figure 5: Schuller's (2007) Matrix of Bonding and Bridging Social Capital

In this model, a social unit or community with high bonding and bridging is confident in its own identity, enjoys internal cohesion, but is also open and acceptant of outside ideas and values. Schuller (2007:11-17) offers, by way of example, the idea of communities, which embrace immigration while retaining 'strong historical norms'. Conversely, a community with low levels bonding and bridging capital are likely to develop 'untrusting' and 'xenophobic' traits and become characterised by anomie, and/or intolerance as it would not be able to draw on either internal or external resources.

The third category is a well-bonded community with low levels of bridging, particularly those communities whose bonds are based on 'suspicion and hostility towards outsiders' (ibid: 17). In such social units, communities may appear internally cohesive, but be exclusionary in

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[129] Rubio, M. (1997) 'Perverse social capital – some evidence from Colombia', Journal of Economic Issues, 31 (3), 805-816.

[130] Portes, A. (1998) 'Social capital: its origins and applications', Modern Sociology Annual Review of Sociology, Vol. 24: pp 1-24.

[131] Schuller, T. (2007) 'Reflections on the use of social capital', Review of Social Economy, 65: 1, 11 — 28

terms of outside opportunities, unable to adapt to broader social changes and, therefore, prone to isolation and detachment. In the context of post-conflict Northern Ireland this particular blend of social capital is, often, the most prevalent (Shirlow and Murtagh, 2006).[132]

The fourth category in Schuller's matrix, high bridging with low bonding would, generally, refer to groups or communities whose members do not see this 'association' as their 'primary social referent of identity'. Such a blend would be typical of a group of otherwise well-connected people who are, nonetheless independent of each other and are 'together' only in 'temporary or loose connections'. Consequently, these types of social units would be characterised by 'transiency' and impermanence (Schuller, 2007: 14-17). In the contemporary context of ever-more flexible labour markets and increased inward economic-migration, an example of this fourth categorisation could be a 'community' of otherwise transitory individuals, such as short-term residents with privately rented tenures (Syrett and North, 2008).[133]

3.3. Capitals, 'Fields', and 'Habitus'

To further complement the ILiAD social capital framework (see Figure 6), it is also important to examine the (inter-dependant) relationship between the 'objective social structures' of the Wards / communities (fields) and the 'subjective dispositions' of individual residents (habitus). These interrelationships are central to our understanding of how 'class, space and relationships' affect the 'construction of an individual's social world' (Houston, 2002: 159-164).[134]

Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu made a significant contribution to the social capital discourses via his conceptualisations of capitals, field and habitus. In the context of this study, the heuristic of 'field' allows for an analysis of each Ward as a socio-spatial entity; 'habitus' helps us explain the dynamic forces of the different dispositions of agents therein; and Bourdieu's third heuristic, 'capitals' facilitates an understanding of such assets as both 'weapons' and 'stakes of struggle', which 'allows its possessors to wield a power, an influence ... in the field' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 114).[135]

Several communities in the ILiAD study remain (to varying degrees) characterised by the recent conflict. Given that the habitus of individual residents has been formed through a 'multitude of past/present social engagements', their habitus is 'fluid, rather than fixed' and 'remains strongly influenced by historical, social and cultural contexts' (O'Brien and O'Fathaigh, 2005: 67-68).[136] This 'non-static' nature of habitus means that the social 'field': is only 'activated via the agency of individuals'; can never be considered as 'completely stable'; and has a bi-directional relationship with habitus. In other words, the existence of the 'field' is contingent on agents and their 'dispositions and acquired schemata', for it is the habitus of agents that 'constitutes the field' and 'imbues it with meaning' (ibid: 68-70). Concomitantly, by engaging in the 'field', people adapt their habitus to include the dominant norms that will enable profitable engagement in the 'field' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Two examples relating to a downward levelling of norms and the impact of the recent conflict highlight the heuristic qualities of Bourdieu's model. In the framework developed for the ILiAD study, one of the proxy indicators of negative social capital relates the limiting of

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[132] Shirlow, P. and Murtagh, B. (2006). Belfast: Segregation, Violence and the City. Dublin: Pluto Press.

[133] Syrett, S. and North, D. (2008) *Renewing Deprived Neighbourhoods*, Bristol: Policy Press.

[134] Houston, S. (2002) 'Reflecting on habitus, field and capital: towards a culturally sensitive social work', Journal of Social Work, Vol. 2: pp 149-167.

[135] Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L. (1992) An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[136] O'Brien, S. & Fathaigh, M. (2005) 'Bringing in Bourdieu's theory of social capital: renewing learning partnership approaches to social inclusion', *Irish Educational Studies*, Vol. 24 (1) 65-76.

ambition. Bourdieu (1998)[137] himself accepts that habitus is a key factor in the social reproduction of disadvantage. One of the field's most important effects on habitus is to limit the variation between an individual's actions and the constraining norms of their own social group. For example, in a community with low academic attainment and high levels of unemployment, it is likely that the affected habitus of local young people will persuade some to view further or higher education as unattainable and minimum-wage work, precarious zero-hour contracts or unemployment as inevitable (Portes, 1998).[138] In such ways, their 'affected habitus dictates to them what is considered achievable and worth aspiring to' (Oliver and O'Reilly, 2010: 51).[139]

Similarly, Bourdieu's model is particularly useful in terms of explaining the impact of inter-community conflict and extant paramilitarism on individual residents. Although, habitus relates to an individual's internalised dispositions, they are equally influenced by the individual's desire to conform to (local) dominant norms (O'Brien and O'Fathaigh, 2005). In other words, an individual's habitus is, in general, 'typical of one's social groups, communities, family, and historical position' (Oliver and O'Reilly, 2010: 56-57). In such ways, individuals (often unconsciously) 'accept and reproduce the field-specific norms' and hierarchies of their communities, i.e. sectarian identifications and the legitimacy of paramilitaries, as 'self-evident' (ibid).

Figure 6 below shows the final version of the social capital framework developed by the ILiAD team, which reveals the indicators that were used to demonstrate how social capital (including negative social capital) operates in the case study Ward areas.

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[137] Bourdieu, P. (1998) *Acts of Resistance: Against the New Myths of Our Time,* (Translated by R. Nice), Cambridge: Polity Press.

[138] Portes, A. (1998) 'Social capital: its origins and applications', Modern Sociology Annual Review of Sociology, Vol. 24: pp 1-24.

[139] Oliver, C. and O'Reilly, K. (2010) A Bourdieusian analysis of class and migration: habitus and the individualizing process. *Sociology*, 44: 49–65

Figure 6: Social Capital framework for the ILiAD study

Capital	Proxy indicators		
Bonding Micro level (grass roots)	**Empowerment** (1) High local value on education (2) Parental / familial / peer support (3) Stable home environment (4) Individual resilience	**Infrastructure** (1) Accessibility / visibility of schools / school seen as in and of community (2) Effective community and youth work (3) Visible pathways to FE, HE, and work	**Connectedness** (1) Positive community influences (2) Sense of community cohesion (3) Unifying factors and traditions i.e. role of the Church and other shared socio-political / cultural associations (e.g. GAA)
Bridging Meso level (school level)	**Engagement** (1) Positive triangular relationship between school, home and community (2) Effective school leadership re discipline, standards and expectations	**(horizontal) Accessibility** (1) Effective and accessible home-school linkages (2) Supportive teachers / pupil-centred schools / social mixing (3) Inter-school / inter-agency collaboration	**Innovation** (1) Flexible curricula / alternative measures of success / vocational placement opportunities (2) Opportunities for parental learning (3) Effective provision of SEN support, Extended Schools, pastoral care, and support during transition
Linking Macro level (policy)	**Resources** (1) Historical and demographic context (2) Relevant policies / power structures (3) Propinquity of local schools (4) Financial incentives/ investments/ pump-priming	**(vertical) Accessibility** (1) Access to external institutions with power and resources (2) Access to decision / policy making processes (3) Positive (community-level) perceptions of 'spatial self'	**Influence** (1) Ability to influence education <u>policy</u> (2) Ability to affect <u>political</u> decision-making processes (3) Ability to secure <u>financial</u> support
Negative outcomes of Social Capital	**Exclusion of others** (1) Exclusionary processes tied to the bounded solidarity of the community (2) Perceived demographic encroachment i.e. distrust / hostility towards outsiders	**Restrictions on individual freedom** (1) Restricted personal autonomy caused by community demands for conformity. (2) Spatial mobility restrictions (3) Negative impacts and class-based perceptions of testing, selection and primary to post primary transfers	**Downward levelling of norms** (1) Narratives and perceptions of oppression, besiegement, stigma and discrimination which result in limiting ambition downwards. (2) Influence of negative role models e.g. their impact on young people in terms of the local 'reward structure'.

Chapter 4: Summary results of the seven ILiAD case studies

This chapter presents a summary of the key drivers and inhibitors of achievement in each of the seven ILiAD case study areas (Whiterock; The Diamond; Rosemount; Dunclug; Duncairn; Woodstock; and Tullycarnet) as identified from document review, secondary data analysis of official statistics, and qualitative interviews with community representatives, education welfare officers, parents from the Ward, principals of schools serving children and young people from each area, and young people themselves. The drivers and inhibitors will be presented as macro-level (structural) factors, meso-level (school) factors, and micro-level (individual/family/peer/immediate community context) factors, firstly in a force-field analysis diagram, followed by a broader explanation of the factors that have impacted on achievement in each Ward.

Each summary of the drivers and inhibitors of achievement within each Ward is followed by an analysis of the social capital (including negative social capital) within each Ward, as demonstrated through analysis of the data collected. The social capital model developed for the ILiAD study comprises four elements:

Bonding social capital to examine the (micro-level) immediate, familial factors which impact on educational achievement;

Bridging social capital to outline the school-level (meso) factors;

Linking social capital to determine the influence of structural (policy-level) factors such as the Ward's history, demography and access to decision making processes; and finally,

Negative social capital to highlight some of the concept's less desirable outcomes.

Note 1: The full results for each case study Ward are available to view in Volume 2 of the ILiAD final report.

Note 2: In the ILiAD Final Summary Report (Volume 3) the terms, Micro, Meso and Macro, have been replaced with: Immediate (Individual- Home- Community), School and Structural/Policy levels for readability and ease of explanation.

4.1. Case study 1: Whiterock

4.1.1. Force Field Analysis of drivers and inhibitors of achievement in Whiterock

Drivers

Present situation – 60% five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13); 1st Multiple Deprivation 2010

Inhibitors

Drivers

Macro-level

a) Inter-agency & school cooperation

b) High-performing education institutions are situated within the local Ward area

c) Substantial, high-quality early years provision

d) Social mixing in grammar schools

e) High attainment performance of grammar sector

Meso-level

a) Parental involvement in schools

b) Good leadership in schools

c) Facilitative teacher skill-set and positive teacher behaviour & attitudes

d) High expectations of schools

e) Transition support – from nursery school to careers advice

f) Provision of academic and vocational choice

h) Monitoring individual progress and use of school data

i) Combining an academic definition of success with a pastoral definition to heighten aspirations

j) Advantage of single sex schools – for females

Micro-level

a) Resilience and self-motivation of high achievers against the odds

b) Parental support, encouragement and high expectations

c) Positive intergenerational influences

d) Identification with macro-level structures

Inhibitors

Macro-level

a) Felt effects of Academic selection

b) Pressures on SEN and EWO support & insufficient resources

c) Lack of political representation and feelings of disempowerment to participate in local political structures

d) School closures and amalgamations

e) Poor physical environment

Meso-level

a) Inappropriate curriculum and school structure

b) Schools and other agencies working in silos

c) Deficits in teaching – disinterested teachers and teachers struggling to manage classes

Micro-level

a) Class division, anti-social behaviour and the creation of 'no-go' areas

b) Mental health issues and adverse circumstances at home

c) Young people's lack of confidence & internalising a sense of being a 'problem' or failure

d) Poor parental support & skills (particularly low literacy)

e) Intergenerational lack of aspiration/ low expectations of school & education

4.1.2. Summary of the findings from the Whiterock Ward

A range of macro, meso and micro-level factors are seen to impact on the educational attainment of young people from Whiterock. Across these three levels, it is clear that a number of these factors enable academic achievement in the Ward and others are seen to inhibit young peoples' progression through school. In terms of the macro-level drivers of attainment in Whiterock, the data evidence that there is a long-standing culture of collaboration and cooperation between schools and other agencies involved in the educational welfare of young people. This culture may help to explain the reasons why the most deprived Ward in Northern Ireland performs significantly better in terms of the proportion of young people (58%) who attain five GCSEs.[140] It is also clear that an important element of this culture is that there are several high-performing education institutions situated within the local Ward area. Indeed, more than half of Whiterock's school-age population attend schools less than one mile away; and out of a total secondary enrolment of 572, only 15 pupils attend a school which is three miles away. Moreover (and uniquely within the ILiAD Wards), Whiterock has: two grammar schools; a FE campus; a HE institution; and a designated Specialist School for Performing Arts very close to the geographical centre of the Ward. These highly regarded community resources were seen by many local residents as having a wholly positive influence on young peoples' aspirations. There are also multiple nursery schools and Surestart programmes within the Ward which are fully integrated into partnership arrangements with community groups and statutory agencies. Additionally, nursery place uptake for children born in Whiterock has not fallen below 75% in the last four years (higher than the other ILiAD Wards). Moreover, the quality of this provision is also very high and recent inspections have ranked the quality of education and pastoral care within these nurseries as 'very good' or 'outstanding'. The final macro-level driver was based on the claim that many young people from Whiterock benefit from the social mixing which is said to be a feature of the Ward's grammar schools.

Several macro-level inhibitors were also identified. The most significant of these related to the issue of academic selection where, it was argued, that the process typically creates upward mobility for the few and a sense of failure for the many. Here the Whiterock data are seen to concur with the other Wards in the ILiAD study which attest that the impact of this 'failure' can often have a pronounced and long-term effect on the self-esteem of young people. A further significant macro-level inhibitor is the pressure created by (a) the high numbers of local young people who require additional educational support; and (b) the under-resourcing of SEN and EWO provision. According to the data, 45% of Ward's school-aged population have been 'statemented' of are in receipt of additional educational support; the phenomenon of recurring family distress patterns is highly evident; and a lack of resources is preventing proper assessments, supportive interventions, and the effective diagnosis of SEN. Other macro-level inhibitors concerned: school closures and amalgamations; the poor physical environment of parts of the Ward; and the accusation among some residents that, notwithstanding high levels of connectedness in the Ward, it was sometimes difficult to participate in local political structures.

In terms of the school-level (meso) drivers of attainment, the data here also concur with the other Wards in the ILIAD study and suggest that the most important enablers are: schools' capacity to encourage and maintain parental engagement; strong leadership as evidenced by e.g. high expectations and discipline standards; the provision of vocational opportunities and transition support from nursery school to careers advice; and a staff cohort which is empathetic to the young people in their charge. The quality of the schools which serve the Ward was further highlighted in recent ETI inspection reports which claimed that leadership in the two most attended non-selective schools was 'outstanding' and 'highly effective'. Similarly, the capacity of local schools to encourage high levels of attendance is evident in

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[140] However, when English and Maths are included, this figure drops to 25.7%.

the education indices which show that, despite being the most deprived Ward, the nine schools serving young people from Whiterock has an average high-absenteeism rate. Arguably, these factors can be, at least in part, attributed to: (a) the centrality of schools in the wider learning community; (b) the standard of education provided with the CMS; conceptualisations of holistic pastoral care in schools therein which are further strengthened by (broad) community identification with this ethos. It is also clear from the Whiterock data that Extended Schools programmes and Full School Community Networks are making a substantial contribution, particularly, for pupils with limited parental support, and parents who want to become more involved in their child's education but are prevented from doing so on account of their own essential skills deficits. Notwithstanding the evident quality of schools in Whiterock, several meso-level inhibitors were also identified around: the inappropriateness of the school curriculum, particularly for less academically-minded pupils; the accusation that some schools and other agencies continue to work in *'silos'*; and the claim that some teachers appear *'disinterested'* and often struggle to manage classes with disruptive pupils.

According to the data, the key micro-level drivers of attainment in Whiterock are similar to the other ILiAD study areas. The individual resilience and self-motivation of high achievers; high expectations of parents; and parental capacity to support and encourage their children's education were frequently highlighted as significant enablers of academic achievement. Indeed, one of the distinguishing features of the Whiterock Ward is the familial commitment among many parents to schools and education. Two other drivers were identified around positive familial / intergenerational influences and (individual) identification with macro-level structures, for example, the phyco-social connections of the Catholic Church in schools and communities.

As evidenced in other ILiAD Wards, many inhibitors of attainment are simply the flip-side of specific drivers. Notwithstanding the above comments, many young people from Whiterock have a distinct lack of self-motivation and have instead internalised a sense of failure. Many school-aged residents have little self-confidence, aspiration or, indeed, expectations that they will succeed either at school or within the labour market. Similarly, many parents in the Ward have literacy and numeracy challenges which prevent them from providing the necessary level of support for their children. Further barriers to local attainment levels were identified around: poverty; mental health issues; adverse circumstances at home; anti-social behaviour; and the creation of 'no-go' areas. Violence, anti-social behaviour, and the misuse of drugs and alcohol in the Ward were reported by some respondents as having worsened since the ending of the recent conflict.

4.1.3. Social capital in Whiterock

The social capital model developed for the ILiAD study comprises four elements: bonding social capital to examine the (micro-level) immediate, familial factors which impact on educational achievement; bridging social capital to outline the school-level (meso) factors; linking social capital to determine the influence of structural (policy-level) factors such as the Ward's history, demography and access to decision making processes; and finally, negative social capital to highlight some of the concept's less desirable outcomes. In this theoretical framework, bonding capital relates to community-level conceptualisations of empowerment, infrastructure and connectedness. The data attest that there are high levels of bonding capital in Whiterock as evidenced by accounts of: a close-knit community; long-term tenures; high levels of community participation; and reliable networks (familial and community) of support. It is also clear that parental commitment and positive community norms around education are common among large sections of the Ward. Parental involvement with schools is seen as the norm among many families in the Ward; and many of the Whiterock parents interviewed had no difficulty imagining their children at third level education. However, there

are clearly comparisons with the Protestant Wards in terms of deprivation, sections of disaffected youth, and pockets of weak parental support.

In terms of bridging social capital (conceptualised here as schools' levels of engagement, accessibility and innovation), the Whiterock data make clear that the schools which serve the Ward have in place effective strategies to encourage parental involvement, inter-school cooperation, and collaborative practices with external agencies. This reinforces the wider claims made in a recent ETI report that, across West Belfast, collaboration between primary schools and nurseries, in addition to the sustained commitment of local business and community networks, are key aspects of strategic education planning in the area. Two other (meso-level) contrasts with the Protestant Wards in the ILiAD study were apparent. Firstly, a large number of principals and teachers of the schools which serve the Ward are former pupils who grew up, and in many cases, continue to live in West Belfast. In the Duncairn, Woodstock and Tullycarnet data, the middle-class backgrounds of some school teaching staff and the perception that few of them lived locally were viewed as significant inhibitors to educational achievement. However, in Whiterock, the perception of young people is that the teachers at *their* schools are from *their* community. The second key contrast relates to levels of absenteeism. The latest indices (2012-2013) show that in the nine schools which serve Whiterock there is a high absenteeism rate of 13.3%. This compares favourably with Duncairn (16.3%), Tullycarnet (18.2%) and Woodstock (21.3%).

The third element in the ILiAD framework is linking social capital and relates to the structural factors seen to impact on local attainment levels. Although deprived communities in West Belfast were, arguably, at the epicentre of the recent conflict, the data suggest that Whiterock has mediated its post-conflict transitions more successfully that some of the urban-based Protestant Wards. Intra-community tensions did not, to any extent, feature in the data; conflict-related spatial mobility restrictions were similarly absent; nor was there any sense of defeatism, abandonment, or perceived ethno-religious encroachment. Similarly, Whiterock has a young, expanding and settled demographic profile: 25% of the Ward is under the age of 15; and only 1.1% of the Ward was born outside the UK or Ireland compared to a Northern Ireland average of 7.1%. Moreover, Whiterock has an equally settled residential structure and only 8.9% of houses in the Ward are private rentals compared with 21.1% in Duncairn and 28.3% in Woodstock. With specific reference to educational factors, it is clear that stocks of linking social capital in Whiterock are increased via: high levels of inter-agency / inter-school cooperation, substantial provision of pre-school programmes, and perhaps most importantly, the propinquity of high-performing education institutions. The fact that the Ward has so many quality schools, literally, within walking distance from pupils' homes has important and positive consequences such as: (a) these schools being seen as assets of the community; (b) young people having a constant reminder that education is an integral part of their lives and living environment; (c) schools being accessible to parents and more able to also involve the community in events and initiatives; and (d) reduced transportation costs and journey times for pupils thus encouraging higher levels of attendance.

Looking at bonding, bridging and linking social capital together, it is clear that Whiterock faces many of the same barriers to attainment as found in the other ILiAD Wards. For example, there are: acute budgetary pressures for both schools and support services; local legacies of the recent conflict; a section of young people who are bereft of confidence, ambition, or parental support; and high levels of poverty and deprivation. However, the data also make clear that the Whiterock community has a range of 'critical assets' (Lochner et al, 1999)[141]. These critical assets are best understood in relation to the World Bank's (2011)[142]

[141] Lochner, K., Kawachi, I., & Kennedy, B.P. (1999) Social capital: a guide to its measurement. Health and Place, 3: 259-270. (TS, AS)
[142] World Bank (2010) 'WDR Development Report 2010' accessed online on 16/10/10 at:
http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTWDR2010/0,,contentMDK:21969137~men
uPK:5287816~pagePK:64167689~piPK:64167673~theSitePK:5287741,00.html

six dimensions of social capital i.e. networks, norms, reciprocity, trust, pro-activity, and collective efficacy. Social capital can only be generated through voluntary, equal and lateral associations. It is clear from the data that such networks in Whiterock are cemented by the Ward's psycho-social connections to unifying forces such as the Catholic Church, Gaelic sports, and the Irish language. The interplay of these forces, all of which, crucially, have a distinct presence in the school-lives of Whiterock's young residents, are seen to engender, certainly among sections of the Ward, what Portes (2010)[143] describes as 'value introjection' - the internalised norms which inform e.g. young people's attitudes to education and obligate their behaviour in school. Similarly, reciprocity and trust are important facets of neighbourliness and familial bonds which were also evident in Whiterock. Moreover, previous studies have established that the maintenance of social capital requires active citizenry within a participative community. In contrast to some sections of the predominantly Protestant Wards, pro-activity and grass-roots participation in Whiterock are visible community norms. The final dimension of collective efficacy was also highlighted in Whiterock where there is clearly a shared sense of 'collective competence' among residents, schools and community workers which encourages them to act in an 'integrated and concerted' fashion to 'meet the broader need' (Lochner et al., 1999: 264).

The final element in the ILiAD framework highlights the impact of negative social capital. The data suggest a higher value placed on education in Whiterock than was found in the predominantly Protestant Wards. However, the data also show that the academic progression of many young people in Whiterock is inhibited by area-based factors such as unemployment, poverty and deprivation which are seen to limit their aspiration and expectations. Although many disadvantaged young people in Whiterock are cognisant of broader opportunities, in some cases, their aspirations and expectations are suppressed by a depressed environment and a 'moral imperative' to 'maintain solidary bonds' with the people they live amongst. In such ways, negative social capital lowers their ambition because their individual aspirations and expectations are 'not universal' but are, to an extent, 'constrained by the limits' of their own community (Portes, 2010: 42-43). The data here evidence that Whiterock may indeed have substantial stocks of bonding, bridging and linking social capital; and these stocks, in all probability, help to explain the unaligned nature of local deprivation and attainment levels. However, despite these social capital and educational 'achievements', the Ward remains the most deprived in Northern Ireland. This highlights the limitations of social capital, particularly, in working class communities. For example: bonding social capital may be apparent in Whiterock but poverty and material insecurity are known to adversely affect social norms of reciprocity (Das, 2006);[144] bridging social capital in the Ward has clearly promoted outward-looking tendencies, however, deprived neighbourhoods tend to have networks which are spatially and socio-economically limited; and linking social capital in Whiterock may provide 'access to decision making processes' but this should not be 'conflated with a capacity to obtain resources in the social structure' (O'Brien and Fathaigh, 2005; 68-71).[145] In other words, there are manifest formations of bonding, bridging and linking social capital in Whiterock but these are often significantly constrained by the context of socio-economic disadvantage.

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[143] Portes, A. (2010) Economic Sociology: a systemic inquiry, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
[144] Das, R. J. (2006) 'Putting social capital in its place', Capital & Class, Vol. 30: pp 65–92.
[145] O'Brien, S. & Fathaigh, M. (2005) 'Bringing in Bourdieu's theory of social capital: renewing learning partnership approaches to social inclusion', Irish Educational Studies, Vol. 24 (1) 65-76.

4.2. Case study 2: The Diamond

4.2.1. Force Field Analysis of drivers and inhibitors of achievement in The Diamond

Drivers		Inhibitors

Present situation – 85% five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13); 14th Multiple Deprivation 2010

Drivers

Macro-level

a) Historical legacy of the Education Act 1947 (for Catholics)
b) Inward investment and resources
c) Social mixing in primary /post-primary schools
d) Equal number of grammar avenues for males and females
e) Recession as a driver
f) High attainment performance of grammar sector

Meso-level

a) Transition support between key educational stages
b) Good pastoral care and close relationships with teachers
c) High discipline standards and academic expectations of the part of the schools
d) Rewarding effort and success in areas other than academics
e) Cooperation and links between schools
f) Monitoring individual needs, using school data & target setting
g) Intergenerational engagement with schools
h) School-community collaboration
i) Pupils feeling listened to in school
j) Breadth of curricula and interactive teaching styles
k) Low rates of high-absenteeism

Micro-level

a) High levels of youth club involvement (Fountain area)
b) Individual resilience and motivation
c) Family support and high expectations of parents
d) Positive adult education experiences of parent/mother are changing norms
e) Feeling connection to a community
f) Positive early education experiences of nursery and primary school

Inhibitors

Macro-level

a) A lack of community cohesiveness and a fractured community identity for Protestants
b) Continuing division/conflict between communities
c) Felt effects of Academic selection
d) Current culture of education policy – perfectionism in a time of cutbacks
e) Official statistics hiding key issues
f) Recession and poverty – role models not coming back to the area
g) Unstable or inadequate funding for early years, youth and community providers

Meso-level

a) Belief in a finite, 'natural' ability level of a child
b) Overuse of IT
c) Schools struggling to engage with parents
d) Historically, schools that served children from the Fountain had a negative reputation
e) No transition support
f) Boys feeling pressured into doing STEM subjects
g) 'Average' children falling through the cracks at school

Micro-level

a) Anti-social behaviour in the Fountain
b) Adverse circumstances at home
c) Intergenerational 'switching off' from education within the Fountain

4.2.2. Summary of the findings from The Diamond Ward

The data evidence a range of macro, meso and micro-level factors which impact on attainment levels in The Diamond Ward. Some are seen to enable achievement and others are seen to inhibit school progression. In terms of the structural (macro-level) drivers of educational success in The Diamond, it is clear that, certainly for the Ward's Catholic population, the key historical legacies of the Education Act (1947) are a widely held belief in the value of education and qualifications in general and in the Catholic education system in particular. This legacy is also reflected in the secondary data which indicate that, similar to the Whiterock Ward, The Diamond performs significantly better in terms of educational attainment than its deprivation rank would suggest. Although The Diamond is the 12th most deprived Ward in Northern Ireland, the latest indices (2012-2013) show a five GCSEs pass rate of 85%. Moreover, the proportion of school leavers in the Ward who entered Higher Education was 36% - more than double the corresponding figures for Tullycarnet (12%), Whiterock (17%), and Woodstock (14%).

There are several high-performing schools located within the Ward (some of which are new-builds). The seven schools which serve the Ward (including three grammars schools) are all within 2.6 miles of the Ward's geographical mid-point: five of these schools have a five GCSE pass rate of over 90%; and several have been given specialist status and, accordingly, receive additional financial support. Other macro-level drivers were identified around: the *'rich tapestry'* of social mix that characterizes many of the Ward's schools; and the equal number of avenues to grammar school education that are now available to girls in the Ward. This parity is also reflected in the attainment data which show that The Diamond is the only Ward in the ILiAD study where females and males perform at approximately the same levels.

However, the data also highlighted a number of structural inhibitors to educational attainment in the Ward, some of which specifically relate to the relatively small Protestant population. For example, the fractured nature of their community identity; their lack of community cohesiveness, particularly, in contrast with the Catholic community; continuing inter-community division and conflict as evidenced by sporadic sectarian tensions around the Fountain area; and the fact that there is only one controlled secondary school serving the Ward. Indeed, it was accepted by several respondents that: the demographic profile of the Ward (i.e. 81.2% Catholic) presents a structural barrier against Protestants in the education system. More broadly, the issue of academic selection was also seen as a barrier to local attainment levels. It was commonly reported that: the *'pressure'* of the transfer test prevents many from attending grammar schools; a number of these pupils do not realise the impact of the transfer test till after they reach secondary education; the test itself creates opportunities for some but frequently serves to reinforce privilege; and that social cleavages have been created between transfer test *'doers'* / grammar attendees and *'non-doers'* / secondary school attendees. It is also clear that, in addition to inadequate funding for Early Years, youth and community provision, there are concerns around some official statistics, in particular: the neglect of value-added in inspection reports; and the Free School Meal (FSM) entitlement measure masking poverty and distorting Extended Schools funding criteria.

In terms of the school-level (meso) drivers of academic achievement, the data evidence that high standards of pastoral care, transition support, inter-school cooperation, and equally high expectations in terms of attainment and discipline are common characteristics of the schools which serve the Ward. In the Catholic schools, pastoral care and transition support were seen as integral elements of their holistic Catholic ethos. In terms of inter-school collaboration, the data outline the positive impact made by the Foyle Learning Community which: involves 14 post-primary schools; engenders effective cross-school linkages; opens up vocational opportunities for grammar school pupils; and provides a wider range of academic subjects for pupils in the non-grammar sector.

One of the most striking features of these data was the close relationships some schools, particularly those in the Catholic sector, have with pupils, their families and the wider community. Several principals: highlighted the value of a Catholic ethos in schools; claimed that teacher interviews are increasingly based on relationship-building qualities; and argued that faith, relationships, and educational attainment were inseparable. It was commonly recounted that, particularly in the Catholic schools: teachers demonstrate '*love*' towards their pupils; there are high levels of intergenerational engagement with schools; and a culture of collaboration exists between schools and the communities they serve. Several secondary schools encourage former pupils to address assemblies around career advice; secondary pupils '*coach*' primary pupils in (after-school) literacy and numeracy programmes; and many teachers '*go the extra mile*' by staying on to help out in such initiatives. Similarly, a number of Catholic parents spoke about the open-door policy in their child's school and claimed that getting an appointment to see teacher or principal was a straightforward process; community workers highlighted that school facilities were widely used by the community; and principals recalled well-attended parents' evenings, '*packed grandparents' days*' and that many former pupils and family members have continuous engagement with schools as classroom assistants or dinner ladies. Other enablers of local attainment included: conceptualisations of achievement beyond the academic; the breadth of curricula and interactive teaching styles; and the effective monitoring of individual needs.

However, several meso-level inhibitors were also identified. Again, these barriers were seen to have a more pronounced effect in the Protestant schools. For example, it is clear that schools which serve children from The Fountain have a historically negative reputation. Moreover, parental engagement in these schools is significantly weaker than the Catholic schools. The data suggest two reasons for this lack of engagement: firstly, negative familial norms around education - informed by e.g. their own, often unhappy and unproductive, school experience; and secondly, that many young Protestants in the west bank of the city have to attend a secondary school which is located in the Waterside. Several parents from The Fountain also claimed that some teachers were detached, unapproachable and '*disinterested*' with low expectations for the young people in their care. More broadly, the data from across the Ward suggest that in some schools: there is inadequate transition support; many, boys in particular, are pressured into doing STEM subjects for which they are ill-suited; and that '*average*' children are '*falling through the cracks*' at school.

The data from The Diamond also identified a number of micro-level enablers of attainment in the Ward. Similar to other Wards in the ILiAD study, the individual resilience and self-motivation of young people to succeed against the odds; and familial support / high parental expectations were seen as the most important. Among large sections of the Ward, there is parental cognisance of their (pro-active) role in their child's education and a general acceptance that '*no one opts out*'. The data also highlight nascent attitudinal changes among some Protestant parents which are beginning to be reflected in terms of increased engagement. Other micro-level drivers were identified around: high levels of youth club involvement; the impact of positive adult education experiences; notions of connectedness to the wider community; and young peoples' enjoyment of their time at the local nursery and primary schools.

Three micro-level inhibitors of attainment in the Ward relate to: adverse circumstances at home; negative community norms and anti-social behaviour; and intergenerational disengagement from education. A section of young people in the Ward live in home environments which are unsupportive, chaotic, and unconducive to their learning – commonly related to poverty, family breakdowns or mental health issues. Principals spoke about three generations of unemployment and that many young people from the Ward enter primary school with weak language development, poor health, and a complete absence of listening skills. It was also highlighted that across the Ward young people who do succeed at school tend to leave the area and not return. This, of course, deprives such communities of

visible successes and positive role models and creates a situation where, in some parts of the Ward, '*drug dealers with lots of money and flash cars*' become the only role models young people can aspire to.

The data from The Diamond Ward highlighted some anti-social issues, which were also indicative of weak school-community linkages. For example, in response to persistent bullying in the park in the Fountain area, a principal recalled that his intervention was rebuffed because parents told him it was out of school hours, not on school premises, and therefore, none of the school's business.

4.2.3. Social capital in The Diamond

In the ILiAD model, bonding social capital relates to conceptualisations of empowerment, infrastructure and connectedness. The data confirm the central role of parental support in a young person's academic progression and indicates that many parents in the Ward have high expectations for their children's education and play a positive and pro-active role therein. For example, it was commonly claimed that getting to grammar school is as much about parental expectation as it is about individual aptitude. Related to these parental expectations, another important indicator of social capital in the Ward is the high percentage of young people who go on to University. These proxy indicators align with the wider social capital literature. For example, Putnam (2002)[146] saw education as a key factor in creating social capital, and higher educational attainment as one of the concept's most important outcomes.

Similarly, youth and community workers in the Ward are seen to make an equally consistent contribution in terms of instilling within many young people cognisance of education's value and a sense of confidence that application will lead to success; and several parents from both Catholic and Protestant backgrounds argued that they were driven to more fully engage by a desire to ensure that their child did not share their experience of lower streams and subsequent educational failure. Many Catholic parents, in particular, appear to have utilised any negative experiences constructively. Many of these parents are actively engaged with the education system and see themselves as equal players in their child's education. However, some parents from the Fountain area continue to harbour a sense of resentment and are noticeably less engaged in the school lives of their children. There were similar differences in terms of community-level bonding capital. Of course, The Diamond Ward is not one unified socio-spatial unit and instead encompasses a number of satellite communities each with their own unique characteristics. Close-knit communities and settled family networks are a feature of The Diamond Ward and the impact of these ties is seen to make these satellite communities, particularly the Ward's Catholic ones, stronger, more confident and inter-dependant. However, the data suggest that some young people from the Fountain have a different set of connections to and perceptions of their community. A siege mentality pervades sections of the Fountain community; positive role models are thin on the ground and some families have completely disengaged from education.

Bridging social capital in the ILiAD framework relates to schools' levels of engagement, accessibility and innovation. The data show that many schools which serve the Ward have forged: loving and committed relationships with their pupils; trusting engagement processes with parents; meaningful school-community linkages; and effective inter-school and inter-agency collaborations. These schools are seen, even among those parents with limited academic capacity and negative school experiences, as approachable and understanding.

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[146] Putnam, R.D. (2002) Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society, Oxford: University Press.

Moreover, a range of innovative practices have been adopted to sustain and further improve schools' relationships with young people, their families and their communities. The data also attest that a critical factor in these relationships is the commitment of teachers and principals who, it was claimed: knock on doors to introduce themselves to parents prior to enrolment; invite pupils to their house during holidays for extra tuition; and, more broadly, demonstrate explicitly that they genuinely care about the young people in their schools. It was also claimed that this commitment was, at least in part, due to the Catholic ethos which was said to: provide a (psycho-social) unifying force in the community; frame the setting of school values; and imbue teaching practice. However, the data also highlight factors which are likely to diminish stocks of school-level bridging capital and suggest: ridged pursuance of STEM subjects can create difficulties; and that many middle-band pupils are neglected as teachers concentrate on the highest and lowest achieving students.

Linking social capital concerns structural factors such as history, demography, and access to political decision-making. While it is clear that the recent conflict has impacted both sections of the Ward, the data suggest that the Catholic community has mediated its post-conflict transition more successfully than their Protestant neighbours. Similarly, demographic shifts in the Ward have affected the two communities in different ways. For example, the Catholic community (in general) perceives itself as confident and in control of its own destiny. However, sections of the Protestant community, particularly in and around the Fountain area, sees itself as isolated, in decline, and subject to political, cultural, and demographic forces over which it has little or no influence.

According to Savage, Warde and Devine (2005)[147], stocks of social capital in a community are informed by the Capitals, Assets and Resources (CARS) at its disposal. The propinquity of high-performing schools is a salient example of CARS in the Ward. The spatial relationship between these schools and the communities they serve: is an important factor in the valuable triangular linkages that exist between schools, families and the community; and, at least in part, explains the high attainment and low absenteeism levels in the Ward. However, these CARS do not inform the social capital of young people from the Fountain: there is no visible presence of high-performing schools in their lives; it is considerably more difficult for their parents to engage with schools; and more broadly, learning is seen as something that happens beyond the confines of their community. In such ways, the social capital value of these CARS (i.e. centrally located, high-performing schools) in the Ward is, to an extent, diminished because the 'capital' created is not entirely inclusive.

More broadly, it is clear that the Ward has benefited from its capacity to secure macro-level support such as Neighbourhood Renewal, City of Culture designation, and regeneration initiatives. However, these funding streams, cultural programmes, and planning interventions appear to have had little impact on the ethno-religious separation which remains a feature of many working-class communities in Derry/Londonderry. Two other macro-level issues are seen to weaken linking capital in the Ward. Firstly, sections of the Ward are characterised by acute poverty and unemployment which has been compounded by the latest recession. As Portes (2010)[148] has argued, even limitless supplies of social capital are rendered if there are no resources to share and no jobs. Secondly, although academic selection may indeed give the most privileged and able children in the Ward the chance to realise their potential, The Diamond data show it also causes: social cleavages among young people and their families; and a sense of failure among those who either fail or do not sit the transfer test.

The final element in the ILiAD framework relates to indicators of negative social capital and the data from The Diamond Ward highlight three specific examples relating to bounded

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[147] Savage, M., Warde, A. and Devine, F. (2005) 'Capitals, assets and resources: some critical issues, The British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 56 (1) pp 31–47.
[148] Portes, A. (2010) Economic Sociology: a systemic inquiry, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

solidarity, negative role models and an absence of collective efficacy. Firstly, the data have outlined innumerable examples of neighbourly bonds and a strong sense of community belonging. However, in sections of the Ward these bonds interplay with notions of besiegement, demographic fatalism, and stigmatisation. And, as a consequence, a bounded solidarity is created which engenders hostility and distrust of outsiders, insular tendencies, and a community outlook which supposes only continual and unstoppable decline.

Secondly, it was also clear from the data that in the most deprived areas of the Ward it is common for young people who do succeed at school to leave the area and thus deprive the community of positive role models. In parts of the Ward, the absence of these positive role models is compounded by the presence of negative ones who have been 'successful' in criminal enterprises. The social capital literature attests that the signals produced by such individuals have a profoundly negative effect on local young peoples' conceptualisation of achievement and personal fulfilment (Portes, 2010).

Thirdly, according to Halpern (2005),[149] an important element of social capital is the 'collective efficacy' of a community which emboldens them to pull together to, for example, lower crime in their neighbourhood by discouraging drug use or general anti-social behaviour amongst local teenagers. However, in sections of the Ward: there is little evidence of this collective efficacy; criminality and anti-social behaviour are recurring features; and the community's inability to address such problems is obvious. Previous examinations of negative social capital have shown that communities characterised by deprivation, besiegement and stigmatisation are likely to lack: the confidence to personally intervene; faith in the criminal justice system to protect them; and the levels of aspiration required to envision themselves living in a substantially improved environment (Das, 2006).[150]

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[149] Halpern, D. (2005) Social Capital, Cambridge: Polity Press.

[150] Das, R. J. (2006) 'Putting social capital in its place', Capital & Class, Vol. 30: pp 65–92.

4.3. Case study 3: Rosemount

4.3.1. Force Field Analysis of drivers and inhibitors of achievement in Rosemount

Drivers

Macro-level

a) Effective youth service and education initiatives in the community

b) Inward investment

c) Physical locations of schools and educational institutions

d) Historical legacy of the Education Act 1947 for Catholics

e) Huge early years provision nearby

f) Recession as a driver

g) High attainment performance of grammar sector

Meso-level

a) Community-school linkages and Extended Schools

b) Warm ethos of school, combining pastoral care and academic success

c) Close relationships with teachers

d) Provision of flexible curricula and alternative qualifications

e) Measures to ease transition

f) School leaders' understanding of local needs

g) Schools and community workers promoting the voice of young people

h) Individual needs of pupils are considered

i) Peer role models in schools

j) Primary school expectations of and support for pupils sitting the transfer test

k) Low rates of absenteeism

Micro-level drivers

a) Family support and high expectations of parents

b) Intergenerational closeness and close-knit area

c) Feelings of connection to a broader community

d) Family connection to schools

e) Individual resilience

Present situation – 91% five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13); 44th Multiple Deprivation 2010

Inhibitors

Macro-level

a) Impact of Academic selection

b) Community resources lacking for older teenagers

c) Changes in demographics

d) The lack of jobs in Derry

Meso-level

a) Curriculum (statutory and local) and school structure

b) Balancing 'labelling' and support in school

c) Poor relationships with teacher

d) Education system failing to pick up underlying issues early

Micro-level

a) Anti-social behaviour and negative peer pressure

b) Low self-esteem, low expectations, and sense of hopelessness

c) Adverse family circumstances

d) Low parental expectations or engagement with schoolwork

4.3.2. Summary of the findings from the Rosemount Ward

The data has identified a range of macro, meso and micro-level issues which impact on the educational attainment of young people from Rosemount. Across these three levels, a number of issues were seen to enable academic achievement in the Ward and others were seen to inhibit school progression. In terms of structural (macro-level) factors, it is clear that enduring legacies of the Education Act (1947) include appreciation of education's value and a patent belief in the Catholic education system amongst large sections of the Ward's population. Indeed, similar to other Catholic Wards in the ILiAD study, Rosemount performs significantly better in terms of education than its deprivation rank (44th) would suggest. For example, on the specific domain of education and skills the Ward is ranked 236th most deprived; and the latest statistics (2012-2013) show that 91% of the Ward's school leavers attained 5 GCSEs which was the highest proportion across the seven ILiAD Wards.

Educational attainment in the Ward is also enabled by the propinquity of high-performing schools. Of the seven schools which serve Rosemount, five are within 1.6 miles of the Ward's geographical mid-point; and the three main secondary schools are all within 0.5 miles. Other macro-level drivers were identified around: effective youth service and education initiatives in the community; extensive inward investment in the Ward, such as, new and improved school buildings; substantial provision of Early Years and other pre-school programmes; the social mix which is said to exist in the Ward's schools; the benefits of co-education for boys, particularly around addressing aggressive behaviour; and the argument that the recession and lack of jobs has, paradoxically, provided '*incentives*'.

However, a range of macro-level inhibitors were also identified in the Rosemount data. The most significant of these related to the issue of academic selection which, it was claimed: creates an implied hierarchy and social cleavages among grammar and secondary school pupils; engenders negative self-labelling as '*non-achievers*'; and, as a consequence of falling rolls and 'creaming' processes, deprives local secondary schools of likely high-achievers. Other structural barriers in Rosemount concern: changes to Ward's demographic profile which, it was claimed, has made the community more '*transient*'; the scarcity of employment opportunities in Ward; and a lack of community resources for older teenagers. Moreover, a series of additional, albeit less significant, inhibitors were identified around: the poor physical environment in the Ward; changes in Exam Board standards; and the skewing effect of official statistics e.g. the suggestion that schools are '*unfairly*' compared with each other in attainment statistics.

In terms of school-level (meso) factors in Rosemount, the data show that staff-pupil relationships are, in general, productive, friendly and respectful; the individual needs of pupils are considered; pupils feel '*listened to*'; the ethos of local schools combines pastoral care and academic success; and, in furtherance of this ethos, schools have in place flexible curricular, broad conceptualisations of achievement, and effective processes to support transitions. Similarly, the Rosemount data evidence: close and long-standing school-parent and school-community relationships in the Ward; and that the Extended Schools programmes has been a critical factor in terms of improving pupil performance, parental engagement and schools' understanding of local needs. For example, many young people have benefited from revision, homework, and breakfast clubs; many parents have participated in programmes around essential skills, parenting, and supporting their child's education; and effective partnerships have been fostered and improved around school-community linkages and inter-agency support.

The data also highlight: that schools and community workers consistently promote the voice of young people; the valuable contribution made by peer role models in schools; and that within many of the Ward's primary schools there is an expectation of and support for pupils sitting the transfer test. These enablers, in addition to the above outlined macro-level drivers,

e.g. the propinquity of high-performing local schools, are seen as important factors in the Ward's low absenteeism rate of 10.2%, again, the best in the ILiAD study.

However, the data highlight that, in some instances, educational attainment in Rosemount is inhibited by: an often overly rigid adherence to the curriculum and school structure; the complex balance between providing additional education support and the labelling of young people as deficient; the poor relationships that are said to exist between some teachers and their pupils; and the frequent claim that, too often, the education system fails to pick up underlying issues early enough.

In terms of the micro-level influences, which impact on the academic progression of young people from Rosemount, a series of factors were identified relating to the level and consistency of parental support. The data make clear that many parents in the Ward are *'academically orientated'*, routinely involved in their child's education, and are demonstrably engaged with the schools their children attend. These parents, some of whom did not themselves achieve at school, also hold high expectations for their child's education and are keen to ensure that: (a) their child apply themselves; (b) the school pushes their child towards realising their academic potential; and (c) that they, as parents, do everything they can to fulfil their *'obligations'* in terms of providing support and creating a home-regime which is conducive to their learning.

Three other inter-related micro-level drivers to emerge from the Rosemount data concerned: the close-knit, intergenerational bonds which were seen as a feature of the Ward; the feelings of connection to a broader community (geographical and psycho-social); and the long-standing family connections to schools which were equally typical. The final micro-level driver of educational attainment in Rosemount was the individual resilience and self-motivation of certain young people, many of whom have little parental support and live in adverse home environments. This resilience is seen to encourage them to resist any negative influences; to avail of the learning and support opportunities that initiatives such as Extended Schools offer; and, subsequently, succeed against the odds.

However, a number of micro-level inhibitors were also identified. Anti-social behaviour in the Ward and (associated) negative peer pressure were seen as the most significant of these barriers. According to the data, the key sources of this anti-social behaviour were: the influence of *'outsiders'* from neighbouring Wards; an acute lack of youth resources and venues; and that many young people from the Ward, some as young as 12, frequently consume alcohol and drugs. It was also commonly reported that some young people in the Ward: engage in destructive and defiant behaviour; and often perceive getting into trouble and being suspended from school as a form of *'achievement'*.

It is also clear from the Rosemount data that some young people in the Ward harbour low self-esteem, low expectations, and sense of hopelessness. These pessimistic outlooks, it was claimed, are primarily informed by family histories of academic failure, negative peer influence, and the fact that because many of these young peoples' focus is on the weekend, they are, often, *'not remotely interested'* in school.

The last two, albeit less frequently cited, micro-level inhibitors relate to: the adverse family circumstances many young people from Rosemount endure; and, notwithstanding, the high levels of parental engagement as outlined above, a number of parents in the Ward have low expectations for their child's education and equally low engagement with schools.

4.3.3. Social capital in Rosemount

In terms of bonding social capital, conceptualised here as empowerment, infrastructure and connectedness, the Rosemount data evidence that: positive familial and community norms around education; supportive and engaged parents; close-knit community networks; and a widely held sense of community belonging are common features of the Ward. Rosemount is also characterised by high levels of community activism and a confident identification with the broader Derry/Londonderry area. Moreover, it is clear that these immediate, neighbourhood bonds are, in many ways, cemented by the interplay of psycho-social connections between families, schools and the Catholic Church. For example, principals and teachers in the Ward spoke about the positive impact of the 'Service of Light' where year 8 pupils, their parents and their form teacher participate in a simple religious service and light a candle to (a) symbolise the beginning of these tri-partite relationships; and (b) commit to themselves and each other to sustain these relationships. In such ways, many young people in Rosemount come to see: their community as a supportive learning hub; their school as the focal point of this hub; and their family as active agents in their learning.

However, a section of the Ward's young people, particularly those from the most disadvantaged households have a completely different perception of their families, schools and community. Among this group: adverse home circumstances, the inter-generational transmission of educational failure, and the spectre of inherited welfare dependency conspire to limit their ambition. For some: school attendance is seen as *'pointless'* because attainment is *'impossible'*; the prospect of well-paid employment is equally bleak; and conceptualisations of community are framed around notions of poverty and decline.

Bridging social capital refers to schools' levels of engagement, accessibility and innovation. The data make clear that: schools which serve Rosemount have successfully fostered and sustained high levels of engagement with pupils, their families and the wider community; many teachers were born and raised in the local communities and, thus, have a deep emotional connection and commitment to the young people in their care. Again, the role of the Catholic schools in terms of facilitating this engagement and formalising this ethos cannot be overstated. Several teachers and principals spoke about: their professional practice as a *'vocation'*; school values being informed by a belief that every child is created in God's image; and that pastoral care, particularly for the most marginalised pupils, is a key priority. Stocks of bridging social capital in Rosemount are further increased by innovative practices on the part of local schools. For example, homework and revision clubs are fully integrated into 'Extended Schools' programmes; parents are routinely texted by schools to e.g. remind them of upcoming exams; and during the Easter holidays, a three-day course was provided to help pupils prepare for the forthcoming exam season. This initiative was seen as particularly successful because: (a) the learning setting was informal and relaxed (e.g. no-uniform); and (b) the pupils were engaged and wanted to be there. Importantly, these programmes were also said to create a socio-economic *'equalising effect'* for young people whose parents, unlike their more affluent counterparts, are unable to hire private tutors.

However, the value of these bridging capital stocks in Rosemount is undermined by issues such as: the (unintended) labelling of struggling students; the inflexibility of some school structures; the prohibitive cost of third-level education; the insufficient number of places in Higher Education; and that demoralising impact on young people who miss out on such a place having to watch other people access a University which is, literally, on their doorstep. Linking social capital relates to structural factors such as the Ward's history, demographics, and physical assets. Although the recent conflict has impacted the Rosemount community, few respondents highlighted its legacies as specific barriers to attainment. Similarly, demographic change does not appear to have affected the Ward in the same way as others in the ILiAD study. However, the increased proportion of houses in the private rented sector

has, according to some, created transitory residential tenures and a *'landlord culture'*. In terms of Rosemount's physical assets, the Catholic schools which serve the Ward are high-performing, well-led, and populated by teachers who are empathetic and committed. Moreover, these schools are also: highly visible; an integral part of the Rosemount community; and, thus, serve to reinforce notions of education as a community priority and schools as an important identity referent for local young people.

However, the negative impacts of academic selection were seen as a significant inhibitor of educational achievement in the Ward. While the data make clear the many benefits of a grammar school education, they equally highlight pronounced disadvantages for those who either fail or do not sit the transfer test. Resultant social cleavages, negative self-labelling, and perceived hierarchies were frequently evidenced. For example, several secondary school pupils spoke about feeling *'second class'* and some grammar pupils argued against mixed ability classes claiming that they simply *'wouldn't work'* because *'less capable'* pupils would hold them back. Therefore, looking at bonding, bridging and linking capital together, it is clear that Rosemount has substantial stocks of each; and that, in general, they combine effectively to ensure that the education of many young people in the Ward is effectively supported. However, the distribution of these 'capitals' is, on many levels, framed by issues such as social class and family norms around education. Thus, somewhat predictably, the impact of these 'capitals' on local young peoples' academic prospects are, often profoundly, uneven.
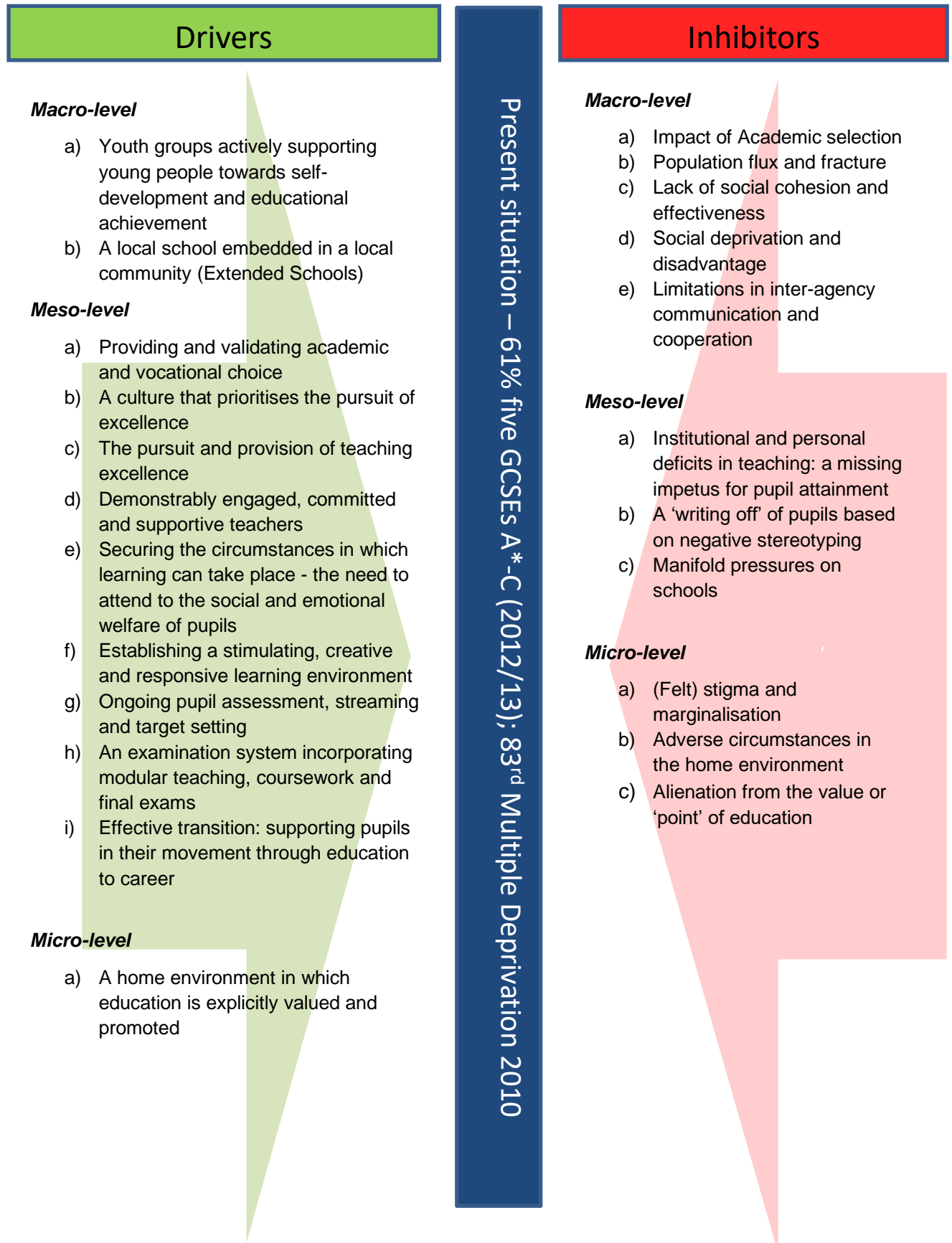
In terms of negative social capital, the data reveal two examples relating to orthodox interpretations of the concept which assume universal benefits. While Rosemount has formations of social capital at familial, school, and structural level, it is clear that many of the Ward's most socio-economically disadvantaged school-aged residents have: less parental support; weaker connections to schools; and, notwithstanding the propinquity of a University campus, little prospect of accessing third level education. In such ways, their utilisation of the social capital created within their community is constrained by the socio-economic context of their lives. According to Rubio (1997),[151] a community's social capital should not be regarded simply as the presence of opportunities but rather their accessibility in the social structure. In other words, a community can only sustain (positive) social capital stocks if the benefits created are shared and available to all. More recently, Field (2010: 91-93)[152] has shown that associations such as price cartels may indeed encompass cooperation and accrue benefits for members, but the social capital thus produced does not benefit wider society. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between 'socially productive' networks which generate 'favourable outcomes' to members <u>and</u> the wider community, and 'unproductive networks' which provide benefits for members but produce negative outcomes for the wider community (ibid). According to the Rosemount data: processes associated with academic selection have created networks in the Ward patently more related to this second category: and, it was further claimed, the political will to identify and develop a fairer education structure is absent because many of those in positions of influence are product of the system that was seen to work well for them.

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[151] Rubio, M. (1997) 'Perverse social capital – some evidence from Colombia', Journal of Economic Issues, 31 (3), 805–816.
[152] Field, J. (2010) *Social Capital,* (2nd edn) London: Routledge.

4.4. Case study 4: Dunclug

4.4.1. Force Field Analysis of drivers and inhibitors of achievement in Dunclug

Drivers

Macro-level

a) Youth groups actively supporting young people towards self-development and educational achievement
b) A local school embedded in a local community (Extended Schools)

Meso-level

a) Providing and validating academic and vocational choice
b) A culture that prioritises the pursuit of excellence
c) The pursuit and provision of teaching excellence
d) Demonstrably engaged, committed and supportive teachers
e) Securing the circumstances in which learning can take place - the need to attend to the social and emotional welfare of pupils
f) Establishing a stimulating, creative and responsive learning environment
g) Ongoing pupil assessment, streaming and target setting
h) An examination system incorporating modular teaching, coursework and final exams
i) Effective transition: supporting pupils in their movement through education to career

Micro-level

a) A home environment in which education is explicitly valued and promoted

Present situation – 61% five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13); 83rd Multiple Deprivation 2010

Inhibitors

Macro-level

a) Impact of Academic selection
b) Population flux and fracture
c) Lack of social cohesion and effectiveness
d) Social deprivation and disadvantage
e) Limitations in inter-agency communication and cooperation

Meso-level

a) Institutional and personal deficits in teaching: a missing impetus for pupil attainment
b) A 'writing off' of pupils based on negative stereotyping
c) Manifold pressures on schools

Micro-level

a) (Felt) stigma and marginalisation
b) Adverse circumstances in the home environment
c) Alienation from the value or 'point' of education

4.4.2. Summary of the findings from the Dunclug Ward

The data demonstrate that a range of structural, school-level and familial factors have a significant impact on the learning and subsequent attainment levels of young people from Dunclug. Across these levels, there are factors which are seen to enable academic achievement in the Ward and others which appear to inhibit such progress. In terms of macro-level influences, i.e. those factors relating to historical, demographical, and policy considerations, two specific macro-level drivers of attainment in Dunclug were identified around: local youth groups actively supporting young people; and the embedded nature of the relationship between local schools and the communities they serve. The Dunclug data suggest that local youth groups enhance the educational achievement of young people by: providing young people with a safe space and alternative opportunities for learning; supporting them in the context of formal education; demonstrating an active interest in their welfare; and encouraging them to believe in themselves. The data also highlight the value of schools being located in the local community. For example, it was frequently cited that: young peoples' school choice and attendance was often premised on opportunities for peer interaction; the embeddedness of schools means they can more easily engage with the communities they serve; and because successive generations have attended the same school, local educators have a robust knowledge of pupils and their family circumstances.

However, several macro-level inhibitors of attainment in Dunclug were also identified, the most significant of which related to the issue of academic selection. Although only 17.5% of young people in the Ward attend grammar school, the Dunclug data concur with the other ILiAD Wards that the selection process is '*divisive'* because it separates children into categories based on privilege (educational and socio-economical); and thus, serves to reflect and perpetuate social hierarchies. Of course, the argument that academic selection reinforces socio-economic privilege and disadvantage is hardly new. In a major study on the effects of the selective system of secondary education in Northern Ireland, Gallagher and Smith (2000)[153] claimed that: (a) the importance attached to passing the transfer test results in parents feeling obliged to pay for out-of-school tutoring; and (b) many families on low income are simply unable to afford this extra expenditure. Educators in Dunclug also argued that academic selection: creates significant pressure and stress around the transfer test (which some pupil-respondents claimed they struggled to cope with); sets young people on fixed trajectories; causes many young people to be labelled as under-achievers; and means that secondary schools often struggle to restore the confidence of pupils who either failed or did not sit the test. Moreover, recent reports indicate that increasing occurrences of exam stress, frequently cited in Dunclug data, are a UK-wide phenomenon. According to the NSPCC, the number of young people in Britain seeking counselling over exam stress has increased by 200% in recent years (Guardian, 2015).[154]

The data also show that, in addition to social deprivation, population flux and fracture are (increasingly) common characteristics of the Ward. Sectarian polarisation continues and recent arrivals, particularly those from Eastern Europe, have presented a range of challenges (perceived or otherwise) for the community. Perhaps relatedly, a lack of social cohesion was evidenced via accounts of: local disputes over DSD funding; the residents group being beset with in-fighting; and community facilities being routinely under-used and/or vandalised. It was also argued that inter-agency cooperation in the Ward is limited and that schools' consequential lack of insight into a pupil's problematic home circumstances encourages the perpetuation of such disadvantage.

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[153] Gallagher, T. and Smith, A. (2000) The Effects of the Selective System of Secondary Education in Northern Ireland, Bangor: Department of Education for Northern Ireland.

[154] "Surge in young people seeking help for exam stress", by Richard Adams, The Guardian Newspaper 14-05-15 [online]. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/may/14/calls-to-childline-over-exam-stress-break-records

In terms of the meso-level factors, the data from Dunclug show that schools which serve the Ward: provide a range of academic and vocational choices, effective transition systems, and responsive assessments; and promote a culture that prioritises the pursuit of excellence. The data suggest that inter-school cooperation is a further feature of the Ward. For example, several respondents highlighted the role of the Ballymena Learning Together Group which involves grammar and secondary schools sharing access to A level subjects. Similarly, many teachers in these schools are demonstrably committed and supportive of the young people in their care; and it is common for teachers and classroom assistants to undertake voluntary work *'above and beyond normal hours'*.

However, three meso-level inhibitors were identified. There were accounts in the data of deficits in teaching which were seen to compromise young people's potential for academic attainment; and several young people spoke about *'bad teachers'* who were sullen, easily annoyed, and overly authoritarian. It was also claimed that many pupils are *'written off'* because of negative stereotyping. Several respondents claimed that: many young people experience *'educational discrimination'* because they are labelled as coming from a socially deprived area; and that such class-based differentiations further deepen their marginalisation from education. The Dunclug data also make clear that local attainment levels are negatively impacted by the manifold pressures on schools around, for example: league tables and composite achievement targets; and class sizes of more than 30 with one teacher having to deal with different ranges of abilities.

In terms of the micro-level influences on a young person's academic attainment, the Dunclug data concur with the other Wards in the ILiAD study and highlight the importance of a supportive home environment. According to both school and community-level respondents, creating such an environment was contingent on parents proactively encouraging and enabling their children to do well at school.

However, three micro-level inhibitors of attainment were also identified. Firstly, several respondents spoke about the *'felt stigma'* and marginalisation experienced by local young people. One effect of this stigmatisation is that some of Dunclug's younger residents reported being *'ashamed'* of where they were from and highlighted: entrenched anti-social activity, including crime, vandalism and drug and alcohol abuse; and a very poor local physical environment with burnt out and boarded up housing and streets full of litter. Secondly, it was claimed that the academic progression of young people from Dunclug is inhibited by adverse circumstances in the home environment. The data here make clear that: many families in the Ward are characterised by unemployment and poverty; the learning of local young people is negatively impacted by resultant financial shortages; and that such problems are commonly compounded by parental ill health, alcohol or drug abuse, physical and/or emotional neglect, and familial norms which place little value on education. Thirdly, it was argued that many local young people feel alienated from education and see little point in applying themselves at school. The two most frequently cited reasons for this lack of belief in young people around the value of education were: the inter-generational transmission of school failure; and the distinct lack of visible employment opportunities – made all the more pronounced by the latest recession.

4.4.3. Social Capital in Dunclug

In terms of bonding social capital, the Dunclug data make clear that: close-knit networks of support are a feature of the Ward; and that the educational achievement of many young people is enabled through a supportive home environment and encouraging parents. Moreover (and somewhat paradoxically), divisions in the Ward between the satellite communities e.g. the Dunclug, Dunvale and Millfield estates, have, in many cases, served to strengthen these immediate bonds and associated cultural identifications. However, local

stocks of bonding capital are, to an extent, diminished because many young people are impacted by (area-based) stigmatisation, adverse home circumstances, and a sense of alienation from the value of education.

The second category in the ILiAD social capital framework relates to bridging capital and concerns schools' levels of engagement, accessibility and innovation. The Dunclug data show that: the propinquity and embeddedness of the two main schools, in addition to the patent commitment of school staff, have markedly increased accessibility; and that Extended Schools programmes have made a significant contribution in terms of encouraging the engagement of young people and their parents. Moreover, these schools have clearly adopted innovative initiatives to foster positive attitudes among young people and their families around education and its value. For example, several principals and teachers spoke about: broader conceptualisations of achievement; a wider range of vocational A level subjects; lunchtime activities; the learning benefits of a six-period school day; and organising their school into 'houses' to encourage involvement in school activities. More broadly, these schools seek to provide, concomitantly, ambitious academic targets for higher achieving students and tangible pathways to e.g. technical college for the less academically minded. Schools in the Ward also have high expectations in terms of quality of teaching, individual attainment, and standards of discipline. It is also clear from the data that the schools which serve the Ward: have forged meaningful linkages with the local communities; have in place effective engagement systems for young people and their parents; and have clearly embraced the opportunities provided by the Extended Schools programme.

The third element of the ILiAD framework is linking social capital and refers to structural factors such as demography, statutory youth provision, physical assets, and the impact of education policy. Although Dunclug is a mixed-religion Ward, residential segregation is still evident. Moreover, it would appear that new social divisions have been created with the arrival of migrant workers. There were accounts of hostility and abuse being directed towards these new arrivals and acknowledgements from residents (young and old) of the resentment they harbour around, for example, these new arrivals taking up employment and educational opportunities. It is also clear that schools, teachers, and indeed some pupils, have been challenged by the increasing numbers of children whose first language is not English. There is also a large Travelling community in the Ward and several principals and teachers outlined: the additional support required for pupils and parents with severe literacy limitations; and the need for such interventions to be sensitive to this community's cultural norms around e.g. gender, education and community participation.

In terms of statutory youth provision, the data attest that: youth groups in the Ward provide a safe and welcoming environment and stimulating opportunities for learning; and youth workers are expressively supportive, help young people chose subjects GCSE, and signpost Further and Higher Education opportunities. Moreover, this provision is underpinned by a philosophy that the most effective learning environments are ones which are enjoyable, sociable and interactive. In addition to the patent benefits of this youth provision, academic attainment in Dunclug is further enabled by the propinquity and embeddedness of the local schools. This spatial attachment between communities and schools: increases parental involvement; widens access to school facilities; and, more broadly, contributes to the local-level service infrastructure. Moreover, and importantly, many young people in the Ward thus come to see their school as an integral part of their lives and an important referent in their social world. Consider together, these factors, at least in part, explain why rates of high absenteeism within Dunclug are the lowest in the ILiAD sample.

It is also clear that Dunclug has the required linking social capital to secure significant funding, for example, through the DSD 'Areas at Risk' Programme. However, these extra resources seem to have had little effect in terms of addressing the lack of community cohesion, the insufficient provision of youth facilities, and existing (ethno-religious and class-

based) social cleavages. According to the data, academic selection is a source of social division in Dunclug. Although initiatives such as the Ballymena Learning Together Group have successfully brought grammar and secondary pupils together, negative self-labelling and a form of educational hierarchy are evident in the Ward. It was also frequently cited that children whose parents could afford private tutoring in subject specialisms and exam techniques were at a distinct advantage in terms of accessing a grammar school education.

Looking at the three levels together, it is clear that the close-knit networks in Dunclug are based on familial and geographical factors rather that, as was found in several other ILiAD Wards, a shared sense of adversity. However, although many parents actively support their child's education, many young people in the Ward live in adverse home conditions, routinely experience stigmatisation and feel disengaged from education. Similarly, bridging social capital is generated via the local schools' capacity to engage and be accessible and innovative in their teaching practice. However, the value of this capital is undermined by, for example: divisions between the Ward's satellite communities; and classist attitudes which unfairly label young people because they come from deprived communities. Linking social capital is evident in the Ward's physical assets – the popular schools which are seen as both in and of the community. Moreover, the interplay between the bonding, bridging and linking forms is clear, for example: the immediate (micro-level) bonds i.e. familial connections to schools and neighbourhood friendships have, in all probability, improved and sustained (meso) school attendance levels; and the propinquity of local schools (macro) enables higher levels of parental engagement (meso) which, in turn, increases levels of aspiration and self-belief in young people (micro).

The Dunclug data highlight a number of examples of negative bonding, bridging, and linking social capital which is seen to impact the educational attainment of young people, particularly those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. Firstly, immediate bonds in the Ward are limited by peripheral spatiality, and ethno-religious segregation. The social capital literature attests that, particularly for the most disadvantaged families, the interplay of these factors with weak familial norms around education and employment have a constraining effect on young peoples' educational ambition (Dika and Singh, 2002).[155]

Secondly, the data make clear that bridging ties in the Ward are weakened by ethno-religious residential segregation. According to Putnam (2000: 22),[156] networks within spatial concentrations of deprivation 'provide crucial social and psychological support'. However, he also cautions that when this bonding is framed by competing homogeneities, the social capital created tends to be 'inward-looking and exclusive'.

Thirdly, the Dunclug data make equally clear that the actual benefits of the educational social capital created by academic selection are, commonly, disproportionately accrued by the most privileged i.e. those families with positive educational norms, a family tradition of academic success and sufficient income (e.g. to pay for private tutors). This uneven distribution of the concept's benefits highlights a central criticism of orthodox interpretations of social capital which are, essentially, premised on the belief that social networks engender economic opportunities. Li et al. (2008: 406)[157] argue that this proposition ensures that advantage and disadvantage are 'simply reproduced' because those who are 'already privileged' are 'best positioned to take advantage' of such networks.

The debates around the strengths and weaknesses of academic selection, in many ways, are seen to mirror the dichotomy between orthodox interpretations of social capital and more radical interpretations which argue that socio-spatial and socio-economic networks have

[155] Dika, S. L. and Singh, K. (2002) "Applications of social capital in educational literature: a critical synthesis", *Review of Educational Research.* Spring 2002, 72(1), 31-60.

[156] Putnam, R. (2000) Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community, New York: Simon & Schuster.

[157] Li, Y. Savage, M. and Warde, A. (2008) 'Social mobility and social capital in contemporary Britain', The British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 59 (3) pp 392–411.

entirely different impacts in working class communities than in more affluent ones. Here again, Pierre Bourdieu's heuristics of 'field' (social arena), 'habitus' (individual dispositions) and 'capitals' (assets and resources) are particularly useful. The Dunclug data evidence that academic selection creates a 'field' wherein: the most valuable 'capitals' are income and positive familial norms around education; and class differentials are seen to be a significant informer of 'habitus' for pupils and their parents. In such processes: young people from middle class families invariably succeed (in the selection/transfer process) and get the opportunity to attend a high performing school with other likely achievers; and the most disadvantaged pupils invariably either fail or do not sit the transfer test and are, thus, denied the same opportunity. According to Portes (2010: 75),[158] neglecting the 'underlying class structure' in analyses of social processes (in this case, academic selection) creates a 'classless fallacy' which 'wrongly assumes that such processes occur evenly across the population'.

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[158] Portes, A. (2010) Economic Sociology: a systemic inquiry, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

4.5. Case study 5: Duncairn

4.5.1. Force Field Analysis of drivers and inhibitors of achievement in Duncairn

Drivers	Inhibitors

Drivers

Macro-level

a) Collaborative involvement of external agencies

b) The provision of new and improved school buildings and learning facilities

c) Current economic climate

d) Additional resources

Meso-level

a) Effective school-parent engagement, communication and support structures

b) Flexible curricula, vocational placements and alternative measures of success

c) Stricter school regimes (discipline and high expectations)

d) Committed and empathetic teachers

e) Effective school-community links

f) Support during transition(s)

g) Effective SEN provision and 'problem behaviour' management

Micro-level

a) Parental support and a stable home environment

b) Individual resilience and the notion of education as a means to leave the community

c) Community and youth work interventions

d) Student cognisance of value of education / career pathways

Present situation – 50% five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13); 14th Multiple Deprivation 2010

Inhibitors

Macro-level

a) Legacies of the recent conflict

b) Felt effects of Academic Selection

c) Spatial detachment of schools serving the Duncairn Ward

d) Lack of inter-agency collaboration / disjointed provision of SEN support

e) Demographic change / unsettled demographic patterns

f) Exclusion from mainstream education

Meso-level

a) Negative teacher attitudes and behaviour management techniques

b) High levels of absenteeism

c) Perception of schools as 'detached' i.e. class-based identifications

d) Inappropriate curricula

Micro-level

a) Parents' lack of capacity to support their child(ren)'s education

b) Disadvantaged home and community environments

c) Low expectations / low self-esteem amongst young people (in contrast with RC community)

d) Peer, familial, community dissuasion

4.5.2. Summary of findings from the Duncairn Ward

The data evidence that a range of structural, school-level and familial/neighbourhood factors, (and the interplay between these factors) have a significant impact on the learning and subsequent attainment levels of young people from Duncairn. It is equally apparent that, across these levels, there are factors which are seen to enable academic achievement in the Ward and others which appear to patently inhibit such progress. In terms of macro-level factors, i.e. those informed by historical, demographical, and policy considerations, a range of issues have been identified as significant barriers to educational success. For example, the Ward's history has clearly been shaped by the recent conflict and, as a consequence: spatial mobility restrictions and insular attitudes are common; paramilitary groups retain an influence, particularly amongst young people; and more broadly, the wider community continues to be characterised by both intra and inter-community divisions. Similarly, significant changes to the Ward's demographic profile have occurred such as: a falling number of Protestant school-aged residents; the near quadrupling of the Catholic community within the past decade; the steep rise in (often transitory) private rented sector tenures; and the fact that over 10% of the Ward's population were born outside of the UK and Ireland. For some residents of the Ward, this has created an unsettled community characterised by impermanence. Related to these demographic changes, it is also clear that the learning of local young people is inhibited because there are no secondary schools located in the hub of the Ward and as a result, the detachment many local young people already feel in terms of education is further compounded by (a) the invisibility of structured learning in their communities; and (b) the distances they now have to travel to the nearest available schools.

Despite the fact that only 11.7% of local secondary pupils attend grammar school (the lowest in the ILiAD study), the Duncairn data make clear that the policy of academic selection and the inter-related issue of the grammar school sector not contracting in line with demographic changes are having a negative effect on local attainment levels. The data here further evidences that the most important aspects of this impact are that: those who fail or do not sit the transfer test are routinely labelled as deficient; grammar schools are encouraged to 'cream' higher performing pupils from the non-selective sector; such processes make these non-grammar schools vulnerable to closures and amalgamations; and deprives these schools of positive role models / likely high achievers.

The Duncairn data also highlight several (structural) macro-level factors which enable academic attainment. Firstly, although it is clear that a number of young people and parents in the Ward are acutely disadvantaged, school collaborations with external agencies such as Barnardos, Parenting NI and SureStart have made a substantial and positive contribution in terms of addressing their needs. Secondly, improvements and renewals of school premises and facilities have affected positive change and confirmed that young people are more likely to succeed if their learning environment reflects aspiration and not decline. Moreover, it is indicative of the broader economic context that a further structural driver was the current recession and the argument that this has encouraged many young people to stay on at school. While this is positive, it needs to be remembered that many are only doing so because they are, often deeply, pessimistic about their labour market prospects.

In terms of the meso-level factors, a range of both positive and negative influences were identified around schools' levels of engagement, accessibility and innovation. Young people in Duncairn are encouraged to learn and attain qualifications because many schools which serve the Ward now have in place meaningful and effective engagement processes with communities and parents. Whilst it is clear that this has not always been the case and many parents recalled very different levels of engagement during their time at school, these schools have patently adopted a more collaborative and outward-looking approach in recent years. It is also clear that these relational changes have been mirrored by similar improvements to: school regimes which are seen to have engendered higher expectations

and discipline standards; and teacher attitudes which are seen as markedly more committed and empathetic.

These schools have also sought to become more accessible to pupils and their families, particularly those who are disadvantaged and/or require additional support. Perhaps the most salient example of this relates to the provision of Extended Schools programmes in some of the schools which serve the Ward. In addition to improving attainment and attendance levels, these initiatives have created: *'a level playing field'* for young people with weak parental support; and opportunities for parents to address their own essential skill deficits and become more involved in their child's education. Schools which serve the Ward have also adopted innovative practices which are seen to have had a positive impact on the educational outcomes of local young people. For example, many of the schools which serve Duncairn now have in place: flexible curricula; a wider range of vocational placements; alternative measures of success; effective support packages during transition(s); as well as higher standards of SEN support and problem behaviour management. There were, however, a number of school-level factors identified which were seen to inhibit academic progress. The most important of these concerned: schools which continue to adhere to inappropriate and inflexible curricula; some teachers who display negative attitudes and behaviour management techniques; the stubbornly high levels of absenteeism in the Ward; and more broadly, community-based perceptions of some teachers in Protestant working class schools as '*middle class'* and *'detached'*.

In terms of micro-level factors, i.e. those informed by familial and neighbourhood influences, the inter-related issues of parental support and home/community environment were the most important. Many young people in Duncairn have the parental support and stable conditions at home which are long known to be most conducive to their learning and development. However, many others have a distinct lack of either. Moreover, the parents of this less supported group, commonly, have a range of disadvantages themselves, primarily related to their own time at school, including: essential skills deficits; a lack of confidence; and an, often acute, aversion to engage with schools. In addition, but in all likelihood related, to weak familial support, many young people in Duncairn have very low self-esteem and equally low expectations for their future. Of course, the current recession has done little to raise these expectations and the latest indices show that youth unemployment in the Ward which stood at 7% in 2001 had risen to 22% by 2011. Moreover, their self-esteem and expectations are further depressed in two important ways: firstly, rightly or wrongly, they routinely contrast their own pessimistic outlook with what they perceive as an increasingly confident Catholic community; and secondly, many young peoples' academic aspirations are dampened by peer, familial, and community dissuasion. For many young people from Duncairn, considering a grammar school means contemplating being separated from friends and being the *'odd one out'*; the negative attitudes of some parents convinces their children that school is a waste of time; and community norms around education, often, dissuade academic success because it is such an unusual occurrence. In other words, although there would appear to be an *'awakening'* among some young people of the value of education, in other sections of the Ward's population a pervading sense of pessimism exists.

There were a number of micro-level factors which were seen to enable educational achievement in the Duncairn Ward. However, in terms these immediate influences, the primary drivers were limited to: the resilience and self-motivation of individuals, many of who view education simply as a means to leave the community; some young people becoming more cognisant of the value of education and potential career pathways; and finally, local community and youth work interventions, particularly those which (a) divert young people attention away from conflict, paramilitaries, and interface violence, and (b) provide out-of-school guidance for the section of young people in Duncairn with little or no parental support.

4.5.3. Social Capital in Duncairn

It is clear that within the Duncairn Ward there are high levels of bonding capital. Indeed, respondents presented a variety of examples which showed disadvantaged residents in Duncairn sticking together and being united by a shared sense of adversity. Similarly, many young people in Duncairn have the necessary levels of parental/familial support, community encouragement, and individual resilience to allow them to succeed at school. However, as evidenced in the data, many other young people from Duncairn have significantly lower levels of these attributes. Therefore, these 'absences' conspire to diminish local stocks of bonding social capital.

In terms of bridging social capital, analysis of the Duncairn data show that many schools which serve the Ward have recently: established/renewed effective tri-partite relationships between school, home and the community; adopted flexible curricular and higher expectations; and put in place targeted support mechanisms, particularly around transitions, and addressing the needs of those pupils with SEN. However, this is not the case in all schools and, in other schools, negative teacher attitudes, high levels of truancy and community perceptions of schools as *'detached'* remain prevalent. Moreover, in a broader context (and primarily related to the recent conflict), insularity and spatial mobility restrictions are seen to seriously inhibit: (a) the formation of bridging ties with neighbouring communities; and (b) perceptions of *'safe passage'* to the city centre which, although within walking distance, commonly entails transiting through 'the other' community.

Linking social capital refers to the structural factors which are seen to impact on local attainment levels. In the context of Duncairn, the Ward's history, geography, and demographic profile appear to also conspire against educational achievement. Corrosive legacies of the conflict such as extant paramilitary influence and sectarian polarisation interplay in complex ways with Duncairn's geographical realities and current demographic patterns to foster increased levels of insularity, distrust of outsiders and fatalism. As Evans (1997) has noted, in communities which are characterised by conflict, the nature, meaning and utility of social capital becomes more complex. Moreover, recent demographic changes have contributed to the closure of local schools and the subsequent need for young people to attend schools which are neither located in nor seen as part of their communities. It is important to note here that in another ILiAD Ward (Whiterock) the local (visible) provision of quality schools was identified as perhaps <u>the</u> most significant driver of attainment. This again highlights the somewhat obvious point that the absence of social capital indicator, in this case, good schools located in the Ward, tells us as much about local social capital formations as presences do.

Considered together, therefore, it is clear that although there are a number of *presences* of bonding, bridging and linking social capital indicators in Duncairn, across all three levels there are, arguably, a greater proportion of significant *absences* which at best diminish and at worst completely negate any positive outcomes, particularly for those local young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

The final and perhaps most telling element of the theoretical framework adapted for the ILiAD study concerns the development of negative social capital. As outlined earlier, many of the community bonds which have been created in Duncairn are based on shared experiences of adversity, besiegement, and external stigmatisation. However, the social capital literature consistently shows that these types of bonds often create the wrong type of social capital. Fukuyama (2001),[159] for example, claims that in such environments, a form of negative social capital is created because this type of group solidarity is commonly purchased at the price of hostility towards out-group members. This phenomenon is clearly apparent in Duncairn where high levels of inclusionary bonding social capital can, to an extent, be attributed to exclusionary process linked to historical ethno-religious divisions. In

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[159] Fukuyama, F. (2001) 'Social Capital, Civil Society and Development' Third World Quarterly, 22, 1, 7-20.

other words, the bonds created in certain parts of the Ward are restrictive in terms of the community developing the more outward looking bridging bonds which are seen to counter the effects of 'bounded solidarity' (Portes, 1998).[160] A host of previous social capital analyses have shown that bounded solidarity is a common feature of communities who have endured the collective 'experience of adversity and opposition to mainstream society' (ibid: 17). Moreover, it is claimed that the interplay between bounded solidarity, external stigmatisation, and embedded fatalistic tendencies, commonly, engenders restrictive processes and a downward levelling of social norms (Harper, 2001).[161]

Three examples from the Duncairn data around neglect of the positive, accentuation of the negative, and undesirable role models ably demonstrate this phenomenon. There were several accounts in the data (i.e. around successful transfer tests, high achieving school leavers, and University offers) which showed that narratives of individual success were, occasionally, actively dissuaded at peer, familial, and community levels. Portes (1998: 16-17) argues that this is a regular feature of communities whose bonds have developed through a 'narrative of oppression and besiegement'. Such communities, he concludes, have 'no place for individual success stories' for they undermine community solidarity, especially where this solidarity is 'premised on the alleged impossibility of such occurrences'.

Similarly, many community level sources offered profoundly pessimistic overviews and prognoses of Duncairn and the Ward's social, economic, and educational challenges. In a later publication, Portes (2010)[162] argues that emphasising the plight of a community or neglecting to highlight a community's positive assets become important 'methods of cementing' such bonds, because these bonds are premised on 'acquired schemata' of continual 'shared adversity' and 'inevitable collective failure'.

It is also clear that a perception exists among a number of Duncairn's younger residents that: education is a waste of time; achievement is beyond them; worklessness is a feasible option; and the only local people who seem to '*really succeed'* tend to be those who do so through nefarious means. This, according to the literature, has serious implications for local social capital formations. For example, if young people increasingly come to see unemployment benefit or criminal enterprise as viable strategies in the 'field' they occupy, some are likely to adjust their 'habitus' to suit these specific conditions (Moser, 2006).[163] In other words, while habitus relates to an individual's 'internalised structures' and dispositions, they are 'equally influenced' by the individual's 'desire to conform to prevailing and dominant norms' (Oliver and O'Reilly 2010: 56-57).[164]

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[160] Portes, A. (1998) 'Social capital: its origins and applications', Modern Sociology Annual Review of Sociology, Vol. 24: pp 1-24.

[161] Harper, R. (2001) Social Capital: A Review of the Literature. London: Social Analysis and Reporting Division, Office for National Statistics.
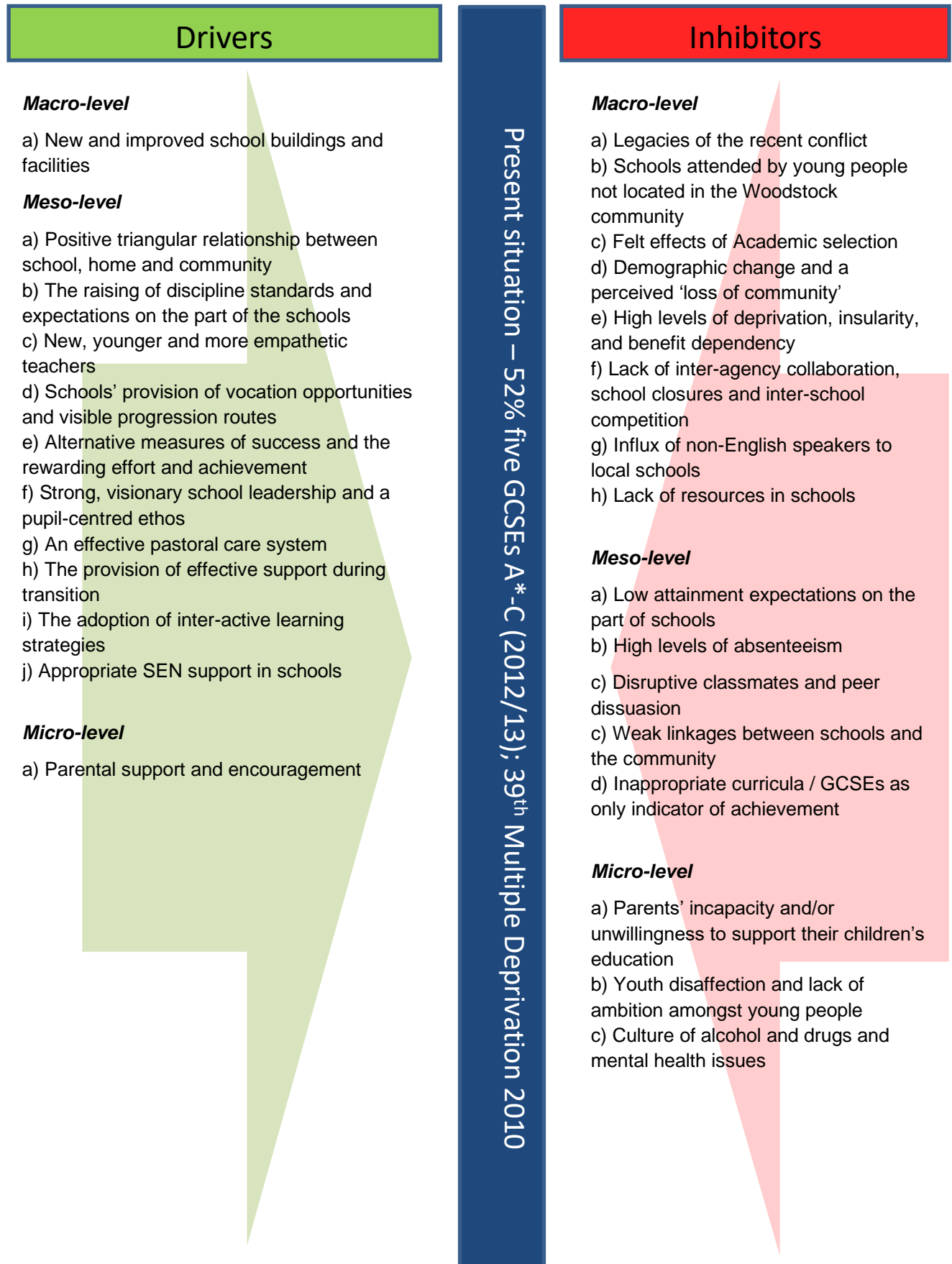
[162] Portes, A. (2010) Economic Sociology: a systemic inquiry, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

[163] Moser, C. O. N. (2006) Reducing Urban Violence in Developing Countries, Washington: The Brookings Institution.

[164] Oliver, C. and O'Reily, K. (2010) A Bourdieusian analysis of class and migration: habitus and the individualizing process. Sociology, 44: 49–65.

4.6. Case study 6: Woodstock

4.6.1. Force Field Analysis of drivers and inhibitors of achievement in Woodstock

Drivers

Macro-level

a) New and improved school buildings and facilities

Meso-level

a) Positive triangular relationship between school, home and community
b) The raising of discipline standards and expectations on the part of the schools
c) New, younger and more empathetic teachers
d) Schools' provision of vocation opportunities and visible progression routes
e) Alternative measures of success and the rewarding effort and achievement
f) Strong, visionary school leadership and a pupil-centred ethos
g) An effective pastoral care system
h) The provision of effective support during transition
i) The adoption of inter-active learning strategies
j) Appropriate SEN support in schools

Micro-level

a) Parental support and encouragement

Present situation – 52% five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13); 39th Multiple Deprivation 2010

Inhibitors

Macro-level

a) Legacies of the recent conflict
b) Schools attended by young people not located in the Woodstock community
c) Felt effects of Academic selection
d) Demographic change and a perceived 'loss of community'
e) High levels of deprivation, insularity, and benefit dependency
f) Lack of inter-agency collaboration, school closures and inter-school competition
g) Influx of non-English speakers to local schools
h) Lack of resources in schools

Meso-level

a) Low attainment expectations on the part of schools
b) High levels of absenteeism

c) Disruptive classmates and peer dissuasion
c) Weak linkages between schools and the community
d) Inappropriate curricula / GCSEs as only indicator of achievement

Micro-level

a) Parents' incapacity and/or unwillingness to support their children's education
b) Youth disaffection and lack of ambition amongst young people
c) Culture of alcohol and drugs and mental health issues

4.6.2. Summary of the findings from the Woodstock Ward

The data show that there is a range of structural, school-level, and familial factors which impact on the learning and attainment of young people from Woodstock. Some of these factors are seen to enable academic achievement and others create significant barriers to such a goal. In terms of summarising these factors, it is important to note that there were substantially more barriers identified in the Woodstock data than there were enablers.

The structural (macro-level) drivers of educational attainment in Woodstock i.e. those related to policy inputs and the Ward's history and demography, appear to be limited to the improved learning environments which have been created by recent investment in new buildings and facilities in the schools which serve the Ward. The data here make clear that young people from Woodstock have responded very positively to such improvements and appear more willing to apply themselves in newer learning environments that are designed to meet their educational needs.

However, a far wider range of structural inhibitors to educational attainment in the Ward were apparent. Similar to the Duncairn findings, the complex interplay between Woodstock's recent history and their demographic trajectory seems to have had a negative impact. East Belfast's monotonous slide from industrial heartland to industrial wasteland, broader shifts to a more skills-centric economy, and the latest recession have, collectively, created sizable pockets of acute deprivation in the Ward. It is also clear that the economic cleavages both within Woodstock and between the Ward and its more affluent neighbours have created a *'tale of two cities'* microcosm.

The lives of many local young people and their families also continue to be effected by legacies of the conflict, such as: *'conflict-era'* political representation; a continuing paramilitary presence; ongoing inter-community tensions; and sporadic incidents of civil disorder, most notably evidenced during the recent 'flag protest'. These findings are in line with previous studies on educational underachievement in loyalist communities. For example, Purvis (2011) found that the 'impacts of these historical failings' around education and accelerated forms of deindustrialisation are routinely compounded by conflict legacies. In the context of Woodstock, one such legacy relates to the impact of negative role models which offer to young people 'status and income through illegal activity' (ibid).

Of course, other studies (e.g. Shirlow & Murtagh, 2006)[165] have shown that a further pervasive legacy of the recent conflict for many working-class communities is the restricted spatial mobility of residents, particularly those who live in and around the interface communities which straddle Belfast's many peace-lines. The Woodstock data were littered with references to this phenomenon which was consistently described as one of the most debilitating features of the community.

Significant changes to the Ward's demographic profile have seen the Catholic population of the Ward increase three-fold from 6.2% in 2001 to 19.4% in 2011; the number of residents born outside the UK or Ireland increase to 14.7% (more than double the Northern Ireland average); and the percentage of privately rented housing rise 10% in the last decade to 28.3%, the highest in the ILiAD sample and nearly double the Northern Ireland average. Of course, such shifts are mirrored in many other areas of the UK with little local concern, particularly in terms of attainment levels. However, in (post-conflict) Woodstock they are, among some respondents, seen to represent unstoppable decline and a lost sense of community. These perceptions are reflected in contemporary demographic patterns across Belfast which depicts an aging and declining Protestant population and a young and

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[165] Shirlow, P. and Murtagh, B. (2006). *Belfast: Segregation, Violence and the City*. Dublin: Pluto Press.

expanding Catholic community. Moreover, these perceptions also mirror the literature around Protestant working class communities which suggests that these population changes tend to engender high levels of insularity which are reinforced by perceptions of fatalism, defeatism and demographic encroachment (McKay 2000;[166] Hall 2007).[167]

The policy of academic selection was widely seen as an important structural barrier to local attainment levels. It is clear from the Woodstock data that the grammar sector views selection as an opportunity for pupils with high ability (and a privileged background in terms of e.g. familial education norms) to leave school having achieved their potential. However, it is equally clear that the same process, commonly, prevents pupils from less privileged backgrounds from doing likewise and, thus, simply reinforces pre-existing disadvantage. While it may be argued that academic selection is not the primary cause of social division in the Ward, the Woodstock data concur with Purvis et al (2011)[168] in that it accentuates it.

Two further macro-level inhibitors related to demographic change in the Ward were identified. Firstly, the secondary schools attended by young people from Woodstock are located outside the Ward. In addition to creating logistical/transportation challenges for pupils and their parents, the invisibility of post-primary learning in the Ward has the predictable consequence of further supressing educational aspirations. Secondly, the reported '*influx*' of foreign nationals into the local primary sector has clearly created extra pressure for schools already struggling to mediate reduced budgets and resources.

In terms of the school-level factors which are seen to enable academic progress. The data make clear that several schools which serve the Ward have, in recent years: fostered new and improved relations between school, home and community; significantly raised both their expectations and standards of discipline; provided alternative measures of success and a wider range of vocational opportunities; and enhanced their provision of SEN, pastoral care, support during transition, and inter-active learning strategies. In addition, principals with visionary leadership qualities and a pupil-centred ethos have been seen to make a substantial difference, even in previously 'failing' schools; and a new generation of teachers in the schools which serve the Ward are seen to be markedly more empathetic and committed to the young people in their charge.

However, several meso-level barriers were apparent in the Woodstock data: many parents, for example, believe that the issue of low expectations on the part of schools has not been completely resolved; and some young people continue to be inhibited by disruptive classmates and dissuasive peers. Moreover, and in all probability related to spatial detachment of schools from the communities they serve, high levels of absenteeism in the Ward remain a regular feature of the indices.

The most important micro-level influencer of local attainment levels is the level and consistency of parental support and encouragement. The data here confirm the long-established maxim that the most significant differentials in academic performance are commonly found outside of schools and classrooms. Many parents in Woodstock provide such support and thus increase their child's academic prospects. However, others, for a variety of reasons, do not and their children begin and progress through school with a distinct disadvantage. Many of this latter group, somewhat predictably, make up the significant proportion of local young people who, as the data here patently evidence, have become increasingly disaffected and are often bereft of aspiration or ambition.

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[166] McKay, S. (2000) Northern Protestants: An Unsettled People, Belfast: Blackstaff Press.

[167] Hall, M. & Conflict Transformation Initiative (2007) Is There a Shared Ulster Heritage? Belfast: Island Publications.

[168] Purvis, Dawn; Shirlow, Peter; Langhammer, Mark (2011) Educational Underachievement and the Protestant Working Class: A Summary of Research, for Consultation (Belfast: Dawn Purvis MLA Office).

4.6.3. Social Capital in the Woodstock Ward

In terms of bonding social capital and the immediate factors which impact on local attainment levels, the data present mixed messages. The consistent provision of parental support for one section of the Ward's young people stands in stark contrast to the abject absence of familial encouragement experienced by another. The incapacity of some parents in Woodstock to have a positive involvement in their child's education is perhaps the most significant inhibitor of academic achievement in the Ward. Similarly, but in a broader context, the Woodstock community clearly has substantial stocks of bonding capital as evidenced by innumerable examples of close-knit ties and local people sticking together during times of adversity. However, the data also indicate that many of these internal bonds were, to an extent, informed by the recent conflict and are thus, at least in part, based on suspicion and hostility towards outsiders.

Formations of bridging social capital are also problematic in the Ward. A range of positive school-level (meso) influences around improved relationships (with families and communities), a raising of standards, and the adoption of flexible and empathetic approaches have clearly encouraged many young people from Woodstock and their parents to take a greater interest in their education. However, weak linkages between some schools and the community were also commonly reported and it is clear that the task of addressing this sense of detachment is significantly hampered by historical norms, contemporary levels of absenteeism, and the future envisioning of many young people which supposes a pointless engagement in the labour market. In a broader community context, forming bridging ties with other communities is evidently inhibited by, for example, the (wider) area's sectarian geography.

In terms of linking social capital in Woodstock, a series of structural factors, primarily around demographic change and the recent conflict are seen to further inhibit academic achievement. As outlined earlier, the interplay between these factors has: made the community more insular; sustained intra and inter-community divisions; created tensions between the community and its political representatives; and engendered a host of negative role models and influences.

Looking at these three levels of social capital together, it is clear that in the Woodstock Ward there are: pockets of bonding capital which are, to an extent, diminished by low parental capacity; an acute shortage of bridging social capital, notwithstanding recently improved school-level influences; and a near complete absence of linking capital, made infinitely more pronounced by the economic cleavages which are an increasing feature of the Ward. The broader social capital literature confirms that communities with high bonding capital and low bridging capital are commonly characterised by an appearance of internal cohesion and a persistent distrust in relation to external entities (Schuller, 2007)[169]. It is clear from the data that the recent conflict had the effect of cementing the bonds of solidarity within the Woodstock Ward by harnessing the commonalities of shared adversity and ethnic homogeneity. It is equally clear that Woodstock has, for a variety of reasons, been unable to create sufficient stocks of bridging capital or, indeed, adapt to broader social and demographic changes. According to Shirlow (2006)[170], working class communities with these characteristics are, as a consequence, more prone to isolation and detachment, particularly, if their residual structure remains connected to the trauma of violence.

The final element in the ILiAD social capital framework relates to the negative outcomes of the concept, which Portes (1998)[171] categorises as: the exclusion of outsiders; restrictions on individual freedoms; and a downward levelling of norms. It is clear that the internal bonds created in Woodstock during sustained periods of conflict and adversity has produced a

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[169] Schuller, T. (2007) 'Reflections on the use of social capital', Review of Social Economy, 65: 1, 11 — 28

[170] Shirlow, P. (2006) 'Belfast: The 'post-conflict' city', Space and Polity, Vol. 10: 2: pp 99-107.

[171] Portes, A. (1998) 'Social capital: its origins and applications', Modern Sociology Annual Review of Sociology, Vol. 24: pp 1-24.

'bounded solidarity'. This has engendered, paradoxically, high levels of both community spirit and insularity in the Ward. For example, the exclusive nature of bonding in some sections of the Woodstock Ward has reinforced the importance of homogeneity at the very time that homogeneity is challenged by demographic change. It is also apparent from the data that an additional consequence of bounded solidarity in these areas of Woodstock is that many young people endure significant restrictions on their individual freedom. For example, young peoples' participation in the recent flag protests was, at least in part, driven by a desire to conform to community influences; and their spatial mobility restrictions are, to an extent, similarly guided by neighbourhood demands.

However, the most salient examples of negative social capital relate to a downward levelling of norms. The Woodstock data are littered with references to this phenomenon where narratives and perceptions of oppression, besiegement, stigma and discrimination are seen to have two particularly negative impacts. This first of these concerns the influence of negative role models and their impact on young people in terms of aspiration. Some young people spoke about: individuals in the Ward who have failed at school, *'never worked'*, but, nonetheless, *'seem to survive'*; and others in the community who have achieved *'success'* via criminal enterprise. According to Rubio (1997: 810-812),[172] the signals which these survival strategies and 'successes' produce have a negative effect on the 'local reward structure'. This is clearly evident in Woodstock where some young people don't see the point in applying themselves at school because they see a route to survival/success which: (a) involves extra-legal activities; and/or (b) does not entail educational achievement. Therefore, the type of social capital they seek to build and invest in is informed by such pathways (ibid).

A second downward levelling of norms example relates to the limited ambition of many of the Ward's younger residents. The data have highlighted a host of factors which are seen to have depressed the aspirations and ambition amongst large sections of the Woodstock community. Moreover, the data attest that there are dissuasive forces at familial, peer, and community-level which sustain such tendencies. In terms of trying to understand these processes, Bourdieu's (1998)[173] conceptualisations of 'field' (social arena) and 'habitus' (an individual's subjective dispositions) are particularly useful. If we imagine the 'field' as the Woodstock community and its influences, and the 'habitus' as the personal inclinations of its residents, a central tenet of Bourdieu's thesis becomes apparent. Namely, that one of the field's most important effects on habitus is to 'limit the variation' between an individual's actions or choices and the 'constraining norms' of their own social group. In such ways, the bounded solidarity of a community contributes to a downward levelling of ambition among its members. In the context of Woodstock, the consequence of this process is that some young people absorb the 'field's' many 'pessimistic influences' (i.e. high unemployment, low attainment levels, and negative role models) and are persuaded to envision further or higher education or a successful engagement in the labour market as 'unattainable' and minimum-wage work, precarious zero-hour contracts or 'unemployment as inevitable'. In other words, 'their affected habitus dictates to them what is considered achievable and worth aspiring to' (Oliver and O'Reilly, 2010: 54-61).[174]

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[172] Rubio, M. (1997) 'Perverse social capital – some evidence from Colombia', Journal of Economic Issues, 31 (3), 805-816.

[173] Bourdieu, P. (1998) Acts of Resistance: Against the New Myths of Our Time, (Translated by R. Nice), Cambridge: Polity Press.

[174] Oliver, C. and O'Reily, K. (2010) A Bourdieusian analysis of class and migration: habitus and the individualizing process. Sociology, 44: 49–65

4.7. Case study 7: Tullycarnet

4.7.1. Force Field Analysis of drivers and inhibitors of achievement in Tullycarnet

Drivers

Macro-level

a) Socially-mixed schools serving the area

Meso-level

a) Improved community-school links
b) Increasing levels of parental and familial engagement with schools
c) Strong school leadership and high expectations by the school
d) Staff commitment to local schools and community
e) Adaptation of school structures, policies and pedagogical styles to suit local pupil needs
f) Support for pupils during transitions
g) Broader conceptualisations of achievement (on the part of schools)

Micro-level

a) Parental support and encouragement
b) Individual resilience and self-motivation of high achievers against the odds
c) Close social networks and positive community influences

Inhibitors

Macro-level

a) Schools closures and falling enrolments
b) Spatial detachment of schools from the communities they serve
c) Unreliability and skewing effect of official statistics
d) Unsuitable facilities, lack of resources, and inadequate provision of Early Years
e) Lack of joined-up education strategy (i.e. between DE & CCEA)

Meso-level

a) Inappropriate teacher skill-set/negative teacher attitudes, behaviours and expectations
b) Inappropriate curriculum and learning strategies
c) Schools and other agencies working in silos

Micro-level

a) Lack of aspiration and sense of hopelessness amongst young people
b) Low parental expectations and engagement regarding education
c) Negative community norms
d) Mental and physical health issues

Present situation – 43% five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13); 109th Multiple Deprivation 2010

4.7.2. Summary of findings from the Tullycarnet Ward

There are a range of factors which are seen to impact on educational attainment in the Tullycarnet Ward. The data here show that across micro, meso, and macro levels, there are a number of issues which are seen to enable academic achievement and others which create significant barriers.

In terms of the macro-level factors, i.e. those informed by policy and the Ward's history and demography, the only driver highlighted was the socially mixed composition of some of the schools which serve young people from the estate. This factor, it was claimed: (a) gave local young people the opportunity to learn alongside pupils from different social backgrounds; and (b) consequently, raised their aspiration levels and broadened their horizons. However, a number of macro-level inhibitors to educational attainment were also identified, primarily, related to the Ward's demographic realities. In 2011, it was reported that Tullycarnet had only 109 young people at post-primary schooling (one of the smallest in the ILiAD study). Similar to the other predominantly Protestant Wards in the study, these falling enrolments have: (a) heralded a spectre of school closures; and (b) accentuated the spatial detachment of schools which serve the Ward.

There are nine post-primary schools which serve the Ward and only one is located within two miles of the estate. Indeed, almost half of the 109 post-primary pupils in Tullycarnet attend Newtownbreda High School which is some 4.3 miles away. These distances serve to reinforce the idea that the education of local young people is not a priority and make it difficult for young people to feel 'their school' is in any way part of 'their community'. Moreover, it can also be argued that the significantly higher than average absenteeism levels at Newtownbreda (32.8%) and Dundonald High (36.5%) can, at least in part, be attributed to this spatial detachment and the, consequential, invisibility of post-primary education in the estate.

On a policy level, other inhibitors of educational attainment were identified around: (a) the unreliability and skewing effect of official statistics, for example: Key Stage target levels; the neglect of value added and progression; and the inappropriateness of Free School Meals (FSM) as a measure of socio-economic need; (b) lack of resources / inadequate provision of Early Years; and (c) an apparent lack of strategic collaboration between the Department of Education and the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA).

In terms of meso-level factors, several enablers were identified around the recent (community-inspired) *'transformation'* that has occurred in relation to improved triangular linkages between schools, the Tullycarnet community and local parents. The data make clear that two key factors in this transformation were, firstly, the *'wake-up call'* engendered by the proposed closure of the local primary school; and secondly, the role of the Tullycarnet Action Group Initiative Group (TAGIT). The campaign led by this group has clearly galvanised the wider community and increased levels of parental and familial engagement with schools. It is also apparent that the community's improved perception of education has been matched by the schools which serve the Ward in terms of: higher expectations; increased levels of commitment and empathy on the part of teachers; flexible policies and pedagogical styles; effective support during transition; and broader conceptualisations of achievement.

However, several school-level inhibitors of achievement were highlighted. Some schools which serve the Ward, it was claimed, continue to pursue inappropriate curriculum and learning strategies and retain a *'silo'* mentality in terms of engaging with external agencies. Similarly, some of the teachers working with young people from Tullycarnet occasionally display negative teacher attitudes, and hold low expectations for their pupils.

In terms of the micro-level factors which are seen to impact on attainment levels in Tullycarnet, three drivers were identified. Similar to several other Wards in the ILiAD study, the most important of these immediate enablers to academic achievement was the support and encouragement young people receive from their parents. It is also important to note here the cross-over between the meso factors and the micro factors. The TAGIT group has played a significant role in increasing both the local value placed on education and levels of engagement between schools and families. These improvements have, in turn: raised the confidence levels of local parents; addressed some of their essential skills deficits; made them more cognisant of their role in their child's education; and, thus, enabled them to provide effective support.

The second micro-level driver relates to the individual resilience and self-motivation of high achievers. The data make clear that, despite a range of barriers, several young people are seen to succeed at school. Amongst this group there was an important commonality – a perception that effort was more important than ability. In other words, these high-achievers concurred that someone with ability will nonetheless fail without effort but that someone with limited ability will nonetheless succeed with effort. The data also show that many residents who achieved very little at their time at school have subsequently gone on to succeed in further and higher education settings. It is clear, therefore, that the academic potential of a proportion of the Ward's population was not realised during their mainstream schooling. The final micro-level driver of educational attainment is the close social networks and positive community influences that exist within the Tullycarnet estate. Notions of neighbourliness and *'pulling together'* were apparent throughout the data in addition to a host of accounts highlighting the contribution of positive role models such as voluntary youth workers and TAGIT committee members.

However, several micro-level inhibitors of educational attainment in Tullycarnet were also identified. Despite the aforementioned *'transformation'*, it is clear that an acute sense of pessimism pervades in sections of the Ward. The data are littered with references to a distinct lack of aspiration and sense of hopelessness among some young people. There are, it was claimed, two key contributing factors at play here. Firstly, many parents in the estate, primarily in account of their own unhappy experience at school, have little or no engagement with schools and equally low expectations for their children's education. Secondly, there remain, despite the best efforts of TAGIT and others, extant negative community norms around education and employment. Young people from Tullycarnet, it was frequently claimed, are *'surrounded'* and influenced by people who view school as alien, secure employment as unattainable and unemployment as inevitable.

Moreover, these perceptions are indicative of and reinforced by the indices which show that while Tullycarnet is the 109th most deprived Ward it is regarded as the 14th most deprived in terms of the education and employment domain. Similarly, across the seven Wards in the ILiAD study, Tullycarnet has the lowest rate of 5 GCSEs and the lowest percentage of young people who go on to Higher Education. In addition, the data also highlight the issue of mental health as a significant barrier to attainment in Tullycarnet. Self-harming, drug use and depression among teenagers is increasingly prevalent and it is clear that the community and several schools which serve the Ward are keen to secure increased provision of effective support mechanisms to address such problems. These schools also report that the number of pupils with SEN is rising year on year. These claims are clearly supported in the indices which show that Dundonald (52.8%), Newtownbreda (46%), and Orangefield (52.8%) have markedly higher SEN proportions than the Northern Ireland average of 30.8%.

4.7.3. Social Capital in Tullycarnet

The data make clear that within the Tullycarnet estate there are substantial stocks of bonding social capital as evidenced by micro-level conceptualisations of empowerment,

infrastructure, and connectedness. There were innumerable examples in the transcripts of a cohesive, united community pulling together and affecting positive change through collective action. As Field (2003)[175] has argued, such social interactions enable residents to: build communities; commit themselves to each other; and create a cohesive social fabric. Perhaps the most salient example of this cohesion relates to the community inspired campaign against the proposed closure of the local primary school. Although this campaign was ultimately unsuccessful[176], this campaign seems to have galvanised the wider community to take a renewed interest in in education.

On a more individual level, this transformation translates into increased parental support and is seen to raise aspiration amongst local young people. However, it also needs to be noted that, in addition to these nascent changes, the data evidence that many young people from Tullycarnet are inhibited from realising their academic potential because they: (a) lack such parental support; (b) remain influenced by (historical) negative community norms around education; and (c) consequently, harbour a sense of hopelessness. These findings further highlight the long-established correlation between social capital and school success and are aligned to the broader literature. For example, the World Bank (1999)[177] claims that teachers are more committed, pupils attain higher grades, and better use is made of school facilities in communities where parents are actively engaged in the education of their children. Similarly, Putnam (2000)[178] has shown that local norms and networks have far reaching effects on young peoples' educational choices, behaviours, and development.

Bridging social capital in the framework designed for the ILiAD study refers to schools' levels of engagement, accessibility and innovation. The Tullycarnet data make clear that the schools which serve the Ward have sought to foster new and improved relationships with the community and local families. As evidenced in this and several other Wards, community perceptions of schools as *'middle class and detached'* are perhaps the most significant barrier to such triangular relationships. It is equally apparent that to address this detachment schools and teachers need to explicitly and empathetically demonstrate an understanding of working class communities and families. For example, in recent years, a school serving young people from Tullycarnet appointed as principal a former pupil who continues to live locally. Under his leadership: parental engagement was increased; effective community linkages were established; and the proportion of their pupils attaining 5 GCSEs doubled in the space of two years.

In terms of linking social capital in Tullycarnet, it is clear that the Ward's history and demographic development has not engendered the same inter and intra-community divisions as the other predominantly Protestant Wards in the ILiAD study. Local legacies of the recent conflict and demographic change appear significantly less pronounced than in Duncairn or Woodstock. For example, although extant paramilitary influence was reported in Tullycarnet, this influence was seen as *'diminishing'*, and considerably *'less of an issue'* than in the other two Wards. Similarly, although these three Wards share a sense of spatial detachment: Tullycarnet does not interface with the 'other' community; sectarian violence is not a feature of the estate; and conflict-related spatial mobility restrictions are similarly absent. Moreover, three examples from the indices show that Tullycarnet appears to have a more settled demography and residential tenure. Firstly, unlike Duncairn and Woodstock, there is no sense of ethno-religious encroachment and the Ward remains predominantly (86%) Protestant. Secondly, only 2% were born outside the UK and Ireland which is less than a third of the Northern Ireland average. Thirdly, the percentage of private rented housing (7.2%) is the lowest amongst all the ILiAD Wards.

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[175] Field, J. (2003). *Social Capital*, London: Routledge.

[176] Tullycarnet primary school was closed in 2017 – primarily because it filled only 46 of its available 552 places (2016-2017).

[177] The World Bank (1999) 'What is Social Capital?' Available online at: http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/scapital/whatsc.htm

[178] Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling Alone. The collapse and revival of American community*, New York: Simon and Schuster.

However, the Tullycarnet data evidence several structural factors which are seen to impact negatively on local attainment levels. Across all the Ward examinations in the ILiAD study, there is an attempt to identify and measure what Savage et al (2005)[179] have described as a community's capitals, assets and resources (CARS). While the primary foci of these examinations were on relational, and often intangible, aspects of social capital such as empathetic teachers, parental capacity, and familial / community norms, it is also important to explore the impact of the more palpable factors. Indeed, a century ago, Hanifan (1916: 130)[180] first used the term social capital to refer to rural school community centres which he described as 'those tangible substances … that count for most in the daily lives of people'. Hanifan's views on tangibility are supported in the data from across the seven ILiAD Wards which show that the most significant of these 'tangible substances' relates to the visibility of quality schools located in the Ward. However, in Tullycarnet, there is no visible representation of post-primary learning and young people are thus educated in establishments which, despite the best efforts of some schools, are neither seen as in or of the community they serve.

In terms of the inter-play between bonding, bridging and linking social capital in Tullycarnet, several clear causal linkages are apparent. For example, the data attest a transformation has taken place amongst significant sections of the Ward around education. A host of community-inspired initiatives to address underachievement in the Ward have been developed and the role of the community sector in general and TAGIT in particular cannot be overstated. Here, social capital can be seen to produce virtuous circles across bonding, bridging, and linking levels. For example, the bonding capital which encourages local people at a micro-level to organise and become more engaged with local schools is further reinforced via the new (meso-level) fora and engagement processes thus produced. In turn, these initiatives create new (macro-level) structural linkages to decision making process.

As stated earlier, the recent conflict does not seem to have created the same formations of negative social capital as where apparent in Duncarin and Woodstock. The internal bonds in Tullycarnet appear more organically informed rather than shaped by a shared sense of adversity; there was little in the data to suggest that the community is untrusting and/or hostile towards outsiders; and respondents routinely highlighted the influence of positive role models (including ex-combatants) rather than the impact of negative ones. More broadly, the community perceives no external or internal threats and, as a consequence, has a confidence in its future which was noticeably absent in the other predominantly Protestant Wards. However, it is clear that deeply embedded community norms around education and its value continue to lower the ambition of many of the estate's younger residents.

Of course, this analysis of Tullycarnet is a snapshot in time and it is often more valuable to examine trajectories. The nascent attitudinal changes within the community regarding education are slowing being reflected in the most recent indices. Furthermore, even though the community-inspired campaign to retain the local primary school was ultimately unsuccessful, the galvanising effect of this campaign has encouraged the local community sector and parents to sustain their engagement and address the above mentioned barriers to educational attainment in the Ward. It is clear that Tullycarnet has featured regularly in the lowest deciles of the education indices for some time. However, it is equally clear that the community is, perhaps more than ever, effectively marshalling the capitals, assets, and resources at its disposal. Moreover, the Tullycarnet data concur with the broader social capital literature and attests that when this is done and when these efforts are supported at the macro policy-level, such communities can begin to mobile the concept of social capital to example a more positive trajectory of change.

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[179] Savage, M., Warde, A. and Devine, F. (2005) 'Capitals, assets and resources: some critical issues, *The British Journal of Sociology,* Vol. 56 (1) pp 31–47.
[180] Hanifan, L. J. (1916). 'The rural school community center', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 67: 130-138.

Chapter 5: Towards policy and practice - some considerations

Findings from the ILiAD case study Wards are qualitative and not generalizable to other ward areas or N. Ireland as a whole. Nevertheless, common themes identified offer a number of important insights for policy and practice consideration. The following section provides summaries of key aspects of young people's experiences that can help or hinder their educational pathway and point to some implications for policy and practice for these Wards.

Only by understanding the various immediate (micro), school (meso)and structural/policy factors influencing differences in education outcomes at local levels will it be possible to design effective responses in policy and practice that improve the educational outcomes for all young people in these deprived Wards.

Given the qualitative nature of the ILiAD study, there is no suggestion that the factors identified are in any way causal but rather, taken in the round, they illustrate the delicate balance of interrelated factors seen to persist for many young people in these areas. Supporting and investing in the aspects that are viewed as enhancing educational success and reducing or minimising the negative impact of those that delimit educational possibilities, may shift the balance of opportunity in a positive direction.

In this chapter, each of the original research questions will be addressed individually. This is followed by an analysis of the ILiAD findings in relation to the social capital theoretical framework developed for this study. The final section of this chapter will present the key messages from the research and key observations around policy, educational practice, and future research.

As stated earlier in this report, the full results for each case study Ward are available to view in Volume 2 of the ILiAD final report.

5.1 Answering the Research Questions

5.1.1 Research question 1: Why do children and young people in some Wards with high level deprivation perform well educationally, relative to their counterparts in similar or less deprived Wards?

What has made this project different from other studies on successful schools in areas of disadvantage is the fact that we have differentiated between disadvantaged areas, and examined various factors that combined seem to lead to some young people doing very well in school (by the current educational standards). We have also outlined inter-and intra-Ward differences. Some of the challenges (and drivers of achievement) are the same across all Wards, but some factors combine to lift young people and their families up. However, each community has a unique set of circumstances too – and some communities have the resources to mediate the challenges that exist. This is partly why achievement was so high in some of the electoral Wards investigated (particularly the Derry/Londonderry Wards), relative to their counterparts in similar or less deprived Wards.

One example which can be used to illustrate how these different factors combine in unique ways is the comparison of the Rosemount Ward (in Derry/Londonderry, which is ranked 44th out of 582 for multiple deprivation under the NIMDM (2010) and in which 91% of young people achieved five or more GCSEs at A*-C in 2012/13) and the Tullycarnet Ward (in Belfast, which is not as highly deprived as Rosemount – it is ranked 109th in Northern Ireland for multiple deprivation, and 43% of young people from Tullycarnet achieved five or more GCSEs in 2012/13). Firstly, in terms of structural (macro-level) factors, there were several positive drivers of achievement within Rosemount that were observed as absent from

Tullycarnet. Within Rosemount, there is an enduring positive legacy of the 1947 Education Act, for Catholics especially, which includes an appreciation of the value of education and a belief in the Catholic education system. Furthermore, high-performing schools are located close to or within the Ward itself, which were reported to have a social mix within them; 30.6% of young people from the Ward attended grammar schools; and there is an effective youth service and education initiatives within the community. In contrast, within Tullycarnet, although the socially mixed composition of some of the schools which serve young people from the area was highlighted as a structural driver of achievement, there were many more inhibitors of achievement at the structural (macro) level; for example, only one in five young people attended grammar schools or schools with a grammar stream (19.3%), and only one of the nine post-primary schools serving Tullycarnet is within two miles of the Ward, making it difficult for young people to feel that their school is a part of their 'community' and reinforcing the idea that school is not a priority. There was also a reported lack of resources/inadequate provision for early years. At the meso (school) level, several enablers were identified in Tullycarnet around the recent (community-inspired) 'transformation' that has occurred in relation to improved triangular linkages between schools, the community, and parents. These enablers included the community having an improved perception of education, along with higher expectations, increased levels of commitment on the part of teachers, flexible pedagogical styles, effective transition support, and broader conceptualisations of achievement. However, it was also claimed that some schools continue to pursue inappropriate curricula, retain a 'silo' mentality, display negative teacher attitudes towards pupils from Tullycarnet, and have low expectations. In comparison, within the Rosemount Ward, the drivers of achievement at the meso/school-level have been long established, and are wide-ranging: there are close and long-standing school-parent and school-community relationships, with many young people and their families benefitting from the high-quality Extended Schools provisions and the effective school partnerships and inter-agency partnerships that have been fostered; the data also show that staff-pupil relationships are, in general, productive, friendly and respectful; pupils feel 'listened to'; and the ethos of schools combines pastoral care and academic success. In addition, the schools serving young people from the Rosemount area were found to have an average absenteeism rate of 10.2% during 2012/13, the lowest rate of the ILiAD sample Wards (in comparison, Tullycarnet had an absenteeism rate of 18.2% during 2012/13).

The micro-level (home and community-level) drivers and inhibitors of achievement that were identified from the data from both Rosemount and Tullycarnet were similar (drivers such as resilience, close-knit family and neighbour networks, and parental support, and inhibitors such as anti-social behaviour, low expectations, and a sense of hopelessness), although within Tullycarnet, there was the added inhibitor of extant negative norms around education and employment – it was frequently claimed that young people there are '*surrounded*' and influenced by people who view school as alien, secure employment as unattainable, and unemployment as inevitable.

These differences between the Wards in terms of the factors that influence achievement have led to differences in the ways (educational) social capital is both created and utilised. The data from Rosemount provide evidence of: high stocks of bonding social capital (referring to positive familial and community norms around education, supportive and engaged parents, close-knit community networks, and a sense of community belonging); high stocks of bridging social capital in Ward (referring to schools' levels of engagement, accessibility, and innovation); and high stocks of linking social capital (referring to the structural factors which can positively impact on attainment levels). Comparatively, within Tullycarnet, while there are substantial stocks of bonding social capital (as evidenced by the examples from the data of the community cohesively coming together to affect positive change, which has empowered people within the Ward and increased parental support for education and young people's aspirations), bridging social capital in the Ward has only recently begun to emerge, in terms of improved school-community-home triangular

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relationships. The Tullycarnet data also evidence a key structural factor that has impacted negatively on local attainment levels - the lack of visibility of quality post-primary schools within the Ward. Young people are educated in establishments relatively far from where they live, and such schools are therefore generally not seen as in or of the community they serve.

However, it was also clear that Tullycarnet has, up until very lately, struggled to access and utilise the capitals, assets and resources in relation to education; and has featured regularly in the lowest deciles in the attainment indices. This has led to an intergenerational sense of hopelessness and low expectations and norms surrounding education and employment – which nascent community-led activism is beginning to address. This (historical) detachment from education may help explain why Rosemount has outperformed Tullycarnet despite having a higher level of deprivation. Moreover, the positive community-led response may help to explain why in Tullycarnet, there was evidence of a confidence in its future, which was less noticeable in other predominantly Protestant ILiAD Wards.

5.1.2 Research question 2: How can differential educational attainment be explained between Wards that are very closely matched as regards multiple deprivation?

The Wards of Duncairn and The Diamond were chosen for the original sample as they gave the study predominantly Catholic and Protestant Wards which are very closely matched for deprivation but demonstrate differential performance educationally; The Diamond and Whiterock Wards were also chosen for the study as they showed substantially different educational attainment levels, yet were closely matched for multiple deprivation (and are both predominantly Catholic Wards). In both of these examples, the Diamond Ward out-performed both Duncairn and Whiterock.

The results showed that, in broad terms, there are two main reasons as to why differential achievement exists between Wards that are closely matched as regards multiple deprivation. The first is to do with the impact of negative social capital and/or the absences of positive social capital stocks within a Ward; the second is to do with the positive influence of the 'Derry Effect' – the impact that attendance at schools in the Derry area has on key measures related to educational attainment.

Taking Duncairn and The Diamond as the first example of differential educational attainment, several key differences were found between the Wards in terms of the drivers and inhibitors of achievement that exist within them. The Diamond, a predominantly Catholic Ward (81.2% Catholic), had several drivers, which were not found referenced to the same extent within the Duncairn Ward. These were: the high value placed on education and the Catholic school system, a legacy of the 1947 Education Act, which is linked to intergenerational engagement with schools; highly-resourced schools which are geographically close to the centre of the Ward; a high level of social mixing within the schools, and a high proportion (30%) of young people from the Ward attending grammar schools; schools characterised by high standards of pastoral care, transition support, inter-school cooperation, and high expectations; high levels of youth club involvement; and positive adult education experiences and young people's experiences of nursery and primary school. In contrast, particular barriers to achievement were found to affect the Duncairn Ward more greatly than was the case in The Diamond. These barriers were partly shaped by Duncairn's post-conflict transition: spatial mobility restrictions and insular attitudes were common; and the wider community continues to be characterised by intra- and inter-community divisions. Other barriers included the significant changes in Duncairn's demographic profile, which have created an unsettled community characterised by impermanence; a low percentage of grammar school attendees (11.7%); the dispersed geography of the schools serving young people from the Ward (which compounds the

detachment that some young people already feel towards their education); and a high absenteeism rate (16.3% on average amongst all schools serving the Ward during 2012/13).

Turning to the second comparison in the sample, The Diamond Ward and the Whiterock Ward, the macro (structural/policy) and micro-level (immediate- family) drivers and inhibitors of achievement were found to be very similar. It was at the meso (i.e. school) level where the key differences emerged. Firstly, in The Diamond, approximately twice as many young people attended grammar school than was the case in Whiterock (14.1%). Secondly, notwithstanding the evident quality of many schools serving the Whiterock Ward, there were identified problems regarding the inappropriateness of the curriculum offered to many pupils; some schools and agencies were reported to be working in *'silos'*; and there were claims that some teachers are *'disinterested'* and struggle to manage classes with disruptive pupils. Meso-level barriers to achievement were also observed within The Diamond Ward, although these were found to be more pronounced in the schools that served the Fountain area within the Ward; and lastly, young people attending schools in Derry/Londonderry also had significantly higher levels of aspirations and expectations and placed a higher value on education for the future than respondents who attended schools in Belfast.. These findings, illustrate the positive impact that attending a school in Derry/Londonderry potentially has on achievement and goes some way in explaining why The Diamond Ward (as one of the two Derry/Londonderry Wards in the sample) is outperforming Whiterock, one of the Belfast Wards in the sample, even though both Wards are within the top 5% of Wards in Northern Ireland for high multiple deprivation.

5.1.3 Research question 3: What contributory factors can be identified to help explain why Protestant Wards such as Duncairn, Woodstock and Tullycarnet, appear to be over-represented within the top twenty Wards for educational underachievement, relative to their multiple deprivation ranks?

The analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data presented within this report has suggested several key factors that help to explain the differentials in educational achievement between the predominantly-Catholic and predominantly-Protestant Wards in areas of high deprivation.

Firstly, from a historical viewpoint, the political and policy context of the past century has left a positive legacy for education within the discourses of the Catholic community. The 1947 Education Act (Northern Ireland) benefited a significant number of working-class Catholics: for the first time, a grammar school education, funded by the state, was a distinct possibility for those who passed the 11+ examination, and this in turn, opened the potential for university study. The first generation of beneficiaries of this legislation left school in the 1950s with raised hopes for social mobility and career development. Community activity became an important characteristic of many Catholic neighbourhoods in the decades ahead and these helped to facilitate important social bonds. In the 1960s, community leaders also pointed to the issue of educational inequalities caused by the limited access to funding for Catholic schools (McGrath, 2000); they did this by pointing to the fact that by 1966, voluntary schools in England and Wales were eligible to claim for 80 per cent of all capital costs. In response to this campaigning the government issued a White Paper which, according to an *Irish Times* report from the time, proposed that 'in return for representation by the local Education Authority on governing boards, the schools would receive capital grants of 80%', whilst the authority would also 'be responsible for maintenance, equipment and day to day running costs.' At the time, church authorities continued to have '*grave misgivings'* about the new set-up, but they were under growing pressure to accommodate change that would be of benefit to the wider Catholic community, even if that meant losing some of their previously unchallenged authority. This pressure is an indication of the strong sense of value that was

placed on education within the Catholic community and this was further reflected in the fact that the majority of Catholic schools proved willing to accept maintained status.

Evidence of this legacy was clear from the qualitative interviews conducted during this project. In both Rosemont and The Diamond Wards, participants consistently spoke of the positive impact of the Education Act on the educational aspirations and attainment of the Catholic population. One principal of a Catholic maintained school serving the pupils of Rosemont spoke at length about the 'powerful' meaning of education for Catholics and the vital role this has played in promoting educational success. This principal also talked about the championing of education by nationalist leaders, such as John Hume. Principals of a Catholic maintained school and a state controlled school serving the pupils of The Diamond also talked about the powerful meaning of education for Catholics living in Derry. This was linked to past experiences of discrimination, as well as a transgenerational norm that began with the Act and has been thereafter championed by nationalist politicians.

This historical legacy was also recognised in some of the discourse of the mainly Protestant Wards. In Duncairn, one principal argued that the divergence between Catholic and Protestant communities in terms of the education-work nexus was linked to their schools' historical approaches to poverty and higher education: "*in the 1970's, when it came to poverty, the way out of it in the Catholic sector was they pushed their kids to go onto University ... here, they didn't need to because they were jobs for them. It was only when the jobs dried up that the Controlled side cottoned on to the fact that education really matters.*" In Woodstock, it was also suggested by local community workers that a contributing factor to a lost sense of community was a long-standing perception within loyalist communities about *"having their identity erased"*. This was contrasted with the Catholic community where, it was argued there is a *"clearer vision … about why you're doing things"; "an overarching ideology that underpins almost everything.*"

This issue relates to a further observation in the data, which is the problem of ineffective political representation. It must be stated that dissatisfaction with political leadership and/or a broader disengagement from politics was evident in the data of most of the Ward areas investigated, both Catholic and Protestan. Nevertheless, this was more pronounced in the mainly-Protestant Wards. For example, several respondents in Duncairn claimed that community development was being hindered by ineffective political representation. Other community level respondents highlighted the contrast between some unionist politicians who were seen as *"detached"*, and nationalist politicians who were viewed as "*part of their community*". Within Tullycarnet, one principal claimed that politicians need to properly engage with educationalists to discuss: the future of education in Northern Ireland; appropriate policy interventions; and how to develop a system that would be '*the pride of Europe'*. Lastly, several principals and teachers felt that a key factor behind underachievement and low aspirations in Tullycarnet, Woodstock and Duncairn was that: many Protestant working class boys feel very *"unconnected";* the flag protests of 2012/13 have "*deepened that feeling";* and that this disconnect intensifies perceptions of *"inevitable underachievement".*

Thirdly, there have been changes in demographics within predominantly-Protestant Wards, which have led to a certain level of 'fracturing' within these communities, and a subsequent lack of community cohesiveness not observed to the same extent within the predominantly-Catholic communities. For example, according to Census statistics, demographics within Duncairn have changed considerably over the ten-year period between 2001 and 2011, in terms of religious makeup, housing tenure, and the settling of new communities within the area. This perhaps implies that the potential for positive intergenerational influence on young people and social bonding within the community is not as likely as it is in other Wards (assuming that a settled demographic pattern enhances opportunities for this to occur). In Woodstock, similar demographic change trends were found, and the perceived loss of community cohesiveness was also observed. According to community workers and residents

in Woodstock, demographic changes, which have happened over a relatively short period of time, have had a *"disruptive"* and *"unsettling"* impact, and as such have been an inhibitor of local educational attainment because such population changes indicate and promote fatalistic perceptions of *"encroachment"* and *"inevitable decline",* and that these notions are absorbed by young people who are then dissuaded from applying themselves in school. Community fracturing too had added to the notion of *"feeling hard done by"* and *"having their identity erased"*. There were also perceptions within the Tullycarnet Ward of a lack of community cohesiveness, and participants linked this to the fragmented nature of Protestantism. It was commonly reported that many Protestant communities such as Tullycarnet are *"in drift",* primarily, because of an absence of unifying factors such as the *"central connection of faith that binds people together".* In contrast, one resident noted that *"there are so many Protestant churches … the Catholic communities just have one which helps to hold people together."*

A fourth observation was the higher school absenteeism rates found within mainly-Protestant areas. Previous research has shown that absenteeism in particular is one of the strongest negative predictors of a pupil's gains in achievement in mathematics and literacy (Public Policy Institute for California, 2003). This finding is substantiated by Wiley and Harnischfeger's work (1974) on the number of hours of schooling and the effect on student achievement – they analysed between-school attendance differences and found that where students receive 24% more school hours, their average gain in literacy was two-thirds and one-third in mathematics. Within the current study, secondary data analysis showed that the eight post-primary schools serving young people from Woodstock had an average high-absenteeism rate (defined as attendance below 85% during a school year) of 21.3% during 2012/13; the nine schools serving young people from Tullycarnet had an average high-absenteeism rate of 18.2% during 2012/13; and the eleven schools serving young people from Duncairn had an average high-absenteeism rate of 16.3% during 2012/13. These average high-absenteeism rates compared less favourably to the Catholic Wards within the ILiAD sample (the average high-absenteeism rates for 2012/13 in Whiterock, Rosemount and The Diamond were 13.3%, 10.2% and 11.5% respectively). The results suggested that differential levels of absenteeism must be factored into any explanation of why Catholic Wards of high deprivation are out-performing Protestant Wards of similarly high (or lower) deprivation.

A fifth difference between mainly-Catholic and mainly-Protestant Wards was the (perceived) levels of detachment or attachment of schools to the areas they served. As evidenced in the case study chapters, strong links between schools and families were consistently seen as having positive impact on a young person's academic progression. However, it is equally clear that in the absence of such links, many young people are inhibited from realising their full potential at school. Several parents spoke about some schools which serve pupils within mainly-Protestant Wards as being detached from the realities of their pupils' lives, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The most frequently suggested reason for this detachment was that many teachers who work in the schools *"come from a middle-class type background"* and thus *"it's totally impossible for them to relate to what's going on"* in their homes or communities. In a focus group of recent school leavers in Duncairn, it was claimed that it *would "not matter if they were from a nationalist background"*, but *"it would have been better if they were from a working-class area".* Again, these responses were commonly framed in contrast with the Catholic community, wherein, it was argued; *"nearly all"* of teachers are working class. Indeed, in the mainly-Catholic Wards, several of the principals interviewed had grown up in and/or continued to live in the local community around the school, and pupils spoke of the positive influence of teachers with whom they had good relationships – relationships which were fostered because these teachers had also lived locally, and as such, understood them and their needs. Furthermore, as will be further examined in the next section of this chapter on social capital within the case study Wards, one of the contrasts between the Catholic and Protestant Wards was the notion of Catholic

parents, the local community sector, and schools having a shared responsibility for the academic progression of local young people. In several predominantly-Catholic neighbourhoods, there are well-established, collaborative learning communities, with Catholic maintained schools at the hub of these learning communities. It was clear that most Catholic maintained schools investigated here were not 'stand-alone' entities in the community – their leaders have enhanced the connectedness between the school and the community. Families in such schools were encouraged to be active participants in their children's education. The data make clear that the strength of these triangular relationships (school, home and community) is a significant factor in terms of addressing the education needs of disadvantage young people.

A further point that emerged from the qualitative data was the twofold-issue of low expectations and the low self-esteem of some young people. Whilst this issue did arise amongst all Wards investigated, many respondents in the Duncairn Ward contrasted the lack of aspiration in the Protestant community with the "*confident*" Catholic community. For example, a youth worker recalled that during the times of exams, almost no Catholic children attend youth clubs because *"their parents have them in the home"; "they're studying, they're revising";* and their "*parents are being supportive".* More broadly, there was also evidence of low expectations on the part of schools; this was an important meso-level inhibitor of educational attainment, particularly within the mainly-Protestant Wards. Some young people and parents claimed that during primary school, there had been little expectation or drive to get pupils to do the 11+ or transfer tests. Some residents thought some teachers simply give up on their children. Some teachers, it was argued, too often conclude that if parents *"don't give a monkey's",* neither should they; and that, because they think *"the majority of those kids are road to no town",* there was no point in bothering. These views were reinforced by parents who claimed that some teachers took the view that, in the absence of individual aptitude and parental interest, there was little point in them pushing a child to achieve academically.

Our qualitative data also highlight possible explanations for the underachievement of Protestant working class boys – which is a key factor in terms of the over-representation of Protestant Wards within the top twenty Wards for educational underachievement, relative to their multiple deprivation ranks. Firstly, many within this group do not, commonly, have a family tradition of academic success and the accompanying positive family/community norms around education that are a feature of middle class families/communities; secondly, their families do not have the means to avail of private tuition or the additional costs of attending a grammar school; thirdly, and in terms of comparison with Catholic working class boys, they do not share the same levels of social mixing in schools and have not benefited from the patently successful models in several CMS schools and communities around raising attainment in areas of high deprivation.

5.1.4 Research question 4: Why do children and young people in high deprivation areas of mixed religion/shared housing appear to perform relatively poorly educationally?

Drawing from the data collected within the mixed-religion Ward of Dunclug (56.5% Catholic, 35.0% Protestant - Census 2011 figures) and a Ward with a clearly defined interface, The Diamond (81.2% Catholic; most Protestant residents (364) are located with the Fountain estate area of the Ward, making up 15% of the Ward's population), there are three key inhibitors that appear to contribute to a lowering of educational attainment in areas which are not predominantly Catholic or Protestant. These are: a fractured community identity; demographic change and resultant difficulties with educational provision; and continuing division and conflict.

A fractured community identity and a lack of community cohesiveness were found to diminish the strength of the home-school-community links that were found to be so important to enhancing educational attainment elsewhere. Despite the fact that different communities might be facing the same social or educational problems, and even if there is recognition that working in an integrated, coherent fashion to tackle such problems together might make a positive difference, there was some evidence that getting divided communities together to come under one umbrella (perhaps the umbrella of a local school) and apply for money to serve the needs of all is a difficult process to get off the ground and come to fruition. This issue, however, is not confined to mixed-religion areas – the same problems of community fracturing were sometimes found within predominantly single-religion areas too. However, Dunclug especially was described as lacking in meaningful community 'spirit'. A lack of social cohesion was evidenced via accounts of: local disputes over DSD funding; the residents group being beset with in-fighting; and community facilities being routinely under-used and/or vandalised.

There was also a hierarchy of residential areas, which divided notions of community further. Some areas were deemed as being more desirable (affluent) to live in than others, and each was associated with particular communities. Certain areas are associated with an increasing ethnic minority and settled Traveller population (and consequently as becoming predominantly Catholic), and least affluent. As such, social segregation in Dunclug is compounded by physical division. The fact that movement between the different areas is, at times, made difficult by a lack of connecting pathways and/or roads adds to this (perceived) division. The divisions and tensions that are manifest in the community were found to be reflected in the social dynamics of pupil interaction in school, militating against positive class interaction and learning. Young people were further aware of the negative impact of the social and cultural 'environment' of Dunclug on their own learning and educational /career aspirations, and attributed examples of educational success mainly to other factors. Nonetheless, one of the meso-level drivers of achievement within Dunclug was found to be the inter-school cooperation that existed; several respondents highlighted the role of the Ballymena Learning Together Group which involves grammar and secondary schools sharing access to A level subjects. Collaborative education processes are thus one of the mechanisms by which the problems of wider community division might begin to be overcome.

The demographic histories of mixed-religion areas and more recent demographic changes were other common structural reasons provided for explaining the lower patterns of achievement in mixed-religion areas of the ILiAD study. For example, the history of the demographics on the west bank of Derry/Londonderry city were referred to as a contributing factor behind the differential achievement levels of children from The Fountain compared to other parts of The Diamond area and Derry/Londonderry more generally. Falling Protestant demographics have left one state-controlled secondary school serving the city (with enrolment numbers within that school falling too). The spatial detachment of this school from pupils from The Fountain has engendered several negative consequences that have, in turn, been seen to impact negatively on educational achievement. Young people (and their families) have had to travel long distances to their school; as such, their school is not where their community (and perhaps their identity) is, which again detracts from the home-school-community relationships that can be built. Distance (compounded by the fact that many parents from areas of high deprivation do not have cars) may make it difficult for young people to stay for afterschool activities/revision clubs, and parents may not be able to attend evening meetings/parent courses. In sum, it may be difficult for such a school to become a central part of the young person's (or their parents') life. A reduction in the number of Protestants in the area and the resultant provision of only one state-controlled secondary school for the city also gives little choice to parents and pupils from The Fountain. In this situation (and in other similar situations around Northern Ireland) children from feuding

families and 'problem families' (as indicated by the data) may be taught in the same class, and that this, in turn, can be very disruptive for whole class.

The Dunclug Ward has also experienced a rapid change in its population makeup over the past five years, with a significant outward movement of Protestants. This has contributed to clashes between Protestants and Catholics in the estate and generally poor community relations. However, the greatest focus was placed on division between the majority grouping of 'local 'Irish'/'British' and the more recent incomer population of Eastern Europeans. Some participants talked about the latter experiencing hostility, sometimes open abuse, from their fellow residents. Young people described classroom tensions between the majority Northern Irish pupil population and those from ethnic minorities. In part, these tensions were based on differences in the language spoken. Teachers also have to cope with increasing numbers of children whose first language is not English, and parents many have language barriers or different expectations and experiences of school from their countries of birth, which may make communication with their child's school difficult. Settled Traveller families living in the area were discussed as having particular family structures and to be frequently distrustful of outsiders, making it important to place an effort on building effective partnerships (in relation to their children's education). They were also considered to have relatively low self-esteem, tending not to push themselves or their children into the limelight, instead relying on fellow Travellers for help and support. School attendance of Traveller children, although improved over the recent past, was still considered comparatively poor. Where relevant additional resources had enabled targeted interventions, meaningful improvements in pupil learning and achievement had occurred. Taken collectively, the evidence indicates that changes in the macro demographic make-up of different areas have the potential to impact negatively on the educational achievement of young people, both those who are longer-term 'local' as well as those from ethnic minority populations.

The third, related inhibitor of educational achievement in the mixed-religion areas under investigation was continuing division and conflict between the two main communities in Northern Ireland. Pupils and principals gave multiple examples of continuing aggressive behaviour and sectarian tensions, particularly in and around the interface area of the Fountain. This included bomb-scares, petrol bombings, attacks, bricks and glass being thrown. The children also reported a fractured relationship with neighbouring nationalist communities. Some post-primary pupils reported being unbothered about or desensitised from these types of occurrences, but one pupil explicitly stated how the disruption this caused had affected her schoolwork. It was clear that insularism and separation of the communities is deeply embedded. One principal of a Catholic maintained school reported having 'no' Protestant children in the school: '*we would be very welcoming, but they just don't want to come here'*; another principal of a controlled school said that some pupils from the Fountain '*had never been on outer Bishop Street … they had never been beyond the school … Going back to what it was like 1980-1990'*. The historical context of the Ward and continuing legacies of the recent conflict, thus, place many local children at an educational disadvantage.

5.1.5 Research question 5: What contributory factors may be identified to help explain any differences in educational achievement across gender within areas of multiple deprivation?

Several factors at the macro, meso and micro levels emerged from the qualitative findings which may also help to explain why females frequently outperform males. Firstly, there was the macro/structural impact of (high-quality) single-sex school provision. To use Whiterock Ward as an example (63.2% of females in Whiterock achieved any five GCSEs at A*-C, and half that figure (31.6%) achieved five GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths; for males, the figure for any five GCSEs was 47.9%, dropping again by half (23.6%) with the inclusion

of English and Maths), two secondary schools dominate the enrolment of young people from the area – Corpus Christi for males and St Louise's for females. St Louise's is frequently ranked as the top-performing non-selective school in Northern Ireland at GCSE level. In 2006, St Louise's was designated a Specialist School for Performing Arts, which included funding of £100 per pupil for four years and an additional support grant to enhance provision in this specialist area. The school also has City and Guilds affiliation, and as such, the range of both academic and vocational subjects on offer is vast. Furthermore, this structural driver was seen as linked to the high achievement of females through the presence of positive role models who raise their aspirations for pursuing careers in areas that would be traditionally male-dominated.

In contrast, there was also a very small variation in the performances of females and males from The Diamond across the period 2008-2012. Looking specifically at female school leavers, 62.5% achieved any five GCSEs at A*-C (the third highest amongst the ILiAD Wards, after Rosemount and Whiterock), and 50.0% achieved five GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths. For males, the pass rate for any five GCSEs was 62.0% (the highest performance rate out of the ILiAD sample), dropping to 52.0% with the inclusion of English and Maths. An explanation provided for this was that there exists an equal number of grammar school avenues available for females and males: although Derry has a large number of single sex schools (which previously disadvantaged females who wanted a grammar education), both sexes are now offered the same number of grammar places.

Other macro-level drivers of females' achievement included the formal structure of the educational system itself – some participants who were interviewed made comments such '*for some boys, just getting them to sit down with a pen and a book is a major achievement*.' Other principals alluded to males and females having different learning styles and learning motivations, which resulted in females being rewarded by the current system. There was also evidence that differences in cultural expectations between males and females in regard to achievement were a factor in females outperforming males*: 'I have always found that girls want to do it right, want to please, or want to be seen to be producing good work.'* Some pupils felt that boys who were capable but were not into sports were sometimes disadvantaged at school; it was the ones who were good at both who were pushed the most.

At the meso (school) level, there was evidence that absenteeism rates are higher in all-boys schools serving Ward areas of high deprivation in comparison to all-girls schools. This is also perhaps an explanatory factor behind the differential achievement rates of males and females from many of these Ward areas. Secondly, some interview respondents suggested that teachers need extra support to know how to help pupils who are coming from particularly difficult backgrounds, particularly males with social problems or who are coming from adverse circumstances and who may have learning difficulties.

Lastly, there were some common micro-level inhibitors of achievement from the qualitative data that specifically related to males. Some young people were of the opinion that some males just '*didn't care*' which school they went to, including disengagement from school and community initiatives. While this indicates gender divisions in the way that education is perceived and valued, but it was also pointed out that some young females are also engaging in destructive, defiant behaviours in school. A number of the principals also pointed to the impact of low self-esteem (particularly since the ending of the conflict and a subsequent '*loss of status*' in the community) and a lack of local positive role model for males as being contributory factors in the lower attainment levels of males.

5.2. Social capital and the deprivation - low attainment nexus

This section of the report provides a broad overview of the ILiAD findings in relation to social capital. This will be achieved by using the ILiAD data to examine conceptualisations of social capital in terms of the addressing deprivation - low attainment nexus. In orthodox interpretations of social capital, the concept is seen as a 'latent resource' which is 'costlessly mobilised' and, typically, produces universal benefits (Daly & Silver, 2008: 562).[181] It is, therefore, unsurprising that a range of diverse policy initiatives around seemingly intractable social problems have been keen to embrace the concept as something of a policy elixir. Moreover, the explicit relationship between social capital and education has consistently been highlighted by the concept's most influential proponents. James Coleman (1987)[182] used the concept to explain how family and other networks affect schooling and concluded that social capital is a prerequisite in the promotion of educational success. In response to Coleman's work, Pierre Bourdieu (1989)[183] argued that social capital in the field of education is a critical factor in the reproduction of middle class privilege. More recently, Robert Putnam (2002)[184] posited that education is a crucial component in social capital formations and that access to a high-quality education is one of the concept's most important outcomes.

The seven ILiAD case studies confirm two important principles: firstly, formations of social capital can have negative as well as positive outcomes; and, secondly, that orthodox social capital theory is seemingly undermined by the concept's neglect of class and political economy. Therefore, the first part of this section examines the positive social capital to emerge from the data. The second part provides examples of negative social capital from the data which are related to the concept's dark side and class-blindness. The section concludes with a series of observations around the role of social capital in terms of addressing the deprivation-low attainment nexus.

5.2.1. Positive social capital: educational attributes and effective interventions

In the social capital framework designed for the ILiAD study, examples of positive social capital were categorised as bonding, bridging and linking social capital. Analysis of emergent themes provided useful insights in three important areas. Firstly, the specific educational attributes of each social capital form were highlighted and their value in terms of improving attainment demonstrated. Secondly, absences of and deficits in such attributes (and their negative impact on attainment levels) were also identified and explored. Thirdly, in terms of addressing these deficits, the most effective interventions around addressing underachievement were illuminated; and it was further shown that many of these interventions can themselves, if properly supported, create and/or increase local stocks of social capital.

5.2.2. Bonding social capital

In terms of bonding capital, the ILiAD data show that educational attainment is encouraged when young people are empowered by: parental support; a stable home environment; positive familial norms around education; and individual resilience. Across all seven Wards in the study, it is clear that many young people have these critical attributes and are, commonly, seen to succeed at school. Moreover, there are also a section of young people who lack some or all of these favourable circumstances who, nonetheless, succeed against

[181] Daly, M. and Silver, H. (2008) 'Social exclusion and social capital: a comparison and critique', Theory and Society, Vol. 37: pp 537–566
[182] Coleman, J. S. (1987) Public and Private High Schools, New York: Basic Books Inc.
[183] Bourdieu, P. (1989) 'Social Space and Symbolic Power', Sociological Theory 7: 14–25
[184] Putnam, R.D. (2002) Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

the odds because they have benefited from effective interventions. Indeed, there are a significant number of young people in the seven Wards who routinely defy the deprivation-low attainment nexus because their schools and other relevant agencies mediate the absence of such attributes via the provision of: high quality and empathetic teaching; holistic interpretations of pastoral care; and additional support mechanisms such as homework clubs, revision clubs and Extended Schools programmes.

Formations of bonding capital are also informed by the education infrastructure of the local neighbourhood, for example: the propinquity, accessibility, and visibility of high-performing schools; effective local community and youth work interventions; and the visibility of realistic pathways to Further / Higher Education and employment. The ILiAD data highlight the significant and positive impact of schools, particularly high-performing ones, which are located within communities and widely viewed as an integral part of the local area. For example, much of the social capital that has been created and sustained in the Whiterock, Rosemount and Diamond Wards is due to the visibility, permanence and propinquity of high-performing schools. Moreover, the data also show that that this socio-spatial relationship is a significant contributor in terms of young people from these Wards performing considerably better at school than other Wards ranked lower in the deprivation indices. A second important element of the education infrastructure, particularly in the most deprived areas, is the wholly valuable contribution made by effective local community and youth work interventions, many excellent examples of which were evident in each of the Wards. Again, these interventions are seen to ameliorate the impact of weak familial support networks and/or other adverse home and/or school circumstances.

The third element of bonding capital relates to perceptions of 'connectedness', which the ILiAD data show is fostered by: positive community influences and role models; a sense of community cohesion; and unifying factors and traditions and other shared socio-political / cultural associations. The data also attest that positive neighbourhood role models around education are an important source of social capital, particularly in terms of raising the aspiration of disadvantaged young people. In the Catholic Wards in particular, there were innumerable accounts of: young people being taught by teachers who 'belong' to and continue to live in the community. More broadly, there were also examples of: former (high-achieving) pupils addressing 5th and 6th form assemblies to give career advice; and secondary pupils revisiting their primary schools to ease any anxiety primary 7 pupils may have as they prepare to transition to secondary education.

Across these data, notions of connectedness were informed by perceptions of community cohesion and unifying factors. For example, several respondents within the Diamond, Rosemount and Whiterock Wards highlighted the significant impact of: the role of the Catholic Church which has a distinct and fixed presence in the school lives of many local young people; and the resultant phyco-social connections engendered within and between local families, schools and communities. The data shows that these connections serve a critical function in terms of: maintaining a sense of community connectedness (which was less evident in the Protestant Wards); giving young people (many of whom are disaffected) an important identity referent at a sensitive stage in their emotional and cognitive development; and further elevating the status of the local schools as shared community assets.

Two, fairly obvious, conclusions can be drawn here. Firstly, bonding social capital (as conceptualised above) can have a significant and wholly positive impact on the learning of young people from deprived backgrounds. Secondly, even when certain social capital attributes are missing or inadequate, effective (individual, family and community-targeted) interventions can mediate such deficits, both on a practical (i.e. supporting learning) and a conceptual (i.e. increasing bonding stocks) basis.

5.2.3. Bridging social capital

In the context of the ILiAD study, bridging capital is conceptualised as schools' levels of engagement, accessibility, and innovation. The data here has highlighted that stocks of bridging capital (individual and community) are enhanced when schools engage effectively by: creating and sustaining positive triangular relationship between school, home and community; and having effective school leadership. Although the data attest that many families from both communities are, to varying degrees, disengaged from education, it would appear that many Catholic schools have prioritised these triangular relationships more effectively than some of their Protestant counterparts. The role of the Catholic ethos in fostering close and trusting connections between schools, communities and local families was frequently aired in the data. Indeed, one of the contrasts between the Catholic and Protestant Wards was the notion of many Catholic parents, the local community sector, and schools having a shared responsibility for the academic progression of local young people. Notwithstanding, pockets of deprivation, disengagement from education, and underachievement comparable with the most disadvantaged Protestant areas, several Catholic neighbourhoods perform, and are widely viewed as learning communities. Many Catholic schools are seen as the hub of these learning communities; and, according to the data, families in such schools are encouraged to be active participants in their children's education. The data also make clear that the strength of these triangular relationships (school, home and community) is a significant factor in terms of addressing the education needs of disadvantage young people. In such ways, the contribution of the Catholic Maintained Sector, in terms of encouraging such learning among disadvantaged families and communities, can be seen, certainly within sections of these Wards, as a (highly effective) systemic intervention.

On a smaller scale, nascent attitudinal change in the (Protestant) Tullycarnet community in terms home-school-community linkages have been seen to make a significant difference in a Ward which has featured regularly in the lowest quintiles of the attainment indices for some time. Importantly, these early improvements are, in no small measure, due to the intervention of the local community sector and their (ultimately unsuccessful) community-inspired campaign to save a local primary school which was earmarked for closure.

Bridging social capital stocks are also enhanced when schools engage effectively with each other and with other relevant external agencies. Inter-school and inter-agency collaboration were common features of the best performing schools in the ILiAD study. The two most important aspects of such collaboration were identified as: improved lines of communication i.e. between schools and social services, and primary and post-primary transitions; and the inter-school sharing of learning resources such as making certain courses / subject specialisms available to pupils from other schools.

The data also highlight the need for schools to be as accessible as possible, particularly in terms of: effective home-school linkages; supportive and empathetic teachers; and a commitment to encourage social mixing in schools. Effective and accessible home-school linkages are a feature of many schools in the ILiAD study. However, it is fair to say that the best examples were more commonly found in the Catholic schools. The data evidence many examples of teachers therein: inviting pupils to their home during holidays for extra tuition and revision; routinely exhibiting a genuine 'love' for the young people in their charge and a patent commitment to see them achieve their academic potential; and proactively reaching out to parents and encouraging them to engage more in their children's schooling and address any of their own learning deficits.

While it was claimed in the data that such levels of commitment were unlikely to be replicated in some schools in the controlled sector (where some teachers, it was suggested, were less likely to be from, reside in, or have the same long-term commitment to the area), there were several excellent examples of schools serving disadvantaged Protestant

communities where effective policies around access and the need for some teachers to adopt a more empathetic and supportive style are key priorities.

In terms of addressing the diverse and complex educational needs of young people, particularly those for the most disadvantaged backgrounds, the ILiAD data attest that innovation on the part of schools is a critical factor. For example, flexible curricula, alternative measures of success, vocational opportunities, appropriate SEN support, quality pastoral care provision, and support during transition were highlighted as ways schools could shape internal policies around a pupil-centred ethos. However, the most effective example of this innovation is the Extended Schools initiative. These programmes have created a host of educational benefits and some spectacular successes, particularly in the most deprived communities. Indeed, in terms of addressing the educational needs of disadvantaged young people, the ILiAD data make clear that many of the most effective interventions have been encompassed within the Extended Schools-type initiative. Where such programmes are delivered: many pupils with weak support networks have made significant progress; many parents with limited capacity to support their children's learning have becoming considerably more engaged with the schools their children attend; and many local communities (several of which had, hitherto, negative norms around education) are now confident and equal partners in the (perceived or otherwise) 'learning communities' which Extended Schools have engendered.

All the examples in this section, in their different ways, demonstrate the educational value of bridging social capital and indicate that bridging capital deficits can also be addressed when effective, and properly funded, interventions are put in place.

5.2.4. Linking social capital

Linking social capital concerns the ability of schools and communities to access power and resources; and their capacity to influence policy and affect decision-making processes. In terms of promoting education, the ILiAD data evidence that many working-class neighbourhoods have benefited from their access to power and resources. These data attest that neighbourhoods with a vibrant community sector collaboratively engaged with schools and external agencies are significantly more successful at securing additional targeted support. Similarly, it is stating the obvious to say that the Catholic and grammar sectors have significant access to resources and decision-making processes. The size, traditions, lobbying power, and attainment performance of these sectors have created substantial stocks of social capital. Moreover, and in their own ways, this capital is seen to make a marked contribution to the educational prospects of each sector's pupils.

Looking at these conceptualisations of bonding, bridging and linking social capital together, the capital that is created is seen to make a significant difference in terms of: promoting the value of education; raising attainment levels; and widening the learning opportunities of young people. Moreover, it is equally clear that where deficits exist, gaps can be identified and addressed, and each social capital form can, in the right circumstances, be created and/or recreated.

5.2.5. Negative social capital: class-blindness and the dark side of social capital

The idea that social capital is an easily created or readily deployable asset, which can solve most, if not all, of Northern Ireland's educational issues is a very attractive one. There are, notwithstanding high levels of academic achievement in many schools, particularly in the grammar and Catholic Maintained sectors, a host of significant (and seemingly intractable) problems needing to be addressed. For example: high levels of underachievement,

particularly among Protestant working class boys; a lack of parental capacity among some to support their children's education, particularly in the most disadvantaged households; and a sense of disconnect between many families/communities and the schools which serve them. More broadly, the ILiAD data attest that the current education system which, as evident from the league tables and indices, is high on excellence and low on equity is a contributing factor in terms of the reproduction of educational disadvantage in the case-study Wards.

However, as attractive as social capital may seem in terms of remedial processes, the ILiAD data have highlighted that some social capital formations are constrained by the context of class disadvantage and others, far from being the solution to educational disadvantage, are, in many ways, significant contributors. For example, in some of the case study Wards there was ample evidence in the data to suggest that stocks of bonding capital were very high. Close-knit networks, a shared sense of (historical and conflict-related) adversity, and an equally shared experience of stigmatisation and besiegement have created strong immediate ties in these communities. However, the ILiAD data concur with the social capital literature to show that these kinds of bonds have, in some communities: created the wrong kind of social capital; engendered a 'bounded solidarity'; and produced distrust towards outsiders and a downward levelling of aspiration (Portes, 1998)[185].

Class blindness

One of the key criticisms of orthodox social capital theory is its failure to recognise that the concept tends to have a different impact on working class communities than it does in middle class ones. For example, bonding (education) social capital is the utilisation of (familial) educational attributes and the pulling and sharing of immediate resources. However, in the most deprived communities many families lack these educational attributes and there are fewer resources to share. Similarly, bridging and linking social capital is about utilising horizontal and vertical connections to secure valuable assets. However, the socio-spatial realities of these working-class communities mean that they have less opportunities to develop/deploy such useful relationships. In other words, social capital in its orthodox form fails to properly address issues of class and political economy; and, in so doing, 'obviates examinations' of how social capital is 'constrained by the context of class disadvantage' (Das, 2006: 79-82)[186].

For example, in each of the ILiAD case studies Wards, many young people and their families endure: social deprivation, financial hardship and unemployment which have been compounded by the latest recession and cuts to social services and welfare provision. Although there is social capital in their communities which provides a degree of social protection, the value and utility of this resource is, to varying degrees, determined by its class dimension and the vagaries of a challenging labour market. In other words, all the social capital in the world is rendered if there are 'no jobs and no resources to share' (Portes, 1998: 18).

The dark side of social capital

It would be somewhat naïve to assume that simply creating social capital will engender positive and universal educational benefits in Northern Ireland, or anywhere else for that matter. As Field (2010: 92)[187] argues, capitals are 'resources which are just as likely to be used for destructive purposes as constructive ones'; the same social mechanisms which enable strong ties and networks to develop and provide privileged access to resources for

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[185] Portes, A. (1998) 'Social capital: its origins and applications', Modern Sociology Annual Review of Sociology, Vol. 24: pp 1-24.

[186] Das, R. J. (2006) 'Putting social capital in its place', Capital & Class, Vol. 30: pp 65–92.

[187] [187] Field, J. (2010) Social Capital, (2nd edn) London: Routledge.

some, concomitantly, prevent others from obtaining the same assets; and the social networks which encompass social capital are just as likely to be socially 'unproductive networks' than productive ones. For example, paramilitary influence was seen as a feature of some communities in the case study Wards. Membership of such groups creates a form of social capital in the same way that a price cartel operates by providing benefits for its members whilst creating problems for wider society.

Similarly, the 'social capital' of academic selection highlight important discourses around class differentials, the reproduction of disadvantage and privilege, and the creation of 'socially unproductive networks'. In the case study Wards, the ILiAD data show that the current system significantly favours those with: positive family norms around education, for example, academically successful parents, older siblings etc.; and the financial capacity to afford, for example, private tutors around subject specialisms and examination techniques.

In other words (and in Bourdieusian parlance), the 'field' (the current system) is structured in a fashion, which, in many ways, best suits the 'habitus' of middle class families. The data also make clear the significant benefits of a successful transfer test and subsequent entry to a grammar school education, such as, the opportunity to attend a high-performing school alongside a cohort of other likely high achievers. Access to a grammar school provides pupils from these Ward areas with distinct opportunities for success in terms of attainment, and access to Higher Education; however, many of those who fail or do not sit the transfer test are considered likely to experience: a sense of failure; a perception that they and their schools are inferior; and, particularly in some of the most disadvantage schools, a learning environment which is, often, disruptive and limited in terms of peer aspiration and opportunities.

Across the seven Wards, a host of negative social capital outcomes were highlighted. Perhaps, the most significant of these were as a consequence of the bounded solidarity that the recent conflict and demographic change have engendered in some communities and relate to: the exclusion of outsiders; restrictions on individual freedoms; and a downward levelling of norms. Firstly, in some communities in the ILiAD study, the bonding capital that does exist has, to an extent, been 'purchased at the price of hostility towards out-group members' (Fukuyama, 2001: 8).[188] In such ways, a form of negative social capital has been created in these communities because this exclusion of others has dissuaded the creation of inter-community bridging ties and reinforced inward-looking, and often fatalistic, tendencies. Secondly, social restrictions on individual freedoms were an additional common feature of these communities. For example, the disruption to schooling in some Protestant communities caused by young people participating in the recent flag protest was, to an extent, due to community-level conformity pressures; the conflict-related spatial mobility limitations experience by many young people who live in or around interface areas are similarly informed by community norms; and negative attitudes towards 'out-groups' such as migrant workers can be seen as neighbourhood-level expressions of threatened homogeneity.

Thirdly, a downward levelling of norms and aspiration were evident in many of the most deprived communities, particularly those whose bonds have developed through outside discrimination, stigmatisation, and a collective experience of adversity. Moreover, this process has clearly engendered internalised stigmatisation among many residents who routinely accentuated negative aspects of their community and minimised positives ones. For example, it was frequently cited in some Wards that individual success stories such as grammar school entry or University offers were 'unwelcome' because they are seen to undermine community solidarity. The social capital literature argues that this is a common phenomenon in the most deprived communities because this solidarity is, often, premised on

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[188] Fukuyama, F. (2001) 'Social Capital, Civil Society and Development' Third World Quarterly, 22, 1, 7-20

the 'alleged impossibility of such occurrences' and an 'acquired schemata' of continual 'shared adversity and inevitable collective failure' (Portes, 1998: 17-29).

Moreover, in several disadvantaged communities in the ILiAD study, many young people perceive that the only individuals who do succeed do so through nefarious means. Criminal behaviour in some sections of the case study Wards have created a preponderance of negative role models in some working-class communities; and that many young people routinely witness individuals 'succeeding' outside the regular channels of education (Rubio, 1997).[189] It is also clear that these 'role models' have, in some cases, had a negative effect on local young peoples' perceptions of achievement routes to follow and personal fulfilment.

5.2.7. Social capital, deprivation and educational attainment

The ILiAD data have shown that bonding, bridging, and linking social capital (as conceptualised above) can play a critical role in terms of educational attainment. In each form, the existence and effective utilisation of educational attributes are seen to make a significant and positive impact on learning and academic achievement. For example, in each of the case studies, positive education outcomes were likely in the presence of: a stable and supportive home environment; positive triangular relationships between schools, communities and families; and their ability to access resources and decision-making processes. Moreover, the data also attest to the fact that in the absence of such attributes, effective interventions can address such deficits and, in some cases, even replenish local stocks of bonding, bridging and linking capital.

Nevertheless, the ILiAD data make equally clear that whether such conceptualisation of social capital can help to address the deprivation and attainment nexus is entirely contingent on the kind of social capital that is created and its accessibility in the social structure. For example, some of the social capital that was identified in the most disadvantaged communities was of a negative variety and was seen to engender distrust of outsiders, a downward levelling of norms around education, and a preponderance of negative role models. Similarly, the negative consequences of academic selection have created a situation where the distribution of the current system's resultant social capital (i.e. entry to the best schools) is, to a very large extent, determined by class, income, and family norms around education within these Ward areas. Moreover, the realities of Northern Ireland's segregated school system, in terms of both religion and social class, means that the social capital of many of the best schools is beyond the reach of many young people, particularly those from Protestant working class backgrounds.

The underachievement of Protestant working class boys is a common topic in the contemporary discourses around the education system in Northern Ireland. This has led some to frame their understanding of Protestant working class underachievement in a deficit model where this social group are, essentially, blamed for their own predicament. Moreover, this conceptualisation of the problem is seen to mirror one of the most troubling aspects of orthodox social capital theory where the blame for poverty and other forms of social inequality is implicitly apportioned to the dispossessed themselves. For if social capital is indeed a 'latent resource, costlessly mobilised' then it follows that its absence is 'due to the failings of those without it' (Daly and Silver, 2008: 562).

This study has highlighted the potential that for both communities, but for the Protestant community in particular, social class and positive family norms around education, to a very large extent, determine the distribution of social capital benefits in Northern Ireland's current education system. The ILiAD data have equally shown that, notwithstanding comparable

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[189] Rubio, M. (1997) 'Perverse social capital – some evidence from Colombia', Journal of Economic Issues, 31 (3), 805–816

levels of deprivation, many Catholic schools are: high-performing; well-led; populated by empathetic and supportive teachers; accessible to parents; embedded in local communities; and are seen to encourage the creation of cohesive learning communities, even in some of the most disadvantaged areas. While it is important to state that educational disengagement and underachievement are persistent features for many working class Catholic families, the data have highlighted many examples where the Catholic 'holistic' ethos of local schools and their relationship with the local community has been seen to make a significantly positive impact on the learning of socially disadvantaged young people and the engagement levels of their parents and wider community. In such ways, the function of the Catholic ethos and the positive psycho-social connection thus engendered (within and between schools, families and communities), can be seen as a systemic, and in places, effective intervention in terms of addressing the deprivation-low attainment nexus.

In other words, the social capital findings of this study suggest that the problems associated with Protestant working class underachievement (compared to Catholic or middle-class pupils) needs to avoid deficit model analyses and instead be contextualised in a way which recognises: Firstly, they have not benefited from the (effective and successful) systemic intervention (in schools and communities) which has been seen to make such a positive impact on the academic prospects of many young Catholics from disadvantaged backgrounds. Secondly, they commonly, do not have positive family/community norms around education (i.e. academically successful parents/siblings and a local community 'tradition' of academic success) or sufficient income (i.e. to pay for private tuition and the associated additional costs of attending a grammar school) which are: (a) a feature of many middle class families/communities; and (b) seen as the most valuable forms of social capital, under the current system, in terms of accessing the best education.

The logical conclusions that can be made here are: (a) attempts to address underachievement, in both Protestant and Catholic working class communities, are likely to fail in the absence of a fairer education structure in terms of access to the best schools; (b) models of shared and integrated education should be actively encouraged to encourage social mixing; and (c) in the meantime (and in lieu of the radical review of the local education system which this study suggests), schools (in all sectors) have much to learn from each other in terms of mediating the impact of deprivation on educational outcomes.

More broadly, and in both communities, despite its limitations, this study is suggesting that, left unattended, educational failure at individual, familial, school and community levels will not be rectified. Rather, such problems will intensify; the life chances of young people, particularly those from the most disadvantage backgrounds, will be reduced; and the Northern Ireland education system will remain characterised by inequality.

However, there are, as evidenced in the ILiAD data, patently effective interventions (such as Extended Schools and inter-agency working), in addition to valuable and tested models of best practice (particularly in some schools in the Catholic Maintained sector) around addressing the education needs of disadvantaged young people, which have been widely seen to successfully mediate such inequities. The important questions here are: (a) does the political will exist to fully support these initiatives? And (b) can the Controlled sector embrace some of the key learnings from Catholic Maintained sector in terms of holistic understandings of socially disadvantaged young peoples' cognitive and emotional development?

Similarly, the data from the ILiAD case studies reflect a series of concerns around the impact of the two-tiered system that academic selection creates. These data also evidence broad support for the current (primary to post-primary) transfer system of Academic Selection to be replaced by a system, which serves the many and not the few. In other words, as highlighted across many case study transcripts, there is a desire for a primary to post-primary transfer system that embraces the principle of fairness and delivers an education system which

works for all young people and seeks to create an education system which is high on excellence and equally high on equity

In conclusion, social capital (as conceptualised above) can indeed help to understand and address the deprivation - low-attainment nexus. However, this can only be achieved if: there is an understanding that social capital produces different outcomes in working class communities than it does in middle class ones; there is cognisance that social capital produces negative as well as positive outcomes; there is an appreciation of the limitations of social capital in terms of addressing structural inequality; and, more broadly, there is a determined effort to address such structural inequality by, for example, explicitly linking inequities in education and the equalising effect of appropriate interventions to the equality agenda.

In other words, social capital may be part of the answer to underachievement in the Northern Ireland education system, but inequality is the problem. The ILiAD data have shown: the positive effects of social capital in terms of addressing the deprivation-low attainment nexus; the corrosive consequences when social capital stocks are diminished or the wrong kind of capital is created; and that educational social capital is only truly social when the benefits which are engendered are shared and available to all sections in the social structure.

5.3. Key messages and observations for policy, practice and future research

Drawing together all of the findings (both qualitative and quantitative) from this ILiAD study, the key messages and observations for policy, practice and future research have been subdivided into the following seven thematic areas: empowerment, infrastructure, connectedness, engagement, accessibility, innovation, and structural factors. These thematic areas are aligned to the social capital theoretical framework developed for this study. However, it must be remembered that these messages and observations are based on area-specific data, and as such, may not apply to all areas. Notwithstanding clear overlaps, the first three of these themes relate to community level issues; themes 4-6 relate to school level issues; and the final theme addresses structural issues such as education policy. Each of these will be addressed in turn.

5.3.1 Empowerment

The data from the ILiAD case studies attest that immediate, home-based influences have a significant impact on a young person's education attainment prospects. Across the seven Wards, the most important of these micro-level factors were: a high local value on education; familial / peer support; a stable home environment; and individual resilience (including good mental health). However, the data also make clear that many young people from the most disadvantaged families are (often totally) bereft of these attributes and resources and, as a consequence, are highly unlikely to flourish in the current education system without meaningful individual / family / area-specific interventions.

5.3.2 Infrastructure

The seven case studies evidence the importance of community infrastructure in terms of creating the conditions most conducive to raising local attainment levels. The data here highlight that the most significant of these relate to: the accessibility and visibility of schools; effective community and youth work; and the provision of visible pathways to Further / Higher Education and employment opportunities and good Early Years opportunities for all.

The propinquity of high performing schools is a critical factor in terms of local attainment levels. In such communities: pupils face less logistical / transportation barriers; attendance appears to be improved and more easily managed; parents are more likely to attend parents' evenings and other school-based events; and, crucially, the school is seen as in and of the community, education becomes seen as a community priority, and young people (literally) see learning as a constant in their lived environment. Similarly, the ILiAD data are littered with positive examples of youth and community work interventions targeted at addressing the educational needs of the most disadvantage young people. These data show that local youth and community workers are trusted by and uniquely placed to positively engage with the 'hardest to reach' families; and that these interventions are particularly important for the many young people who have little or no parental / familial support. It is also clear from the data that young people respond positively when they can envision that their application at school can lead to college, university and/or employment opportunities.

5.3.3 Connectedness

The ILiAD data attest that in, many cases, positive community norms around education are contingent on: positive local influences (role models); a sense of community cohesion; and unifying factors and traditions such as the role of the Catholic maintained sector and other shared socio-political / cultural associations (e.g. the GAA or flute bands) as well as arts and broader sporting activities. Notwithstanding generalisations, it was suggested in the case study data that there is a contrast between the connectedness evident in some largely Catholic communities and the fragmentation in some largely Protestant ones. The recent arrival of ethnic minorities also appears to have created more challenges for working class Protestant communities and schools than Catholic ones in the ILiAD study. It is also clear that the rapidly increasing private rented sector has caused difficulties in certain communities, where transitory tenures, perceptions of community as a 'dumping ground', and the creation of a 'landlord culture' (such as Duncairn, Woodstock and Rosemount) have done little to enhance community cohesion.

Similarly, many teachers in the Catholic schools (serving Whiterock, Rosemount and The Diamond) were born and continue to live locally. This was seen to explains in part the closeness of their relationships with pupils. However, this was not the case in the Protestant Wards where, it was claimed, some teachers are perceived as 'middle class', 'detached' and don't have the 'same connection' or, possibly, 'long-term commitment' to the community.

5.3.4 Engagement

In terms of school level engagement, the ILiAD data show that the most important factors are: collaborative, visionary leadership; positive triangular relationships between school, home and community; inter-school and inter-agency collaboration and sharing (the provision of holistic support services between the school, the local community, and pupils' homes through integrated service delivery by schools, statutory agencies and local voluntary and community organisations); and effective school leadership. Where this support was in place from the early years, the beneficial effect was most apparent – for example, pupils received support during key transitions; parents were provided with support not only in helping their child at school but in their own learning and development; and attendance officers helped to decrease levels of absenteeism; all of which combine to aide pupils' achievement.

5.3.5 Accessibility

Across the seven ILiAD Wards, schools' accessibility was seen as a significant factor in terms of raising pupils' aspirations and attainment levels; encouraging parental involvement; and allowing schools to develop a greater understanding of the challenges experienced by the most disadvantaged families and communities. These data also show that young people are most likely to succeed in education when: they are taught by empathetic and supportive teachers; attend schools with a pupil-centred ethos; and learn alongside other young people from different backgrounds.

5.3.6 Innovation

The ILiAD data attest to the fact that that innovative practices on the part of schools are essential in terms of improving attainment and addressing underachievement. The most important of these practices were identified as: the adoption of flexible curricula and alternative measures of success; monitoring of internal-school and individual-level data; the provision of vocational placement opportunities for young people; Full- Service /Extended Schools; programmes for parents around supporting their child's education and addressing their own learning deficits; the effective provision of SEN support; pastoral care, and support during transition stages.

5.3.7 Structural (policy) factors

The ILiAD data highlight a number of policy issues around: the need to redefine understandings of 'education' and 'achievement'; inter-school competition and a lack of collaborative practice; the need for outward-looking and transformative leadership; the problems associated with short-termism; a focus on literacy and numeracy at transition stages; recognition of the continuing impact of the conflict; the indicators used around poverty and deprivation in Northern Ireland; and the negative effects of academic selection.

The data here evidence that GCSEs are viewed by many as a crude measure of achievement and there needs to be a more nuanced approach that recognises that an outcome that is minor for one child may be a huge achievement for another. Many education stakeholders pointed to what is seen as a deep contradiction in our current system whereby children are assessed at 11 on academic standards, but still, even after they are deemed high performing (or not) in these academic standards, they are assessed and measured by the same academic standards as each other at age 16. The current system privileges the children who are academic by the standards being used; with its narrow focus, it does not recognise the gifts and talents of all of our children and young people. Furthermore, this study has highlighted that the focus on the GCSE Maths and English targets means that some schools may be leaving out 'borderline' students from higher-tier classes. In terms of inter-school competition, the data confirm that grammar schools, in particular, are, often, driven on an individual basis. In other words, there is competition to be the best, to have the highest academic results and league table position. As a consequence, there is no real incentive to work collaboratively with other schools. The ILiAD data also make clear that the funding for support programmes from government Departments (including the Department of Education), is often contingent on linear measurement and meeting numerical targets. This was widely felt to be problematic as certain achievements are qualitative and significantly more difficult to measure.

There also needs to be a discussion at the policy level of the indicators used around poverty and deprivation in Northern Ireland. A lot of emphasis has been placed on measuring deprivation at the local or geographical level, but our qualitative research revealed that many people do not conceptualise their community in these specific, bounded ways – they

frequently see the geographical boundaries as more fluid, or even more particular; or, they do not agree with the label of 'high deprivation' used to describe their local area.

The final sub-theme in terms of structural (policy) factors relates to the processes and impacts of academic selection. To be clear, while it is obvious that academic selection and subsequent entry to a grammar school gives some young people from these Ward areas an opportunity to realise their educational potential, the same system often prevents the most disadvantaged young people (in terms of social class and positive familial traditions and norms around education) from realising theirs. Whilst some young people from disadvantaged areas do succeed against the odds, the current system does not work for many young people. Indeed, the current transition between primary and post-primary school is seen to create a range of problems, such as: a palpable sense of failure among those who fail or do not sit the test; perceived social hierarchies; and the fact that (due to falling enrolments) the grammar sector is increasingly 'creaming' pupils who would likely be high-achieving, positive role models in non-grammar schools.

Under the present system, access to the best education is too often determined by socio-economic status; and the current achievement-underachievement spectrum, by and large, reflects the social class structure. In such ways, privilege and disadvantage are simply reinforced and reproduced. Therefore, a radical review of education in Northern Ireland should be considered, with a view to moving away from a two-tiered education system; thus, ensuring that Northern Ireland has an education system where academic excellence can be achieved without a long tail of underachievement.

5.4. Future research ideas

(1) Notwithstanding the significant barriers to attainment outlined in this report, The ILiAD study has also highlighted a range of interventions at familial, school and community level (such as Full Service and Extended Schools programmes and other school-home-community initiatives) which have been seen to make a considerable and positive impact particularly for the most disadvantaged families. Resources need to be made available to research and properly evaluate this impact and to capture and disseminate the many models of excellent practice.

(2) More efforts should be made to understand the conditions of successful school-to-school and school-community collaboration. There is a need for further understanding, perhaps through case study research, of areas where successful shared education, area learning communities, and/or integrated support-community services have been set up successfully in order to better understand the processes by which collaborative working and student mixing can be achieved and rolled out into other areas.

(3) The findings from this study indicate that one potential avenue for future research is a focus on non-selective schools across the UK, Ireland, Europe and beyond to identify the most high-performing schools and most effective transfer models. The key aim here would be to create a typology of the different models of non-selective education available, to enable a more fruitful interrogation of how unregulated testing at 11 might be ended and more equal access to a quality education might become available for all.

(4) It would also be valuable in terms of best practice and the knowledge base to examine models of parental engagement in schools at the primary and post-primary level. The central focus here would be to discover the most effective ways of sustaining parental engagement in upper primary school and into post-primary.

(5) Given the importance of school leadership in building successful schools in areas of high deprivation, it would be useful to understand in more depth the necessary qualities and skills required for managing schools in this new era of education,

including the skills and qualities required for promoting inter-agency and inter-school collaboration.

Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation (ILiAD)

Volume 2

The Seven Ward Case Studies

OFMDFM/QUB Research Project:

Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation (ILiAD)

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Case study 1: Whiterock

1.1 Local context

Deprivation Levels

Whiterock is the most socially deprived Ward in Northern Ireland (ranked 1st out of 582 on the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure, NIMDM 2010) and yet GCSE results in the annual school-leavers survey are surprisingly high, compared to the normal equation where deprivation typically equals low achievement. It has had some of the highest levels of educational achievement out of all the sample Wards, particularly since 2008/09 (58% of pupils achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A*- C in 2010/11; 60% did so in 2012/13).

The domains from which the NIMDM 2010 rankings are calculated indicate that Whiterock is amongst the top ten Wards for severity in deprivation in regard to income (1st), employment (1st), health deprivation and disability (2nd), and education, skills and training (8th). On a positive note, the score for living environment (33/582) is much better than the living environment scores for the other urban Catholic Wards and the urban Protestant Wards in the research sample, and crime and disorder (41/582) in the area is much better than in Dunclug in Ballymena, Duncairn in north Belfast, or Rosemount and The Diamond in Derry-Londonderry.

Figure 1.1 shows a map of the Output areas within the Whiterock Ward, colour-coded by intensity of deprivation. The colours of the Output areas refer to the severity of deprivation, based on their multiple deprivation score (ranging from 1.5 to 81.73, with 81.73 being the most deprived) as calculated by NISRA (all statistics are based on the 2010 measures unless otherwise indicated).
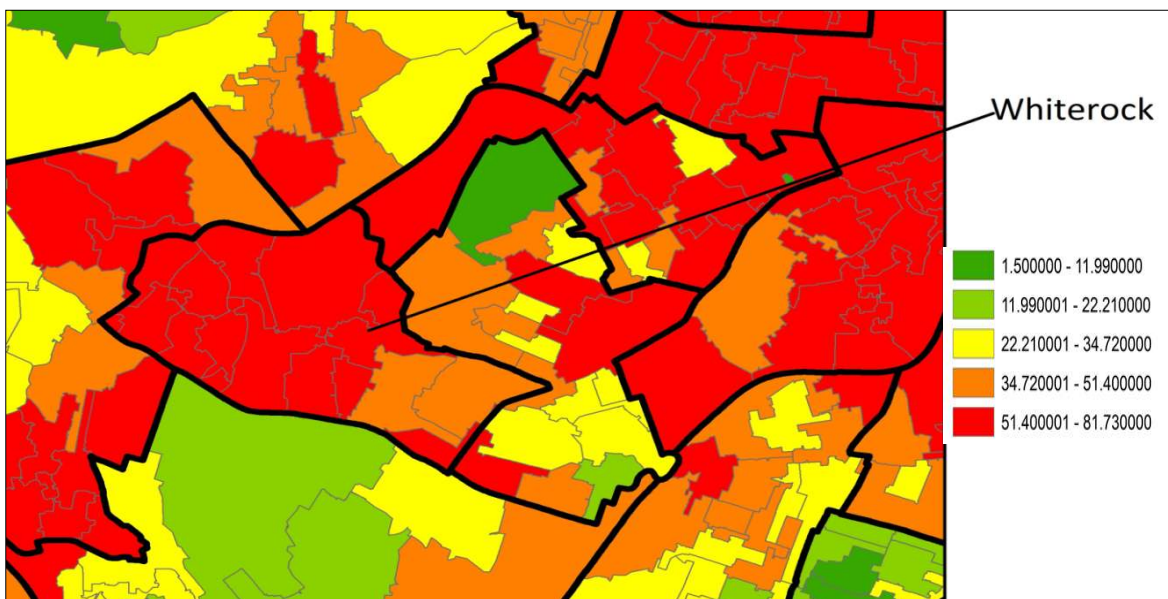
Figure 1.1: Multiple Deprivation in Output Areas: Whiterock Ward

Within Whiterock, the majority of the Output areas are red, with only the Output areas in the lower end of the Ward closer to the Falls Road (i.e. those which are closer to commercial units and services) indicating slightly less deprivation. It is bordered by the City Cemetery (in light green to the south-west of the Ward), Beechmount Ward to the east, and Output areas of similar deprivation levels (in orange-red) along the Springfield Road and Divis Mountain to the north, north-west and west of the Ward. The Ward does not have 'peacewalls' or established community interfaces.

Demographics and Local Facilities

Whiterock is one of the predominantly Catholic Wards in the ILiAD research sample (it was 99% Catholic according to the 2001 Census, which decreased to 93.1% at the time of the Census 2011). The Ward has very low percentages of residents who were born outside of the UK or the Republic of Ireland (1.1%, much lower than the NI average of 7.1%) or born in EU ascension countries[1] (0.3%, compared to the NI average of 2.1%). The population density within the Ward is the second highest of the ILiAD sample, at 69.7 persons per hectare. There is also evidence of significant change in housing tenure within the Whiterock Ward between 2001 and 2011 (according to Census statistics). While the percentage of owner/occupier housing increased slightly from 34.9% to 39.2%, the percentage of privately rented housing more than doubled, from 3.6% to 8.9%. The percentage of social rent housing decreased substantially from 60.2% to 47.8% over the ten-year period.

The Whiterock/Upper Springfield area is also a Neighbourhood Renewal Area under the Department for Social Development (DSD). In 2012/13, DSD was investing £1,089,376 of funding into supporting programmes in the Upper Springfield/ Whiterock area. This was more than four times as much given to the Tullycarnet Ward (£0.25m) and approximately twice as much given to the Duncairn and Woodstock Wards (£0.6m). However, Whiterock is the largest Ward in the ILiAD sample (5694 people, according to NISRA, 2011), and has the second highest percentage of young people under 15, at 25.2% (NISRA, 2011). It is, therefore, unsurprising that there are a huge range of community services aimed at improving the lives of children and families located within the Ward. Due to the degree of overlap and resultant duplication of services in the area, there has been a recent initiative to form an Upper Springfield/Whiterock Integrated Partnership in an attempt to adopt a more coherent strategic approach to planning and delivery of services. This will see community groups and statutory agencies working together in the area in order to develop the cohesiveness and joined-up working between the groups so that community problems are more quickly identified and strategies are put in place to address them, as well as to avoid the duplication of services. Some of the key groups that currently deliver services located within the Whiterock Ward specifically are:

o   Corpus Christi Services (offering individual counselling, group work support, welfare services and a range of work training programmes to young people in the Ward area);
o   Full Service Community Network (FSCN, located at the Whiterock campus of Belfast Metropolitan College, with a project board managed by CCMS, the programme serves to implement existing government strategies and contribute to a more coherent education policy by working effectively with and through statutory, voluntary and community organisations. In the FSCN programme the focus is very much on early intervention with the parents of children of pre-school and primary school age);
o   Upper Springfield Development Company Limited works directly with children, young people and families to deliver a range of community based services including: family support; preventative and support programmes that address mental ill-health, alcohol and drugs related issues; and promote citizenship and reduce anti community/ sectarian & criminal behaviour through street work & group work;
o   Newhill Youth and Community Centre Association;
o   Healthy Living Centre;
o   Whiterock Children's Centre;
o   Barnardos Schools programme which provides support for pregnant teenagers and school-age parents;
o   The Youth Intervention Project which carries out street work with unattached young people;

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[1] EU ascension countries include Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia

- The Resource Centre provides information and support services to the community on a wide range of issues including young people's issues (e.g. suicide awareness etc.);
- Springhill Community House which provides education and health promotion programmes;
- The Top of the Rock centre which provides a range of counselling services, complimentary therapies, sports and physical activities for children and young people;
- Cumain Sport an Phobail which provides sports-based interventions with young people;
- Upper Springfield Integrated Services for Children and Young People.

School Provision, Intake Characteristics, Achievement and Destinations
In terms of education provision, Whiterock has the largest number of pupils within post-primary schools out of all the Wards in the ILiAD study (666 pupils in 2011), with nine schools serving these young people in 2011 (see Table 1.1 below). That year, 14.1% of young people from the Ward attended grammar schools (the second lowest proportion of the seven ILiAD Wards) and 85.9% attended secondary schools. The research team decided to choose a geographical mid-point within each Ward area, and to map the distance from this point to the schools that serve each Ward area.

Table 1.1: Schools serving young people in Whiterock.
Blue – Grammar schools Orange - Other schools

Miles to school	% GCSE pass (5 at A*-C) 2011	Enrolment (2011)	
0.1	47	147	Corpus Christi
0.8	90	181	St. Louise's
0.9	65	72	Coláiste Feirste
1.3	48	63	St. Rose's
1.3	98	32	St. Dominic's
2.1	78	72	Christian Bros.
2.1	93	62	St. Mary's
2.5	68	22	La Salle
3	52	15	Malone College
Total Grammar enrolment		94	14.1%
Total Secondary enrolment		572	85.9%

Looking at average GCSE achievement rates in Whiterock for the three years prior to the ILiAD research commencing (2008/2009/2010), 55.3% of school leavers achieved ≥5 GCSEs or GCSE equivalents (at Grade C or above). This figure reduced to 35.3% if 'pure' GCSEs are considered only, and the figure dropped to just 25.7% if English and Maths are included (this is the highest variation of any of the ILiAD sample Wards). Looking specifically at female school leavers across these three years, 63.2% achieved any five GCSEs at A*-C, and half that figure (31.6%) achieved five GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths. For males, the figure for any five GCSEs was 47.9%, dropping again by half (23.6%) with the inclusion of English and Maths.

In terms of the achievement rates within the Ward of school leavers who are entitled/not entitled to Free School Meals (FSM), Whiterock shows one of the smallest variations of all ILiAD sample Wards. For school leavers from 2008 – 2012, 59.2% of those not entitled to FSM achieved five or more GCSEs at A*-C, compared to 50.5% of school leavers who were entitled to FSM. This variation of approximately nine percentage points stands whether considering FSM/non-FSM males or females.

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There is however a diverse picture in terms of the intake characteristics, achievement rates and destinations of school leavers from the seven non-selective schools that serve the Ward. The average rates by school (2008-2012) for rates of FSM, SEN, and five GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths are shown in Figure 1.2, and the destinations of school leavers in 2012 are shown in Figure 1.3. St Louise's College, the school which serves the majority of girls from the Ward, has slightly higher rates of FSM-eligible pupils and pupils with any SEN than the NI average (37.2% and 35.8% respectively). However, more pupils from the school than average achieve five GCSEs including Maths and English (39.5%) and over four-fifths go on to higher education, further education, or employment after leaving school. Corpus Christi serves the majority of boys from the Ward, and has much higher rates of FSM-eligible pupils and pupils with any SEN than the NI average (51.8% and 52.4% respectively). While the rate of pupils achieving five GCSEs including Maths and English is the lowest in the Ward (12%), only 7% of pupils are unemployed or at an unknown destination after leaving the school – the best rate of all schools in the area (see Figure 1.3). The three secondary schools with the next highest enrolment figures for young people from the Ward, Christian Brothers, Colaiste Fierste, and St Rose's, also have higher than average rates of FSM-eligibility and rates of pupils with any SEN (see Figure 1.2), and while these schools are below average for achievement in terms of five GCSEs including Maths and English, most school leavers in 2012 from Christian Brothers and St Rose's entered employment (42% and 40% respectively), and most from Colaiste Fierste entered further education (79%) – see Figure 1.3.
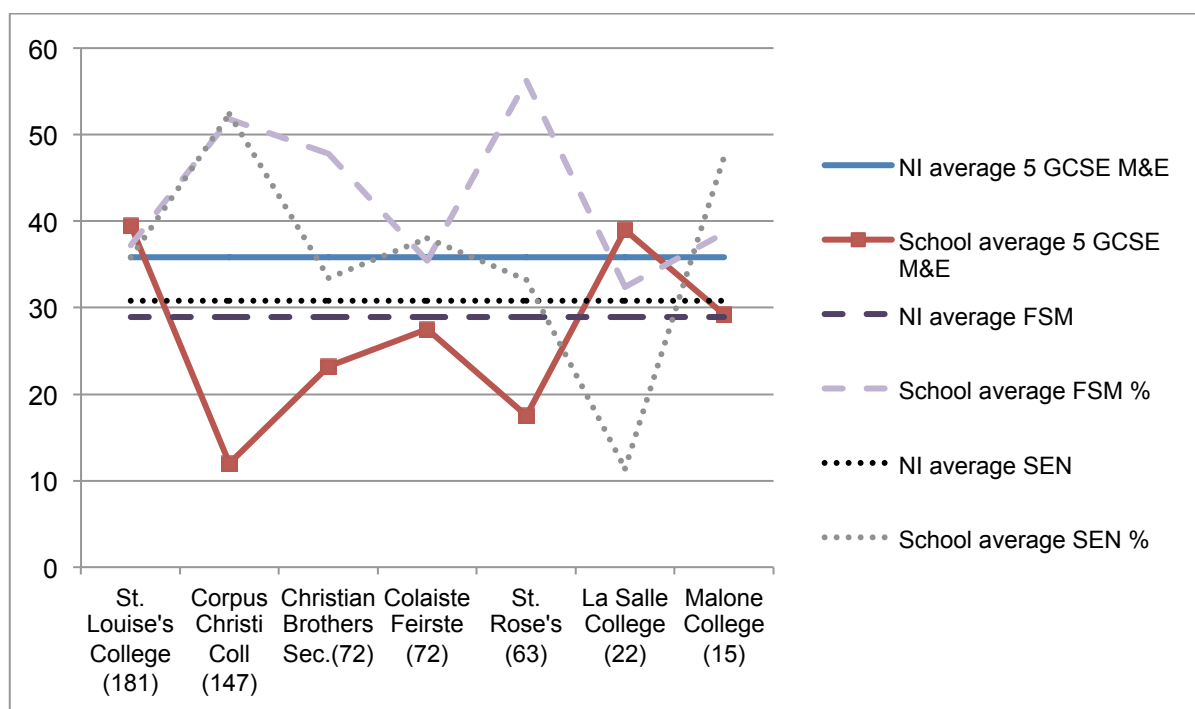
Figure 1.2: Percentages of 5 GCSE (including Maths & English) attainment, Free School Meals eligibility, and pupils with any Special Educational Needs – Whiterock non-selective Schools against NI secondary school averages
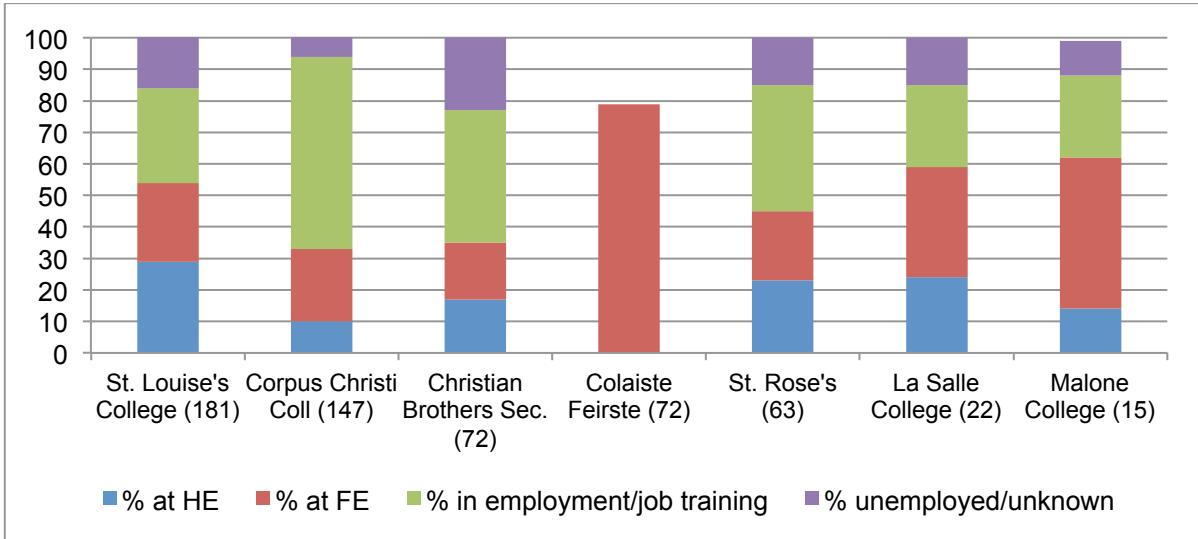
Figure 1.3: Destinations of School Leavers 2012 from secondary schools serving Whiterock Ward

Looking at the destinations of all school leavers in the Ward across the years 2008 – 2012, Whiterock has had the most consistently high rate of school leavers entering employment or job training over the past five years (44%) compared to the other Wards in the ILiAD sample, much higher than comparative figures for the other predominantly Catholic Wards in the ILiAD sample (16.6% in Rosemount, 25% in The Diamond) and higher than the predominantly Protestant and Mixed-religion Wards too (32.8% in Duncairn; 32% in Tullycarnet; 34% in Woodstock; and 17.2% in Dunclug). On average between 2008-2012, 17.2% of school leavers from Whiterock have entered higher education (fourth highest in the ILiAD sample); 24.6% entered further education (the lowest of all Wards in the ILiAD sample); and 14.4% were unemployed or in an unknown destination (second highest in the ILiAD sample).

The following sections of this chapter will outline the key drivers and inhibitors of achievement in the Whiterock area, as identified from document review, secondary data analysis of official statistics, and qualitative interviews with community representatives, education welfare officers, parents from the Ward, principals of schools serving children and young people from the area, and young people themselves (see Table 1.2). The drivers and inhibitors will be presented as macro-level (structural) factors, meso-level (social/community/school) factors, or micro-level (individual/family/peer) factors.

Table 1.2: Profile of participants in Whiterock

School level	Community level
Senior teachers interview x 2	Education welfare officer focus group x1
Education and Library Board representative interview x1	Community representative interview x 1
	Community partnership focus group x 1
Nursery school principal interview x 1	Parents focus group x 1
Primary school principal interview x 1	Detached young people focus group x 2
Special school principal interview x1	
Post-primary principal interview x 4	
Post-primary pupil focus group x 2	

1.2. Force-field Analysis of drivers and inhibitors of achievement in Whiterock Ward

Drivers	Inhibitors

Present situation – 60% five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13); 1st Multiple Deprivation 2010

Drivers

Macro-level

a) Inter-agency & school cooperation

b) High-performing education institutions are situated within the local Ward area

c) Substantial, high-quality early years provision

d) Social mixing in grammar schools

e) High attainment performance of grammar sector

Meso-level

a) Parental involvement in schools

b) Good leadership in schools

c) Facilitative teacher skill-set and positive teacher behaviour & attitudes

d) High expectations of schools

e) Transition support – from nursery school to careers advice

f) Provision of academic and vocational choice

h) Monitoring individual progress and use of school data

i) Combining an academic definition of success with a pastoral definition to heighten aspirations

j) Advantage of single sex schools – for females

Micro-level

a) Resilience and self-motivation of high achievers against the odds

b) Parental support, encouragement and high expectations

c) Positive intergenerational influences

d) Identification with macro-level structures

Inhibitors

Macro-level

a) Felt effects of academic selection

b) Pressures on SEN and EWO support & insufficient resources

c) Lack of political representation and feelings of disempowerment to participate in local political structures

d) School closures and amalgamations

e) Poor physical environment

Meso-level

a) Inappropriate curriculum and school structure

b) Schools and other agencies working in silos

c) Deficits in teaching – disinterested teachers and teachers struggling to manage classes

Micro-level

a) Class division, anti-social behaviour and the creation of 'no-go' areas

b) Mental health issues and adverse circumstances at home

c) Young people's lack of confidence & internalising a sense of being a 'problem' or failure

d) Poor parental support & skills (particularly low literacy)

e) Intergenerational lack of aspiration/ low expectations of school & education

1.3. Macro-level-drivers of attainment in Whiterock

As indicated in the force-field analysis presented above, the Whiterock data identified a total of five macro-level drivers of attainment in the Ward: inter-agency and inter-school cooperation; high-performing education institutions situated within the local Ward area; substantial, high-quality early years provision; social mixing in grammar schools; and the high attainment performance of local grammar schools.

Inter-agency & school cooperation
One of the positive features of Whiterock, especially when compared to some other Wards in the ILiAD study, is that there is much more evidence of joined-up operations between various community and statutory providers. The ETI area-based inspection for West Belfast from 2009 lists '*the very good collaborative working arrangements between the primary schools and the feeder pre-school provision'* and *'the strong commitment of the various local community and business networks to support the work of the schools'* as two of the main strengths for the strategic planning of learning in the area. Perhaps a prime example of this is the Full Service Community Network. Some people from the Ward thought of this as a work in progress with balanced statements made about what is happening and what still needs to occur. What is clear is a strong commitment to interagency links and cooperation for the good of young people and families in the community. Several EWOs argued that '*we definitely need integrated services'* and placed this issue in the context of past service failures in England.

If you look at all those enquiries with Baby P ... they always talk about greater communication between agencies ... if you really want to put in proper changes ... then there needs to be greater communication between agencies, more resources put into the area, targeted resources, extra staff; all of those things. [EWO]

We have links with the Housing Executive ... that relationship has built up over years ... We've struck up relationships with the NSPCC [and] a lot of agencies ... but you wouldn't be sitting down on a monthly basis with all of those agencies sitting and discussing ... that's what we need to do. [EWO]

Several parents referred to the existence of various support agencies in the community. These views were reinforced by a EWO who stressed the need for stronger linkages.

There's people in the community who can work holistically with the family ... it's not like the old days when you were on your own ... the help is there, there's loads of places to be signposted to, whereas there wasn't before. [Parents focus group].

We need to strengthen our links with local resources; things are changing all the time ... There's a wealth within our staff team in terms of what people give, everybody in our team gives something different and something valuable to schools and I think that that is not always seen ... but communication between agencies is imperative. [EWO]

Specific examples were given of the value and benefits of agencies with expertise in the community providing additional support for pupils in need. One of these examples related to extra tuition for struggling pupils.

There's a child ... she was failing all year ... but I got her the tutor through Integrated Services and she passed her exam and she said to me I passed it because I got the confidence and the tutor was fantastic ... She was sitting in shock going "this is amazing". Her parents wouldn't have been able to afford training that was accessed through Integrated Services; and the staff, full credit to them, they bust their asses. [EWO]

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High-performing education institutions are situated within the local Ward area
From the data presented in Table 1.1 (see under Local Context section) a 'bubble' chart was then created in Excel to graphically represent the distance (in miles) of schools serving young people from Whiterock from the Ward centre, and this distance was placed against the GCSE pass rate of the schools, and also to visually represent the numbers of young people enrolled in each school, both grammar (in blue) and secondary (in orange). The bubble chart below (Figure 1.4) shows not only the good attainment levels within Whiterock - the bubbles within the chart lie close to or above the 50% pass mark (y-axis) – but also that all the schools serving young people in the Ward are relatively close to the Ward centre (x-axis), given that the bubbles in the chart are all in the top left-hand corner. This reveals that high-performing schools are also highly visible to young people in the Ward. Two secondary schools dominate the enrolment of young people from the area – Corpus Christi for males and St Louise's for females – and St Louise's is frequently ranked as the top-performing non-selective school in Northern Ireland at GCSE level.
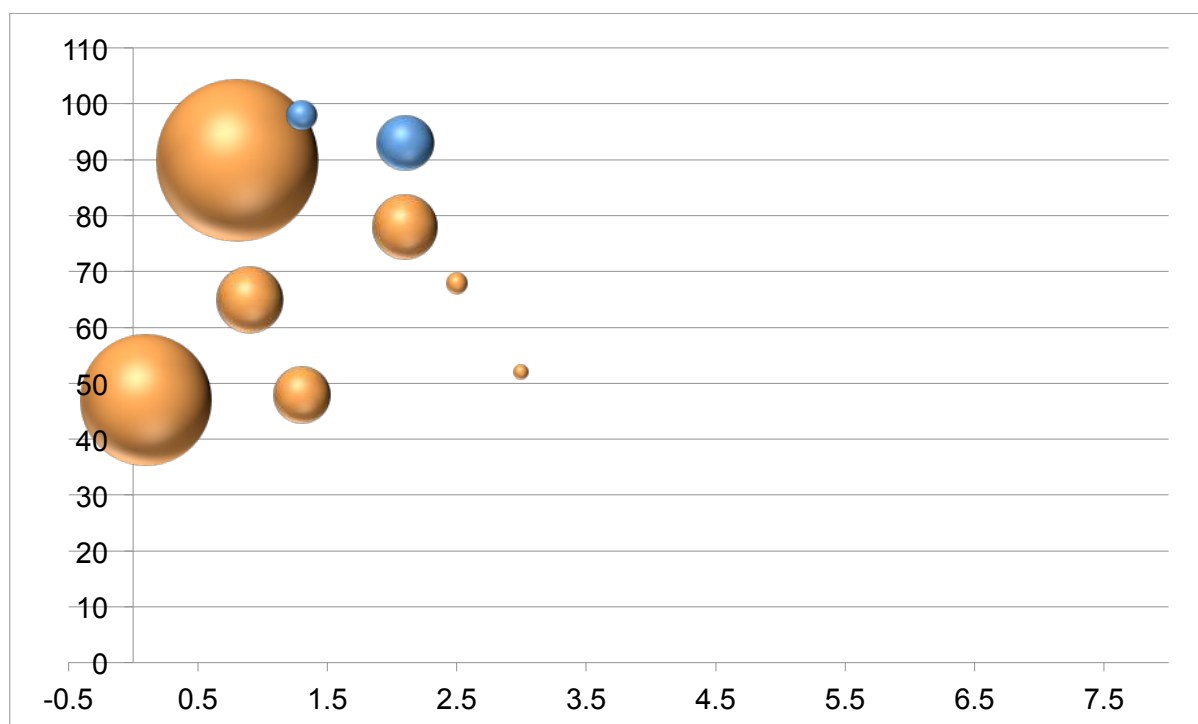
Figure 1.4: Schools in Whiterock GCSE Pass (A*-C) rates 2011 by miles from Ward centre and enrolment numbers. Blue – Grammar schools Orange - Other schools

Whiterock is unique within the ILiAD case study Wards as it has two grammar schools, a further education campus and an institution of higher education which are very close to the geographical centre of the Ward, and these were also regarded by people within the Ward as being positive influences on aspirations.

I would've gone to a primary school which was literally just at the back door of St Mary's and yes, you were always aware of the girls who went to become teachers. [Principal]

Substantial, high-quality early years provision
In Whiterock, there is evidence of strong early years support for children and families. This is a structural driver of achievement which can be traced to the substantial young population of Whiterock (25.2% under the age of 15 compared, for example, to 16.8% in Woodstock Ward and 17.5% in Duncairn Ward). There are multiple nursery schools within or close to the Ward boundary as well as Surestart. These are fully integrated into community partnerships, working alongside community groups and statutory agencies. The 'Our Shared Vision'

programme, coordinated by Belfast Education and Library Board, is an excellent example of the integration of this early years support. Through the programme, a *'family learning worker'* works between the nursery schools, the Whiterock Children's Centre and the Surestart to offer parents a range of programmes to support them and their families.

There are a few Surestart programmes running, and we also have a Stay to Play programme which is funded through another initiative ... Our Shared Vision. Stay to Play, the two-year-old programme is usually targeted at families we have worked with in the past ... Say a family had a history of speech and language problems, we would refer them to the two-year old programme ... Extended Schools has worked tremendously well for us over the years. We have the likes of the health visitor and the midwife. So, we are able to refer families, and they are able to refer to us. So, we are picking up the families most in need now; making sure that they have access to services. [Principal]

Furthermore, statistics from NINIS and DENI indicate that nursery place uptakes for children born in Whiterock have not fallen below 75% in the last four years (higher than the other ILiAD Wards). The quality of the provision is also of a very high standard. In 2011, children from Whiterock attended four nursery and recent inspections (within the past five years) have ranked the quality of education and pastoral care within these schools as 'very good' or 'outstanding'. Pupils who took part in focus groups claimed they enjoyed the experience of nursery school or playgroup; and that it was a norm in the area that all children would attend some kind of preschool setting.

R: I thought everyone went to nursery.

R: That's probably what it was, probably people in the area saying, "oh they're sending their kids to nursery, so we better send ours".

R: Because parents are out working and they can't really take so much time off work to look after their kids so they bring them up to crèche for a few hours. [Pupil focus group]

Social mixing in grammar schools
Although demographics within the Ward are relatively settled with little change observed between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses, the relatively high level of social mixing that occurred within grammar schools in the Ward was regarded by one principal as an important element in raising achievement for pupils from difficult backgrounds.

[One] girl was raped ... another girl was beaten up in her own home ... And that's what some of the children are dealing with. But if you met them, they will be no different from the girls who come from teachers' families ... if we didn't have a grammar school here, that wouldn't happen ... and you can't have a social mix in an area of deprivation unless you've some way of attracting children ... we would take children from Lower Falls right up Poleglass, Dunmurry ... When you've got a social mix, you see aspiration ... and they see a unique opportunity for themselves. [Principal]

However, the same principal believed that because social mixing increases achievement, this inadvertently can lead to less pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds entering 'good' schools in future.

We've a very good social mix here which is probably different from most grammar schools. Funny, our free school meals, it's probably about 15% at the moment ... [previously] we would've been maybe 17% because unfortunately ... when you start improving results, then you 'improve' the intake or it becomes more competitive to get in. [Principal]

As highlighted earlier, there are two grammar schools in the Whiterock Ward. The attainment performance of these schools is highest (St Dominic's – 98% % GCSE pass % at A*-C) and the second highest (St Mary's – 93%) in the Ward. Just as the quality, propinquity and visibility of these schools were viewed as having a positive influence on the aspirations of local young people, these high GCSE pass rates were seen as a further driver of attainment in the Ward. Several respondents from the grammar sector argued that these high GCSE pass rates *'shows what is possible'* and that *'success begets success'*.

1.4 Meso-level drivers of attainment in Whiterock

A total of nine meso-level drivers of attainment were identified around: parental involvement in schools; good leadership in schools; facilitative teacher skill-set and positive teacher behaviour and attitudes; high expectations of schools; transition support from nursery school to careers advice; provision of academic and vocational choice; monitoring individual progress and use of school data; combining an academic definition of success with a pastoral definition to heighten aspirations; and advantage of single sex schools (for females).

Parental involvement in schools

Related to inter-agency involvement and positive intergenerational influences, parental involvement in the schools was highlighted as being key to improving achievement. One principal emphasised the close-knit nature of Irish language community and the impact that parents had had on the building the school and wanting it to succeed. A number also listed initiatives they had put in place to involve parents in school life, such as running parental support classes. A mentoring programme was also in place in a school, whereby parents could choose to mentor a young person between the age of 16 and 20. From the early years onwards, principals were able to trace how parental involvement had a direct impact on achievement, for example, one principal claimed that facilitating parental education resulted in an additional ability to support their child's education.

Last year, we had over 40% of significant males, not always the fathers, who attended courses. That was a huge impact with us. All the courses were really well attended and we would have about 20 places for each activity ... They would have courses for themselves, men's health, breast cancer and things like that. And then courses linked to their children's diet and dental health ... Through Our Shared Vision (BELB), parents have also been involved in volunteer reading, which we tried before to get it off the ground, we've had quite a lot of males coming, we have been successful ... because they have attended so many courses you are able to get them hooked onto it ... reading to their children. [Principal]

Involving parents in school with the help of additional agency networking was viewed by one principal as something which aided community cooperation and led to parents seeing value in education. Similarly, another post-primary principal linked parental involvement to raising expectations about their child's performance in school.

Certainly [the improvement in achievement rates] can't all be all Extended Schools, but what it did do was make people cooperate ... The networking has been brilliant and the support that has come in has been brilliant. It has also raised the profile of the school in the area, so I think people are actually valuing education a wee bit more ... But our parents ... are very much more involved in their children's education than they were at first. [Principal]

When [a pupil] hasn't been listening and she knows what she's to do. You need to bring the force of the parents. So, we would have a lot of interventions ... every time there would be a notice, maybe that they haven't done well, their parents would be called in, and it's a tri-partite meeting, "This is what you could achieve and why are you not?" [Principal]

Lastly, several principals and pupils spoke of positive intergenerational familial links to the area schools, and how this builds trust in the school to be used as a resource for whole families and not be viewed as a hindrance.

I think there is more of a traditional attitude to education here. The parents coming here had been to this nursery themselves; the staff will know their parents and their grandparents. That kind of link can be made, and that helps in getting to know them as well at the start and there is a bit more of a trust there. [Principal]

[We have a pupil who has] got a younger sister who came in [to do the GL test], and she was the only one who came in from [named primary school] that year, but interestingly enough she came to me this week and she said, "My mum forgot to register my brother for the [test]". So, in a way, a lot of that will come, very bright kids where, I suppose if we were a different school we'd say, "You're too late, you can't". In fact, none of the boys' schools would register him, but we said, "Well, of course you can come and do it here". [Principal]

Good leadership in schools

Two sub-themes constituted the overall theme of good leadership – staff connection and commitment to the school, and staff reflecting on and adapting to the needs of pupils. The strong leadership of the main schools serving young people from Whiterock is also evident from recent ETI inspection reports where the leadership within the two main non-selective schools was deemed 'outstanding' in one school and 'highly effective' in the other. Moreover, many of the principals who were interviewed had grown up in West Belfast; some were ex-pupils of the schools they now led. These principals spoke of how their knowledge of the local area had helped them to understand the needs of the pupils and their families better.

When I took over the school ... numbers were haemorrhaging, the school was sitting as second lowest achieving school ... in Belfast and more likely the North in terms of five GCSEs A-C. So, the first thing is to recognise some things are going wrong; the second is to recognise that you want to do something about it, so there has to be a commitment. Ten years on the school is sitting top of non-selective schools in Belfast and 27th out of 157 in the North of Ireland. So, what happened? I think in terms of this area I had a commitment to the school as an ex-pupil and coming from the area. [Principal]

Young people in focus groups also supported this viewpoint, and spoke of how having teachers from the local area provided positive role models for them:

R: It's all about just grabbing the opportunities ... it's good to have teachers that you can look up to, and say "you're from this area as well"; I can look at you and say, "I can do that, I can do what you do, it's achievable".

R: [Two named teachers] grew up in this area and they're like the two soundest teachers in our school.

R: I only like one teacher and he's from this area … all the rest are all culchies. The ones that live in the local area are the best ones. [Pupil focus group

Furthermore, one principal mentioned the positive impact of the Area Inspector for the school, who was also originally from the area.

We have a fabulous Area Inspector and he originally is from the area ... He will come in three times, four times a year and if I phoned him and said, "would you come?' ... He'd do it, and he works that way with all of the schools. [Principal]

Secondly, and related to the first sub-theme, some post-primary principals of non-selective schools described how they reflected on the needs of pupils and adapted the curriculum to try to account for outside factors that could have a negative impact on achievement.

So, you look at ... what was the school like? What was the area like or where were we placed? Where was the school? What did we offer? The area wasn't going to change ... high area of unemployment; kids were coming with low self-esteem; there were no positive male role models in their lives. Expectations were very low. So, I needed to look at all happening out in the community and bringing it into school. Also, the school had changed significantly from when I had been a pupil in '64 here. Coming through the Troubles, the social setting for our community had changed dramatically, there were different pressures; dysfunctional families, lack of male role models in their lives, generational unemployment. So that kind of had to be acknowledged. In the school itself, I needed to look at the curriculum ... was it fit for purpose? [Principal]

A principal of a grammar school had implemented changes in school regimes to provide more support to students who perhaps didn't have a place to study at home.

When I came here it was a choice whether to go to the library or not to go, you could go if you wanted, which I couldn't understand, that was anathema to me, and I'd come from a boarding school so I was used to studying in the evening. We would've girls who will sit here till 9 o'clock, we have study Monday and Tuesday to 9 and come exam time we do it every night, and we would provide it on a Sunday as well. So that creates a whole ethos of work and then that changes your intake as well ... Just the senior team stay till 9 o'clock and the girls love it, they love the camaraderie and the friendship and also it means that studying is a kind of a cool thing to do here, I think that just changes attitude. [Principal]

Facilitative teacher skill-set and positive teacher behaviour & attitudes
Respondents felt that in order to teach in secondary schools in socially deprived areas such as Whiterock, teachers needed to acquire and develop an appropriate and quite specialised skill-set, based on enabling and supporting pupils' learning rather than expecting a more traditional didactic model, based partly on teacher authority, to work. In an exploration of what 'a different skill set' means, the following insights were provided by respondents:

R: You need to be feeling it and believing it and ... not go into teaching because you think you're getting good holidays ... you need to be living it and breathing it for our kids.

R: When you go into schools ... you get a sense of those teachers ... they're generally locals ... they have a real sense of investment in the kids ... For others, a school like [named school] may be their first step in their career and as soon as they get an opportunity to get out of it they will. [Community worker focus group]

Some of these respondents felt it may be particularly difficult for newly qualified teachers, embarking on their first job and being thrown into the *'cauldron'* of places like Whiterock.

It's a very different skill set that you needed to teach ... You would have these girls coming in just out of teacher training ... and then they're fired into the mix in the middle of the Whiterock with thirty young men with a range of complex needs and issues and being young men as well and just not equipped to deal with it. [Community worker]

Gains were reported in relation to teachers' effectiveness in working with some difficult and challenging young people by being able to set-aside notions of power, status and control, in favour of a more facilitative style in which building rapport and relationships with pupils was central. A crucial element of this is trying to build mutual respect:

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R: If they be good to you, you'll be good to them.

R: Because you know the teacher you'll be like, "I'll do this work for this teacher because like him"; you just do the work because he's easier to talk to and all. [Youth focus group]

A number of pupils tried to describe what, for them, a good teacher's characteristics were:

R: One that doesn't keep putting pressure on you.

R: One that's into the same things as you ... like football ... something in common with you.

R: Teachers who treat you like you're a mate instead of like a wee balloon.

R: A teacher who isn't just writing it on the board but showing you actually what you have to do. I hadn't a clue about Maths last year and she would do it and the class would get it and then she'd go who doesn't understand and I would put my hand up and say I haven't got a clue and then she explains it even more and shows you how to do it and I get it.

R: A teacher that can make you work but like can control the class because sometimes it's melting when everyone's talking and you can't listen ... it's hard to concentrate.

R: Teachers with a good personality; our Head of Year ... he's sound because he knows when to be serious but he knows when to mess about. [Youth focus group]

Community workers and parents felt that the most effective teachers are fully committed to the pupils or school in which they work and have a passion for what they do.

There are teachers that are in it for a passion and, you know, it's about them being able to communicate with the young people and deliver and get that over ... to be proficient in your subject is not enough. [Community worker]

The teachers here believe in the kids. [Parent]

This school is holistic, they don't just focus on education, they look at the child as an individual and what they have they'll make them go forward with. And if there's something that they're weak on they'll give them help, they're not just left. [Parent]

It is clear from the data that when pupils were asked to say what subjects they like and why, they begin to describe aspects of the teacher:

R: My favourite subject is electrical engineering because the teacher like messes about and all and he can have a joke but you're doing your work.

R: I like religion because the teacher talks to you like friends more than him being a teacher and it makes it better for us ... like instead of going on about all the bible stories he tries to come off with his own stories ... and he listens to us.

R: I like art ... you just walk in, you don't do no writing, you just do your own thing and if you need help the teacher is there to help you and it's like nice and relaxed ... I look forward to art ... that's probably the only reason why I come into school, to do art.

R: If they're teachers you get along with and you can get on with the subject so it's much easier ... they can have a joke with you and a mess about, well not mess about ... we can have a five-minute break and you can joke around and all and then you go back and work. It makes it easier for you to do the subject ... you enjoy the subject and you feel more

comfortable doing your work for that teacher because if they shout at you all the time you're not going to do it ... it's like you're dreading the classes. [Youth focus groups]

Having a close relationship to teachers was related to inspiring pupils to do well. However, the data also show that some young people felt positive about their teacher for, arguably, more dubious reasons:

R: In Tech, my teacher … looks after me ... I don't go in all the time and he marks me in and I still get paid. [Youth focus group]

R: I know one of the teachers I admire ... she tells us stories inside class and you look at her like, "But Miss, you're under 30, how can you have done all this?' Like she has worked in all these different countries ... and we say, "Miss, how can you do all this?" And she says: "Well, you never say no to anything. If someone says to you, do you want to go to this country and help these people, you say, "Yes sir, when do I start?" [Pupil focus group]

Pupils having trust in their teachers that they have done everything they can do help them to do well also inspired confidence in young people that they can expect to do well in exams.

I: What is it about those teachers ... what do they do that really encourages you to work?

R: They go above and beyond what they're supposed to do ... if you need help with anything, even if it's not related to their class. Like, our English teacher ... she gives us PowerPoints of every single note you could possibly need, whereas other classes have a wee page of things they've written down of notes. I still feel like she's the best.

R: I love the way she gives you loads of notes, but she lets you think for yourself too. You know, you don't like to just learn off the sheet. You look at it and think: "What would I do? How would I analyse this? [Pupil focus group]

High expectations of schools
Older pupils at a grammar school within the Ward also spoke at length about the high academic expectations that were placed on them, which they internalised.

R: I'm not sure if it's just this school, but everyone assumes they are going to go to University ... it's kind of taken for granted that you can go to University ... and that's an achievement all in itself ... I'm going to go to University, why wouldn't I?

R: If you got all Cs here, you'd be looking at your friends going, "Aw, they've done better than me", or, "I'm really low on this subject, I've done really badly on my GCSEs". You've passed them all ... but you still feel as if you've done really badly. And that's because of the high standards that the school sets for you, and you therefore set for yourself.

R: Whenever we get our GCSE results, [the principal] goes, "Right, such-as-such got these predicted grades" ... I think it's that they care about you, individually. I think that's a really good thing. Like, you feel like you matter, you know? In other schools, they would just say "oh this amount of pupils got Cs, you better pull it up", whereas we go, "look at what we can do to help you". So, it's really good.

R: I know there's one teacher in the school who says, "If you come into my class and expect to get by on natural intelligence or whatever, I'll kick you out, because you need to work hard". It isn't all about intelligence; it's about hard work as well. And they do push you to do that, which is brilliant. [Pupil focus group]

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A grammar school principal in the Ward was supportive of academic selection, but was keen to emphasise that the neighbouring non-selective school was *'very aspirational'*, and that pupils can achieve highly in terms of academics in the Ward even if they go to that school, as it also had a system of streaming in place.

We've got a very successful comprehensive school beside us ... they do some of the same but what they do in general is very different from what we do. But it's a very aspirational school ... my cousin started at [named school]; at that time, she started in 1D and moved to 1A. I think that is the great thing about West Belfast, it would be hard to not be at a great school, I think that it is a big advantage, which of course has been a big problem for working class Protestant areas to create that. [Principal]

Transition support – from nursery school to careers advice
This type of support forms part of the aforementioned link between pastoral care and achievement, and was evident at all levels of the education spectrum in Whiterock. Transition support was deemed to be particularly important (by both principals and young people) for pupils in the Ward whose families need extra support or would not be able to afford private outside tuition to help them pass exams at the primary and post-primary levels.

Through Extended Schools and Full Schools Community Network we also have an Education support officer who is a qualified teacher. We also have a transition worker. She works from home to nursery, and nursery to primary, and primary to secondary. So, a lot of work goes into the parents at transitioning. [Principal]

It wouldn't even occur to a lot of the girls' parents to consider getting extra tuition, but we would have a lot of booster classes, for example, in Chemistry, Physics and Maths, and a lot of afterschool extra tuition as well. I suppose that makes the difference. [Principal]

Pupils from Key Stage 4 again linked extra school support to meeting the needs of pupils in the area and high pastoral care as evidenced in the following exchanges:

R: We had really good help and all for our 11+, like we had special classes and over summer and all. Our school was really good ... we had the facilities and all, like you didn't need to have tutors or anything like that; it was just that people didn't take the opportunity. I don't know if it was because like in our area people don't think they are good enough maybe.

I: Did any of you have outside tutors, or was it just in-school?

All: No.

R: It was a really foreign idea ... like people coming out of school and saying, 'I got a tutor for my 11+'. Even now it's weird ... some people have a tutor for Maths and stuff. But I think we have more than enough support in-school to get where you need to be.

R: There's peer mentoring if you are struggling with your Maths. They have lower sixths and upper sixths who can help you ... in Maths club there is teachers supervising. It's on every Wednesday, and you can go and get help with what you need. And the teachers are all really supportive as well, aren't they?

R: Because the school opens so late at night, there's that opportunity for study because some people don't have the environment at home to study, and I think that's what works for me ... staying in after school to study. [Pupil focus group]

In a focus group of local pupils, it was reported that having peers as mentors and positive peer support can also help with transitions during school:

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R: They also organise for older students to ... talk to 3rd years, or A Level students to talk to GCSE students and go and give their own opinion, because they are on kinda the same level, there's only a few years between them. So, they are talking from their own perspective and giving their own advice. It's just to get everyone to do the best they can, because you don't want anyone making silly mistakes.

R: Even the transition from 4th to 5th year, I mean from 3rd to 4th year, we came in and talked to the fourth years when we were off. They got us to come in and talk to them because it's better for us to give them advice than the teachers ... because you think, 'aw they must just say that to everybody', but we know now. The same stuff was told to us last year by fifth year pupils, and it was really true. [Pupil focus group]

In regard to transitioning towards careers, a grammar school principal spoke at length about the lengths her school goes to expose pupils to as many career options as possible in order to raise aspirations; beginning as soon as they enter the school in Year 8.

One of the big things, all our prize-givers are past pupils who've done well, Judge Smith's hoping to come in in December, she's a past pupil, so we try to get inspirational people for all of the award ceremonies as well. We'll go for someone very young for the wee ones, because they're still old to them anyway, and then obviously we have different careers, streams, and different areas. [Principal]

Pupils at Key Stage 3 in the school were also positive about careers talks beginning early:

I: Are some of you making your GCSE choices fairly soon then? And what kind of help have you had for doing that?

R: We had a wee bit, I'd a meeting with the teachers, the careers teacher, and it was all about Queen's and stuff.

R: They told you like all the different careers you could do, because you only think you could do some, but then the subject helps you in all different parts of that job, so there's more careers for you to think of. [Pupil focus group]

Provision of academic and vocational choice

In support of the goal of achieving success for their pupils, schools serving young people from Whiterock appear to be more creative in recent years in terms of the subjects they are providing.

There are GCSE equivalents, which, when the statistics come out, are a GCSE equivalent and it could be whatever it is, an NVQ Level 1, 2, 3 in knitting or crochet or sport or whatever else it is. [Community worker focus group]

Post-primary curricula within the Ward are characterised by not only the broad range of subjects on offer, but also the range of qualification types. In 2006, the main non-selective school for females from Whiterock was designated a Specialist School for Performing Arts, which included funding of £100 per pupil for four years and an additional support grant to enhance provision in this specialist area. The school also has City and Guilds affiliation, and as such, the range of both academic and vocational subjects on offer is vast. The main non-selective school for males from Whiterock also offers a range of occupational studies (computer-aided design, electrical engineering, construction engineering, and hospitality & catering) in addition to the traditional academic subjects. Learning partnerships are also evident within the Ward, which provide students with access to subjects highlighted within the Entitlement Framework.

All of the post-primary schools in West Belfast offer A Levels or higher ... so that you get people to turn the light on for themselves and say that's what I want, that's where I want to go, this is who I am, this is what I think I need. [EWO]

Low rates of high-absenteeism

The nine schools serving young people from Whiterock had an average high-absenteeism rate (defined as attendance below 85% during a school year) of 13.3% during 2012/13, ranging from 23.7% in Malone College to 2.5% in St Dominic's (see Figure 1.5).
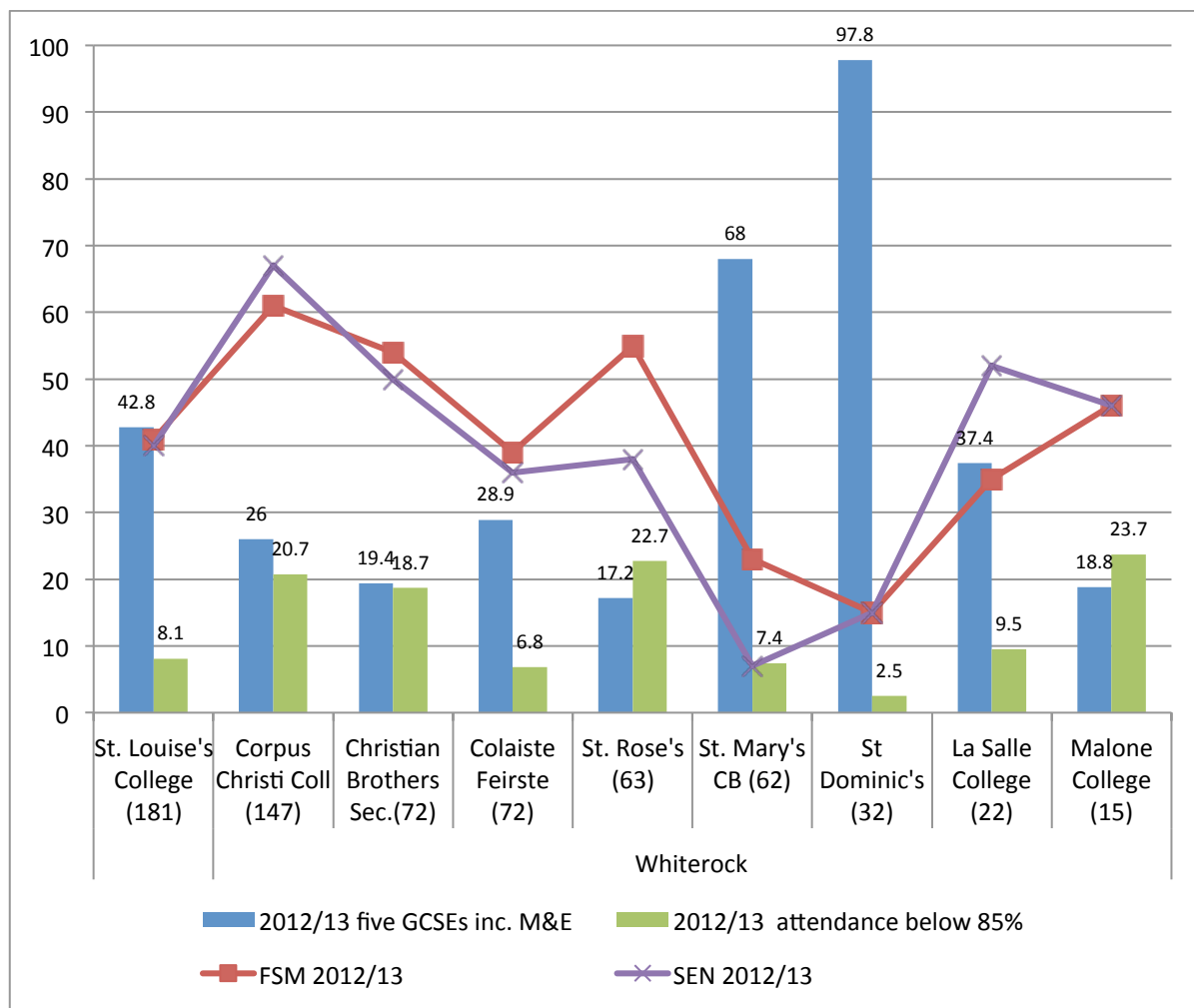
Figure 1.5: GCSE attainment, attendance, and average FSM entitlement rates – Whiterock

This compares favourably to the Protestant Wards in the ILiAD sample. Research suggests that absence tends to be higher in more disadvantaged areas where FSM provision is greatest, which in turn is likely to impact upon children's attainment levels (DENI, 2012). More specifically, Corpus Christi College, St Rose's, and Malone College have similar rates of high absenteeism (20.7%, 22.7%, and 23.7% respectively), but Corpus Christi (the main school serving males from Whiterock) has the highest attainment rate out of the three schools, despite having the highest rate of SEN in its intake and almost as high a rate of FSM as St Rose's. This points to the likelihood that there are other specific factors within Corpus Christi which are having a positive impact on pupils' rates of attainment. The same is true for St Louise's College, Colaiste Fierste, and La Salle College – all have similar rates of high absenteeism (under 10%), and similar rates of FSM entitlement and SEN in their intakes, but St Louise's (the main school serving females from the Ward) has the highest rates of attainment out of the three schools – again, it is likely that there are specific

influences within the school that are impacting positively on pupils' attainment there. St Mary's Christian Brothers school and St Dominic's are the two grammar schools that serve the Ward; St Mary's (an all-boys school) has a rate of high absenteeism that is three times greater than St Dominic's (an all-girls school), as well as a higher rate of FSM entitlement, but there is a 30% difference between the schools in terms of the rate of pupils who attain five GCSEs including Maths and English. The fact that absenteeism rates are significantly higher in the all-boys schools serving Whiterock than the all-girls schools is also perhaps an explanatory factor behind the differential achievement rates of males and females from the Ward.

Monitoring individual progress and use of school data

Related to the sub-theme mentioned above was the presence of systems for monitoring individual student progress in post-primary schools. There was evidence of extensive support mechanisms in place for those not meeting expectations, such as individual teacher support and extra classes. Several schools were keen to emphasise the quality of these interventions and the subsequent improvements in school performance.

When I came in as principal, there's tonnes of data, and we really use data here a lot, and we use benchmarking data and when I said to the senior team, who had been here a lifetime, about using it and giving it to teachers, they said, "Well, you couldn't do that, people might be embarrassed". Well maybe they should be. I was new and I was coming up against a lot of resistance to actually exposing where maybe people had not been doing the best they could for children ... we would have a very tight tracking of pupils ... like a traffic light system; we would track who's in danger of under-performing, and then they are identified to be with the senior leadership or a year head person is appointed to meet them on a weekly basis, they get a written report for every subject, and that would be people who would be in Fifth Year and in Seventh Year ... .Because some of them would look on that as a punishment initially, but then if you try to take them off it, they would say, "Oh please don't", because they actually like the teacher writing something really nice about them once a week and they like that affirmation that they get. [Principal]

Combining an academic definition of success with a pastoral definition

All principals and senior teachers we spoke to in the Ward area emphasised the importance of defining success in both academic and pastoral ways in order to raise pupils' confidence and their aspirations.

Basically, [my view of achievement] would be a school where the needs, both academic and pastoral, are met for every single pupil ... we have a programme in place where we are trying the get the best out of the pupils in the school and make sure that they don't drift and make sure they are supported academically all the way through. But also, pastorally, we have such a strong pastoral team within the school; things like bullying, you know, information on cyber-bullying, drug awareness, alcohol abuse, we also offer counselling in the school for pupils who are having difficulties at home, difficulty in school ... So that all encompasses within that caring Catholic ethos we have; what we try to do is to develop the child holistically. [Senior teacher]

Here there were really lovely relationships and they're still there, but linked to that there are higher expectations. Pastoral [care] is big here. We would have five prize-givings ... We have a non-academics award ceremony because the girls are encouraged to be involved in a lot of competitions because the last few years they've won an awful lot of stuff ... I think it's a very important part of the school because if you haven't got that bit, the marks bit is nonsense ... I said that to the pupils, if you've got integrity and if you've got character, you will achieve or do well irrespective. [Principal]

Seven of the nine schools serving young people from Whiterock are single-sex schools. This driver was linked to the high achievement of females in particular, through the presence of positive role models who raise their aspirations for pursuing careers in areas that would be traditionally male-dominated:

R: And I suppose being in an all-girls school, when you have female teachers ... it's good to look up to them and see them as strong independent women ... you can look at them and say, "I can do what you do; it is achievable". If this were a girls and boys school, there would probably be that diminishment of your confidence because you are looking at the boys thinking, "Oh, you'll probably do better than me".

I: Do you think?

R: Yeah, you know in the STEM subjects, that's like male-dominated, and you're thinking, God, why would they want a woman in there, but in this school, it's not like that ... Science and Maths? "You go do that, you do whatever you want".

R: I wouldn't really think like that. I wouldn't compare myself to a boy. I just think ... we get all these opportunities for engineering scholarships, but I'm not interested in that, but if I was, I don't think I would be intimidated. [Pupil focus group]

1.5 Micro-level drivers of attainment in Whiterock

The Whiterock data identified four micro-level drivers of attainment: resilience and self-motivation of high achievers; parental support, encouragement and high expectations; positive intergenerational influences; and identification with macro-level structures

Resilience and self-motivation of high achievers against the odds
Notwithstanding the negative effects of multiple deprivation on an acute scale, significant numbers of young people in Whiterock appear to do well. It is not easy for pupils at school to achieve when they may fall foul of the admonishments of some peers. Indeed, one respondent acknowledged that '*when a kid tries hard at school',* they tend to get '*a lot of stick from other kids'* who '*sort of slag them off because they were a swot'.* Overall, as discussed in the section above around parental encouragement and expectations, there is a notion that personal motivation and determination are important variables

If a child wants to do well they will ... if their heart's in it they'll do well [Parent]

When I started the school in first year I was in the lower class and just kept on asking teachers for extra and extra help, see when I finally got it, I just progressed and progressed on it and started moving up. There are people that are scared to ask the teachers for help in case they get slagged by all their mates and all. [Pupil focus group]

This idea of self-motivation, often against the odds, is a recurring theme in Whiterock. Sometimes this can manifest within a family where one sibling achieves and others do not.

I was at a house last week and I was talking to the mum about a boy who has not been to school for six months and we're coming to a very difficult stage in regards to how the Board will respond to that. In the same family, there is a girl who has had five University offers and she's at [named school], is a high achiever, is going to go to University, is going to do brilliant, focused on a career possibly in social work or teaching; and, in the same family, someone who has just dropped out. Sometimes the difference is the individual's outlook ... but also sometimes maybe what's happening to that young person. [EWO]

From a gender point of view, an overall pattern can be observed in terms of girls achieving at higher levels than boys. This is consistent with performance data in Whiterock which shows that girls out-perform boys in GCSE results.

Girls generally, the ones that are quicker, brighter, take information in quicker, are more focused, especially the older girls in the family and then there's a maturity on top of that. The younger boys in the family, as well as being immature because they're younger, boys develop slower and mature slower and although they have this adolescent spurt that they zoom up in second year and they're bigger, they're still evolving intellectually ... they're still years behind girls ... they're still growing up. [EWO]

Achievement against the odds doesn't just occur during the school years because examples were forthcoming from adults, who, despite lack of attainment at school, nevertheless went on to achieve their potential later.

My two sisters came to hate school, left school at sixteen with nothing and then both have degrees now in their 40s ... and that's what it took ... it took that length of time for them to get over the negativity of hating school and to gradually get back into adult education again. One just qualified as a midwife and the other works in health promotion, they're both passionate community people and they came into it from that route but at the time, school wasn't right for them or they felt that they failed at school and yet they had got potential, their perception of themselves was different to the reality and I'm sure there's a load of stories like that. [Community worker]

Parental support, encouragement and high expectations
It is clear from the focus groups with parents in Whiterock that many have a strong commitment to education and a belief that children from the area can achieve well. Several parents talked about their hopes for their children to do well and get a good education.

I just really want the kids to get a good education and to achieve whatever they want to achieve in their life as they get older. My wee girl is only P3 now, I've a wee boy in first year so he's just decided that he wants to be a history teacher ... he's only first year so he needs to progress on and do well and hopefully get where he wants to get to. [Parent]

Many parents for Whiterock had no difficulty visualising their child(ren) at University. The general perspective of these parents was that '*the opportunity should be there for them'.*

R: If they're willing to learn and you're willing to put in the effort with them ... I can't see why they wouldn't. I would push mine to get to University.

R: I always say, "Put your head down and do well at school and if you do well you can be anything that you want and have any job you want".

R: We tell our kids their kids every day you can achieve what you want to achieve if you put your mind to it, you can be what you want to be and you can be where you want to be, that's the difference, we believe in our kids and we believe in their future ... and we'll not let nobody put our child down, no matter what.

The origins of this stance appear to be rooted in the oppression experienced by the indigenous Whiterock population historically, as elucidated by the analyses of local parents.

The people of Ballymurphy were put down for so many years and if you continue to let that go on then our kids will never get anywhere, whereas if you give them that belief and you tell them every day that they can be what they want to be and they can achieve what they want

to achieve then they start believing it ... in the past I would never have thought of University for my children and I would've thought 'we don't belong there', but not now. [Parent]

People here realised that they're worth more because they were kept down for years ... we did not realise we were kept down and then when we started to realise, it's like the phoenix rising out of the ashes, everybody realised we are worth it, we can do it. [Parent]

As regards older people who have already left school and moved into adulthood, perhaps as underachievers, there is also the belief that it is never too late for attainment.

There's more support now in trying to enable them to return to education to try to finish off their education. [EWO]

If education is a lifelong process then it's never too late, you can pick it up whenever. [EWO]

The majority of young people going to University are Catholic, that's my understanding of the stats that came out from Queen's [EWO]

A point that comes across strongly is that parents are closely involved in school-life and they see success emerging from a good partnership between pupils, parents and schools. Schools are trying to bring parents in so that they take ownership of the school and the education of their children and to help them have a value on it. It was frequently claimed that many parents come into the school and work alongside their children and this activity relates to things like reading recovery and supporting the teacher to develop skills and confidence where children may be experiencing difficulty. To build capacity in this regard, volunteer parents have undertaken training in things like Essential Skills. It was also pointed out that the idea of parent and child both being simultaneous learners enhances family relationships.

R: It helps me with my confidence then to help my kids then and then the kids enjoy when you're doing things within the school and all too, my wee girl loves the fact that I come here.

R: My daughter and I say to each other come on and we'll do our homework together, so it builds the child's confidence up to help you as well as you helping them ... it helps with the relationship between parents and children because they're communicating ... they're sort of talking to each other about stuff. [Parents focus group]

Significantly, two Primary Schools in Whiterock have a parents' room where parents can drop in at any time of the school day. They can meet for social reasons, to undertake training or to get involved in helping in the classroom and this facility seems to have been very successful in building close bonds between the schools and the community. Initiatives like this, and the general focus on education, has led to parents being quite assertive in relation to their expectations of educational standards and progression for their children.

R: If I see him slipping I'd go straight down to the school like and find out why and see teachers, you know, see why he isn't achieving what he should be achieving in the school or whatever, yeah, I'd be straight down.

R: It's parental involvement ... if you keep your finger on the pulse your child will do well ... it's about communication between the schools and the parents too, to make sure what's going on. [Parents focus group].

Strategies to enhance school home links do not just relate to mothers because there are also 'Dads and Lads' initiatives in operation across the Ward. In a focus group of pupils from one of the local grammar schools, young people also emphasised their parents' high expectations of them in terms of driving them to achieve:

R: It [achievement] depends on the parents' viewpoints. Like, my mummy would say to me, "I want you to do better than I did". Whereas, other parents would just be like, "Oh, if you get what I got, I'll be happy".

R: I think it is really intimidating doing the 11+ as well, with all your peers saying it is really hard and your teacher saying to you that you have to study. Like I know, because my brother went through the GL assessment recently, and he was saying to my mummy, "But what if I get a C or something?' and we're going, "No, you're really smart but you just don't realise it".

R: You need that kind of push from your family and you're not going to get it from your friends in the street ... they're not going to say to you, "Oh, you're really smart, you'll get into a really good grammar school". [Pupil focus group]

Positive intergenerational influences

In terms of bonding social capital, Whiterock appears to be a close-knit community where people try to look out for each other and provide support where they can. It was also clear for the data that extended family networks are a common feature of life in Whiterock.

R: We're tight knit; we're very focused on children within families and schools.

R: There are community workers and youth workers and various activists and semi-political groups in the area and there are resource centres ... and the school is the hook that we hook all our work onto.

R: It's very close knit but in a sense of being generational. I think you'll have a mum living close to her daughters who have got children and you will have families and in that respect, it is close knit ... there's a lot of extended family sort of people who have lived here for generations, they stay in the same area in very close proximity. [Parent focus group]

This family infrastructure has the potential to provide inbuilt support regarding children's school attendance, after-schools care and homework tasks. Pupils felt the same about close social networks, although several mentioned some social divisions that were founded on previous feuds within particular parts of the Ward or current anti-social behaviour:

R: Everyone's very close, and no one looks down on each other, so you are able to interact with your neighbours and I know it's just one example, but every summer we had a street festival. The parents would save up money all year, like £1 a week from each house, to organise like a few bouncy castles and a magician for the kids. And it's just a chance for them to get out. Because you haven't really much to do in the area, apart from playing in the street ... So, it's just the community aspect I think is really good.

R: Like that's it! That's the only downside to living in this area, it's the small houses and that's basically it ... you don't have the space and you don't have, but you have your neighbours and you have your family.

R: Apart from the anti-social people ... you do get people who will really support you ... My mummy said to me ... she loves hearing "oh your daughters are really well mannered", and that makes her so proud. People who live in that area are just so ... nice to each other. That sense of community is definitely the best thing. [Pupil focus group]

These intergenerational influences are perhaps reflective of the settled demographic patterns within Whiterock. The Ward has a settled residential structure (assuming that a rising rented sector is indicative of a fluid / transient / unsettled residential structure) in that only 8.9% of houses in Whiterock are private rentals compared with 21.1% in Duncairn and 28.3% in Woodstock.

Interviews and school prospectuses from the Ward revealed many psycho-social connections between schools and wider notions of 'community', whether that is a broader geographic community or the community of the Catholic Church. A senior teacher from an Irish Medium school was keen to emphasise how the link between their school's vision and the community vision had led to increased school engagement amongst local families.

We are trying to build the whole pupil and we are trying to ... use the pupils to transform their areas; develop their areas. So, for example, we would have a lot pupils coming in through the school, and through Irish Medium education, that would be community leaders. There are plenty of community infrastructures in the Upper Springfield. I don't think it is rivalled anywhere in the Six Counties ... we are trying to tap into this whole notion of build from the bottom up. Whiterock and the Wards in and around the Upper Springfield are some of the most deprived ... we don't want them to be the most deprived in the next 5 to 10 years; we want to come away from that. We want to change it because if we don't change it there is no point in the school being here ... The Irish language ... gives the children an identity and the parents would be more stakeholders in the school. [Senior teacher]

The motto of one of the main non-selective schools serving the Ward is 'Excellence through Caring', and the official school welcome alludes to the level of community involvement and leadership which is expected of the pupils:

We work tirelessly to ensure that each student is valued and appreciates his or her own worth as a person and respects others. Our young people are nurtured in a supportive, caring faith community which develops their emotional intelligence as well as the moral and spiritual values essential to growth as a young Catholic and leader in society ... The notion of service is a cornerstone of our Vincentian school.

Identification with the Catholic ethos was also regarded as a key driver of aspiration for one principal who grew up in the area. This principal was keen to emphasise that Catholic schools do not have the 'monopoly' on ethos, but that Catholic education is based in respect for oneself and others.

Obviously, the Catholic ethos is a big part of the school here and where it manifests itself would be in fundraising and thinking of other people. Obviously, we have the rituals of Mass and beginning of the year ... I just came from behind the school here, and I thought I'd died and gone to heaven when I came in here. So, all of that probably makes the pupils feel something special ... I was shocked when I came here that, number one, the nuns didn't slap me, they didn't strap or whatever, and also that they always treated you ... it was aspirational, there was a way of treating people that spoke to them respectfully and expected to be spoken back to respectfully. [Principal]

1.6 Macro-level inhibitors of attainment in Whiterock

Five macro-level inhibitors of attainment were identified in the Whiterock data: the felt effects of academic selection; pressures on SEN and EWO support and insufficient resources; lack of political representation and feelings of disempowerment to participate in local political structures; school closures and amalgamations; and poor physical environment.

Academic selection
Several teachers and principals in the Ward expressed an opposition to academic selection. This was particularly the case with in schools with a comprehensive structure; they are proud

of this system and the diversity of its student population. Whilst they acknowledged that it brings challenges, they feel it is a better model. One of the key issues raised by principals and senior teachers in opposition to academic selection was the impact that 'failure' had on students' confidence in their learning, and the time it took to rebuild that self-esteem and confidence.

I would have been fairly academic, I finished here with GCSEs ... but I also have a brother who wouldn't have had the same academic ability as me, but he still succeeded here. I personally think that if he had of went to a secondary school where ... you're labelled at 11, everybody is failures, I know for a fact he wouldn't have done well. [Senior teacher]

There is an educational programme required to inform parents that sometimes grammar school is not the best school for them ... But a lot of children will come thinking, and it takes us quite a while to hammer home, that you are not second best because you didn't get the 11+ or because you didn't go for a selection test and didn't get into a grammar school. A lot of children come with that belief ... now it is diminishing and we get them in here, it takes me two or three years to say you are as good as any other pupil in any other school now believe in yourself. [Principal]

Related to the issue of being labelled a failure, respondents spoke about the negative impact of streaming in schools, even where this is not overtly carried out. The following extracts from a focus group of community workers were indicative of wider views:

R: If you were in 1A you were in the top stream, if you were in 1D you were in the bottom stream ... then it's a self-fulfilling prophesy ... .and kids not only get labelled but also label one another.

R: So, there's this kind of judgement call going on among young people themselves all the time and they'll self-identify maybe with being academic or non-academic and that can then limit somebody. [Community workers focus group]

One principal who was supportive of the principle of academic selection stated that she believed all schools in the area were 'good'; and that there was a perception that the same type of education was offered in all of them. Therefore, there was no need to push pupils into going to grammar school and many pupils were not entered for the test.

At the end of 2008 ... we only had one girl who came from [named primary school]. Maybe that was because our school wasn't doing all that brilliantly ... they couldn't see maybe a reason to do at Eleven Plus because we didn't look on the outside terribly different ... from [named school]. Now, we are very distinctive in our curriculum provision ... But I think there was a perception ... when you don't have to do the Eleven Plus and you can go into a comprehensive school, would you bother to go to a grammar school? [Principal]

This same principal was keen to emphasise her belief that the grammar system provided upward mobility for young people from the Ward. However, it could be argued that this system provides upward mobility for only a few from the area, if many parents (or primary schools) in the Ward do not have a desire for their children to sit the transfer test.

I'm from West Belfast and from a deprived background and to me it gives a unique opportunity for upward mobility for children who live in areas of deprivation because ... if the motivation for the majority of people in an area is not to go an academic way, then those children could get lost, the ones that are very bright could get lost. [Principal]

Pupils in a grammar school also spoke of the perception of the transfer tests amongst people from the Ward. They believed that many people don't sit the test, not because they

think there is not much difference between selective and non-selective schools in the area, but because they believed it would be too difficult for them or they aren't pushed enough.

R: Yeah, it is built up. People would say to you, "Oh you're doing [the test], I could never do that". And you're like, "But you've never tried". People just think they are not good enough.

R: Only six of us out of sixty done it [the transfer test], it isn't really pushed ... it's not compulsory ... parents don't push them ... it's just up to the child more now.

R: Yeah, because it's so intimidating going to [named grammar] when [named secondary] is around the corner, it just seems easier ... it's easier to get into as well. [Pupil focus group]

One principal believed that there were *'better ways'* to do selection, because she had observed many bright children in the Ward who did not get the grades to enter grammar school losing out on an academic education that they would be more suited to.

I think that there are streams being pursued to find a different way for children to enter into post-primary education and I would agree wholeheartedly with that, particularly when I look at the scores and if I think of children who maybe get a B1 and last year we weren't able to take all of our B1's. [Principal]

One of the disadvantages mentioned by pupils in a focus group in terms of the separation of young people from the Ward into grammar and non-grammar schools was the social cleavages that it creates between young people.

R: It's like my cousins, if all of their brothers and sisters go to the school, they just go to the same one.

R: You could try to get into a better school but ... it's better to have people you know in it.

R: Like no one else goes to [named school] apart from us

R: A lot of people from our [primary] school and in our year went to [named grammar]

I: How do you feel about that? Do you talk with them a lot about [named grammar]?

R: We haven't talked about them in like a year.

R: You see them about but you never really properly talk to them. [Pupil focus group]

The grammar school pupils who took part in the focus groups were very supportive of academic selection and felt that they were receiving the best education possible; and not just the best education available in the Ward. Some were of the impression that their grammar school was the only 'real' grammar school in the area, and that males from the Ward just 'didn't care' which school they went to anyway, indicating gender divisions in the way that education is perceived and valued in the Ward. This, it was further claimed by these female grammar pupils could be another explanation for the gender differentials in achievement.

R: The wee boys just don't care.

R: They all go to [named secondary] because that's the closest place to them.

R: I remember ... my wee brother's teacher just said they [boys] don't really care; they don't really want to work because they know they can just go to [named secondary].

R: Yeah, they just couldn't be annoyed. [Pupil focus group]

Older female pupils in the Ward also felt that boys who were capable but were not into sports were not 'pushed' at the male grammar school, which disadvantaged them:

R: I know my cousin goes to [named grammar school], he's a first year I think, and he's all into his sports. And because of that, he would be pushed in the school because he's into his sports, but if you are a boy attending [our school] and you don't do anything with sports, you wouldn't be pushed as much. You would be overlooked a bit, I think.

R: Yeah, like in [our school] we're at an advantage because they nurture everything, you know. If you are good at sport, "We'll help you". If you are good at music, if you are good educationally, no matter what it is; whereas, those schools might just say, "Get your grades, or we don't care". [Pupil focus group]

As mentioned before, a disappointing transfer test result can lead to a lack of confidence amongst young people in the Ward, as evidenced in a pupil focus group:

R: Those who said, "aw, I didn't even try" got a B1 or B2 but didn't think they could cope with [named grammar school] and I would be compared to them all the time

R: The three girls in my year who got As in their 11+, I went to [named grammar school]; another girl went to [named grammar school] because she lived close to there, and another went to [named secondary school] because she thought she wasn't good enough to go to [named grammar school]. [Pupil focus group]

Pressures on SEN and EWO support and insufficient resources
In the West Belfast area plan (April 2013), the Whiterock Ward had a school population of 1,282 young people. According to the school census 2011/12, of this figure 576 young people have been statemented or are in receipt of additional educational support. This represents a massive number of children who have complex needs. The BELB has got 3,000 children statemented at the moment. On top of this, Youth Justice did research recently (2013) where they found that 50% of the young people involved with Youth Justice had undiagnosed speech and language problems. This potential under-diagnosis of special needs is another inhibitor of educational achievement and it would appear that the issue of a lack of resources (discussed also below) is hampering some pupils' access to assessment.

There's a failure in the education system to identify early [Key Stage 2 or even Key Stage 1] learning issues, emotional issues and specific ASD issues or even ADHD running up into P7 ... they don't identify and they don't respond early enough and in particular, the SENCOs in the school, the learning co-ordinators are limited in what they can do, psychology is limited in what they can do, referral to psychiatry, referral to other associated health professionals, there's a six month waiting list and so there's a bottle neck of resources and a lot of children and young people fall through the net. They then go to Key Stage 3 in secondary and they survive the first year because the school is novel and they're finding their feet but then in second year of secondary, that's Year 9, an awful lot of pupils, especially in the boys, they drop out. [EWO]

If you start primary school with maybe a mild speech and language problem ... maybe parents aren't able to keep bringing you to speech therapy or ... for whatever reason it doesn't get resolved, that's going to make you less likely to achieve good literacy levels ... so how on earth are you supposed to be learning French. [Community worker]

EWOs, especially those who have worked in the area for a long time, have observed that there is a clear cyclical, intergenerational dimension to special needs within families.

Some of us are dealing with the same families year after year ... it does seem to be the children of the children who are coming back up ... and then it's cousins and all their families ... it's exponential I suppose. [EWO]

When you look at the special schools and when you look at the parents who attend, a lot of the parents went to the same special schools that their children now attend ... so it's going through the generations, whether it's hereditary or life circumstances or a mixture of both I don't know. [EWO]

All of this suggests that much more needs to be done to interrupt recurring family patterns of distress and to ensure that children and young people are given the best chance to succeed educationally, as a result of proper assessments and supportive interventions. The theme of insufficient resources was also recurrent in the data. However, EWOs in a focus group reported being challenged by caseloads of forty, sometimes higher, depending on need:

R: There's always referrals coming in, we basically need more EWOs, we need less of a caseload to be able to deliver the kind of quality service that we could ... we're pretty much stretched to the limit. We would love to be able to go in and say, have a caseload of 25 and ... offer systemic therapy to a number of families.

R: Why not have a team of systemic therapists in the service and focus that team on the families in the most deprived areas and really build resilience and tackle the issues that are systemic and coming through the trauma?

R: It's all down to funding and resources ... there's redundancies left, right and centre, teachers aren't being replaced so the teachers in there are getting smaller and they have more responsibilities and they are pushed to the max and they are exhausted.

Lack of political representation and feelings of disempowerment to participate in local political structures

One young person voiced her frustration that while lots of money has been put into the provision of services for young people in the area, young people's needs are not listened to; and another young person said that what is needed for young people to help them achieve are more training and volunteer opportunities:

R: There's nothing for us ... they say, "What do you want?'; We'll build you a club, we'll build this and that" but it doesn't help ... it's not that we need materialistic things - they need to go deeper than that ... working with the people, talking to them and listening ... There are youth clubs in our area, but people who are into drugs and stuff, they're not going to say, "Oh, I'll give it a miss tonight, I'm going to go to the youth club! Sorry lads, I've got somewhere else to be".

R: Like, even training opportunities now, if people have volunteered and stuff to get it on their CVs, get themselves a stable job, and get themselves set up for life, then they are going to say, well this is ten times better than what I was doing. [Pupil focus group]

Another pupil gave the example where young people needed to be involved in a social network in order to get involved in other networks of support:

R: The Upper Springfield Development Trust ... I think they are really good, but there isn't a lot of them. I think it is still because people are worried about anti-social behaviour, and would still look down upon people. That's excluding people who aren't anti-social, who do care about their education, who want somewhere to go to socialise with their friends, and not cause a scene, smashing windows or whatever. [Pupil focus group]

These problems were related to a more general sense that the needs of the Ward as a whole have not been considered by those in power, and only lip service is paid:

R: [Politicians] don't have a clue about the areas.

R: How can they help if they haven't even witnessed it first hand?

R: Exactly. It's exactly like that. The area isn't involved at all. [Pupil focus group]

School closures and amalgamations

Whiterock, like many other areas, has experience of school closures and amalgamations, most recently the merging of St. Bernadette's and St. Aidan's primary schools into a new co-educational school on the former St. Aidan's site. Often, the rationalisation of schools creates knock-on effects for parents and pupils – and for boys in particular:

Previously in Whiterock there was a school called St. Thomas' on the Whiterock Road and then they built St. Peter's and St. Paul's, and they renamed it Corpus Christi College but it's basically ... the four schools were amalgamated into one. [Community worker]

If you've got a situation where a boy falls out with [named school] or for a variety of reasons will not go back to that school, there is nowhere else in the area for him to go. You can go up to [named school] but that's technically out of the area; it requires travel ... there are no other options. The girls are different slightly in that if something doesn't work at [one named school, another named school] is less than a mile away and so it's still there. [EWO]

Poor physical environment

Principals and pupils talked about the negative aspects of the local physical environment, and how these issues could exacerbate physical and mental health problems in the Ward.

If you drive up to Poleglass, you see it looks very much greener ... There are a lot of trees here ... But in terms of green spaces ... none that I can think of. Nowhere really for them to play ... this is a very built-up area. Very narrow streets. They have a leisure centre, but ... playing outside, there is very little opportunity to do that safely. [Principal]

Three other general macro-level inhibitors to achievement emerged from the Whiterock data. The first of these was the recession and the resultant sense of despair, emigration, and a lack of aspiration amongst young people.

There are no jobs ... why would you bother knocking your melt in for something that's maybe never going to come? [Pupil, AEP]

Monetary difficulties associated with the transfer tests at the end of primary school, the prohibitive cost of third level education, and the unreliability of the Free School Meal (FSM) indicator (in relation to the funding that schools receive) were also highlighted:

If you're from a working-class background, I mean, let's face it, middle class people nearly all get their children tutored ... if I'm on the breadline and I'm wondering how I'll put food on the table, number one, where would I find the money? [Parent]

It is £9,000 a year for Cambridge and Oxford, that's just mind-blowing. [Pupil]

The FSM indicator hides the financial difficulties faced by "working poor" families. [Principal]

1.7 Meso-level inhibitors of attainment in Whiterock

The Whiterock data identified three meso-level inhibitors of attainment around: inappropriate curriculum and school structure; schools and other agencies working in silos; and deficits in teaching i.e. disinterested teachers and teachers struggling to manage classes.

Inappropriate curricula and school structure
Despite the wide provision of subjects and qualifications in Whiterock, it appears that one of the obstacles to some young people is the national curriculum because a lot of children are just not suited to it. There is also a feeling that schools are too inflexible and that a different approach is needed for pupils who cannot cope with GCSEs and/or those who cannot sit at a desk all day long, who cannot focus or cannot cope with the rigid discipline of a school.

There are a lot of children who very much need to be doing much more vocational experiential hands-on work and getting something from that. [EWO]

Having to wear a tie, having to walk on the left, yes sir, no sir, a lot of boys cannot do that, they need more informal, inflexible education. [EWO]

The views of these EWOs were supported in focus groups of young people from Whiterock.

R: My favourite subject is Learning for Life and Work ... my teacher is dead-on because he gives you free time, you get to go outside, have a break ... he brings you outside, you have a break, a couple of minutes, go back in and get stuck into the work and get stuff done.

R: If you had a double period, one of the periods you'd like just get all the messing out of you and then the second one you did work, I think that would be good. Some teachers in my school do it like and it makes it easier for you to do it. Sometimes as soon as you go in, you take your books out and get stuck clean in, it's different like they explain it to you and then you do a bit and then they start reading again. But the good thing is when you do loads of work in one class the time flies...when you're enjoying the class ... the time flies.

R: It's like the hours ... the school day is too long ... I think you should finish about 1pm because see after lunch time that's when you start to go nuts. [Youth focus groups]

These comments reflect the need for schools to accommodate the limited concentration span of some pupils, perhaps by changing not only the subjects they offer, but the very structure and format of the school day. There are also issues about the need for the content of subjects to be presented in ways that will engage pupils, particularly around Maths.

The majority of my caseload … has problems with Maths. Now I have a tutor nearly out to every other one to try to help them with Maths, Maths is a massive problem ... there needs to be a complete revamp of the Maths curriculum because most kids in all these areas, when you include English and Maths you could half all of those GCSE attainment percentages. So, there is a major issue about how Maths isn't connecting with kids ... the focus is on GCSE Maths, they really maybe have to look at Essential Skills Maths ... so you can continue to achieve but in a different way. [EWO]

This notion of achievement in other ways raises the question as to whether GCSEs should be the yardstick by which everything is measured. Whilst academic GCSEs and A Levels may fit well with able, motivated grammar school pupils, consideration needs to be given to whether or not they are applicable to at least some secondary school pupils. These issues were addressed in a focus group of Educational Welfare Officers [EWOS]:

R: We're turning out graduates [but] society needs people who can ... build, people who can plumb, people who can do all sorts, we are constantly pushing for more and more qualifications, for people to achieve this and achieve that, now that's all great but we do need to ... marry that with some of the practical aspects for people who are not academically geared but who could do other things.

R: We had a government that decided that we need everybody to be doing the same at school and we can't because we have a diverse population. [We need to] give somebody something that they're going to actually be able to utilise; to do something with in their lives.

R: I'm not saying that people shouldn't go to University, far from it but there needs to be something ... rather than be labelled a failure. [EWO focus group]

Schools and other agencies working in silos

Comments made in the data collection activity suggest that schools have always been very insular and that more could be done on terms of inter-school cooperation and liaison with families and also the wider community. Although Whiterock does not appear to be the worst offender in this regard, by any means, school autonomy may lead to schools seeing themselves *'as little independent fiefdoms'.*

It's even hard for the Boards and the Department to influence, to a large extent, how school dynamics work. So, what you find is innovators here and there who create a good atmosphere within a school ... a teacher who is very innovative and sees things holistically and therefore makes a difference for some of those young people. [Community worker]

This involves inter-alia, accessing external resources in terms of service and expertise out with the school. Presently, it can be argued, from the data that more could be done to secure a joined-up approach and partnership working between schools and services in the Ward.

In terms of statutory support, I don't think it's there, I can't see any within this area that would be supporting that. Ok, they'll fund certain projects; maybe they see that as their involvement as a statutory provider because they're funding a project that's then looking at tackling some of the issues but there's no joined-up strategy. [Community worker]

One of the frustrations which came through the data is that there is no lack of rhetoric within statutory bodies about the importance and value of inter-agency working but somehow things get lost when it comes to delivery.

Your average worker in the statutory sector probably doesn't think in terms of outcomes yet, they probably still think in terms of process and activity rather than, "What am I actually achieving here? What does the evidence tell me and how do I integrate the evidence into my practice?" The issue isn't really the individual practitioners on the ground, social workers, EWOs, it's more strategic than that ... it involves a bit of a rethink. [Community worker]

What you get is ... at the highest level everybody's agreed around integrated working, at face-to-face level educational welfare officers, social workers will phone up and you'll have contact that way ... but somewhere in the middle of integrating the services at that middle management level, that's where it disappears. [Community worker]

An Education Welfare Officer from the Ward argued that silo working not only minimises the potential benefits for young people but also can lead to duplication and confusion.

A lot of troubled young people will have probably a social worker, they will have an educational welfare worker, they will probably be taken up a significant percentage of a pastoral care team within the school's time, they're probably involved in a community project,

and eventually will be involved in probation and youth justice and all those things and at any one time there could be two or three people around those young people ... we need to make sure that we're not duplicating and you're not covering the same bases and you're not overloading young people with information and inputs. [EWO]

The issue does not relate solely to statutory bodies though because there are various community-based programmes and projects that schools could be tapping into but aren't. There is evidence of good work being done by community sector groups in Whiterock but there is also a feeling that barriers exist when it comes to gaining access to schools in the area to provide extra support for pupils.

We have a lot to offer schools in terms of things like basic skills, personal development stuff, problem solving, resilience, being able to deal with teachers ... a lot of the schools have raised their game but a lot of them are still not looking really outside the school gates to see is there a provider in the community. The energy for that joined-up approach is coming from people like ourselves who are working in the community sector ... the drive doesn't seem to be coming the opposite way. [Community worker focus group]

While one principal emphasised the positive impact of inter-agency working, she also cautioned that a lack of joined up approaches (and funding) in tackling issues within the Ward had created a sense of unease regarding how this support could be sustained.

I'd like to keep the Family Support worker who works with me. Our funding runs out next year. All these initiatives are good, but if you put the money in and then you take them away, where are you? We need to find a way to sustain it, that's the panic now. We can all see what we can achieve when we all work together. But if the funding starts falling apart ... it causes that friction and people don't work as well together. [Principal]

Deficits in teaching – disinterested teachers and teachers struggling to manage classes
Whilst there are many young people in Whiterock who benefit from and enjoy school, there are others for whom it is not a rewarding experience. In focus groups with young people in this latter category, when asked what they thought about school and their teachers, a barrage of immediate responses included the following typical statements:

R: I hate it. See some teachers in school ... are sad as fuck.

R: I didn't get on with one teacher ... I didn't. I just couldn't ... they were all dicks.

R: Some teachers do my head in. [Youth focus groups]

There is an apparent disconnection or alienation between some pupils and some teachers. Young people interviewed felt that teachers were unapproachable and unsupportive, for example, when needing something explained.

If I were to ask them they start shouting at me why you don't understand it like everyone else, you should be listening more. [Youth focus group]

Attempting to drill down into this negativity further, it is possible to identify a number of sub-themes as inhibitors to learning and attainment:

- *Absence of rapport with pupils*
There appears to be an absence of rapport and connectedness between some teachers and pupils in the experience of young people attending the focus groups. Several young people in this focus group claimed that some teachers were difficult to relate to.

Then you get the ones that think they're better than everybody ... think they are something ... think they're really important ... and better than you. [Youth focus group]

- *Blaming behaviours by teachers*

Some teachers, it was further claimed, appear to single-out pupils for negative attention and to use them as an example of failure:

If they're saying your coursework is bad they'll point to me and say, 'it's like his coursework' or say 'his coursework is horrendous. [Youth focus group]

- *Teacher communication*

It was also suggested that some teachers often end up shouting at individual pupils and classes as a form of communication.

Some teachers are very annoying ... they just shout at you ... everyone else will do something and they'll shout at you. If the teachers shout at you you're not going to enjoy the subject, you're not going to listen. [Youth focus group]

- *Pupils feeling undermined*

Pupils' self-confidence as learners may be quite fragile and easily damaged, regardless of any bravado or displays of disinterest. Evidence from within the ILiAD study to date suggests that, even those who have gone on to achieve strongly in educational terms, often feel their confidence pricked when thinking back to negative and undermining comments they received from teachers at school.

No matter what you achieve it's like you sort of feel a bit wick because you're being compared to somebody who has done better ... it makes me really annoyed … it makes you feel like you're thick. [Youth focus group]

- *Gender bias*

Some male pupils in focus groups felt that girls are often treated more favourably than boys.

I go to a mixed school. The teachers love the wee girls and they hate the wee lads because apparently the wee girls are all wee angels. [Youth focus group]

- *Pupils under pressure*

The teachers put too much pressure on you … every class you go into ... your GCSEs and they say 'you're not going to get them if you keep messing around. [Youth focus group]

It was also evident that some teachers in secondary schools struggle to cope with the demands of disruptive pupil behaviours and they probably need more help and support, perhaps from classroom assistants, if resources enabled this to happen. Rather than try to manage the behaviour of some pupils it would appear that they are permitted to wander within the school.

R: We have the ghost class in our school ... there's a group of kids that just don't go to class and we're just allowed to walk about the school ... that's us.

R: If the teacher is trying to explain something and people are talking over her or talking over him and they can't get explaining properly, then there's people sitting at the back of the class who can't hear her because she's shouting at other people and this is setting the other people back on their work who want to pass the subject. This happens in 8 out of 10 classes.

R: They focus on the higher classes more than the lower classes where the messing goes on and these messers spoil it for everybody ... because there's people in our class who aren't capable of going up into a higher class and working at their pace; they're in that class to try and get their education and try to get their C but there's people there just holding them back. There aren't enough teachers in the school to deal with it ... extra help with a classroom assistant or something would help them out a lot. [Youth focus group]

1.8 Micro-level inhibitors of attainment in Whiterock

Five micro-level inhibitors of attainment were identified around: class division, anti-social behaviour and the creation of 'no-go' areas; mental health issues and adverse circumstances at home; young people's lack of confidence and internalising a sense of being a 'problem' or failure; poor parental support & skills (particularly low literacy); and intergenerational lack of aspiration / low expectations of school and education.

Class division, anti-social behaviour and the creation of 'no-go' areas
Many young people in the focus groups reported feeling unsafe in the Ward and that this was a major issue for them. However, in juxtaposition with the spatial mobility restrictions that young people from other ILiAD Wards experience, this is not as a result of interface violence or interface areas, but because of anti-social behaviour. Both younger and older pupils gave many examples of the types of anti-social behaviour that occurred in the area:

R: The graveyard ... that's where everyone goes to drink.

R: Not being allowed in it more makes you wanna go in it.

R: Yeah, and there's like kids younger than us drink and stuff, they're 11 and 12.

I: Would that make you feel sometimes that you can't walk around at night?

R: I'm scared to.

R: There's all like, motorbikes ... people throw eggs out the windows sometimes, like car stealing ... you hear about punishment shootings sometimes.

R: Usually people who sell drugs.

R: I personally don't like my area. Like, I want to move out of it whenever I'm older. It's just because recently in my family, there was an issue ... a break-in and it has really made me feel like not secure, you know what I mean? [Pupil focus groups]

Young people perceived social divisions and anti-social behaviour at the interface between permanent residents' housing and transient residents' housing:

I know in my street, like the top half of the street would mostly be permanent residents and people who have lived there for years who own their houses, whereas when you get to the bottom of the street ... there is more anti-social behaviour, therefore people don't want to live at the bottom of the street. And it's all people renting houses so they're not there for long ... you don't know your neighbours. [Pupil focus group]

These young people also talked about moving away from the area to get away from the dangers, but also because of a perceived decrease in community cohesion.

R: You want to be away from the dangers of it ... I want to live somewhere in a different country, well away; preferably America ... as far away as possible.
R: Like my mummy, she's lived in her street all her life, and my granny lived there, so we live there now ... all the neighbours, they're all the same from when my mummy was a child ... But now, there's a lot of new people moving and ... there isn't really much community ... there is in some places ... yes, but not much. [Pupil focus group]

These pupils felt that boys were particularly at risk from anti-social behaviour in the Ward:

R: Like, most boys ... are wasting their lives ... I think it's down to the parents as well, because ... they just have no morals ... they just haven't been brought up ... I know it's easy to fall in with a crowd, but it's hard to imagine how you could go that much off the rails.

R: But it's also their friends as well ... fellas would be more likely to tease each other, "You're studying?! What are you at! Come on out". Whereas girls wouldn't tease ... I know I'm generalising a bit, but I suppose that's the way it is most of the time. Fellas would be more likely to mess about; fellas would be more likely to have a laugh. [Pupil focus group]

Some young people talked about a more general class divide between young people in the area, evidenced by where they would and wouldn't socialise:

R: [Named school] ... it's really cheeky. I went for a couple of weeks and I hated it.

R: I don't know anybody round where I live ... I do know people but I just don't talk to them.

R: Usually they're not very nice in the area, no offence. [Pupil focus group]

Mental health issues and adverse circumstances at home
It was clear from the data that many respondents identified mental health issues as obstacles to attainment, and that since the Troubles have officially ended, these issues have come more to the fore. Various aspects of mental illness were mentioned in a focus group of EWOs, such as anxiety, depression, phobias, and suicide:

R: The conflict in the community years ago covered up an awful lot of things when the Troubles were on, and particularly with regard to suicide and mental health that have come to the fore, whereas many years ago when all the Troubles were going on a lot of that was covered over, people didn't talk about it or were unaware of it.

R: It was said once the Troubles were over that the amount of mental health you would see would be phenomenal and that's what we're seeing ... post-traumatic stress disorder ... because while it was ongoing ... there was a focus on the struggle ... and now whenever there is peace then all that bubbles up to the surface.

R: The paramilitaries had got a hand on the situation, the drugs situation was kept hidden ... whereas now it is everywhere. It's mainly teenagers but it has been kind of drifting down to primary schools now ... families have talked to me about a heroin problem ... but I would say it would be more cannabis that would be used. [EWO focus group]

Because these issues are more prevalent now, there are knock-on effects for families, young people and, in turn, educational achievement levels. Moreover, many of the mental health problems of parents can be traced to intergenerational trauma:

R: This week we couldn't understand why a pupil wouldn't go to school and we'd been working with this pupil, this lad two or three months and it recently came to light that the pupil's mother committed suicide when the boy was very young. [EWO focus group]

One principal also suggested that while close social networks were a positive of the Ward, it also created problems in that tragedies rippled throughout the community. Similarly, some parents felt that instances of these problems had escalated in recent years; that the situation was worse now than when living through the Troubles; and that young people are increasingly insular and withdrawn.

When there is falling out, it tends to have a bigger impact. And also, because it is a close community, a suicide or a death will have a much bigger impact as well. [Principal]

I feel sorry for any parent that is rearing a family nowadays, really it is scary. I feel sorry for my grandkids growing up in this day and age ... drugs, alcohol, violence, they might get stabbed and it's just crazy now ... when I think about the Troubles ... it was almost like safer; it's more risky now for kids; I'd rather have them growing up in the Troubles than today ... and maybe actually because of the Troubles maybe the community felt very close-knit ... everybody looked after each other. [Parent]

They won't leave their bedrooms ... so it's not just about disengaging from education ... it's disengaging from everything ... the social aspect, retreating into themselves, kind of thing ... they're becoming reclusive. [Parent]

One principal also pointed to the poor physical health of parents and young people.

The life expectancy here for males is something shocking like 52 or 54. Nearly all parents would smoke ... We are also promoting activity; we would find more and more that the children are becoming very inactive ... they are only on their computers. [Principal]

Unsurprisingly, given Whiterock's deprivation rank, poverty came up as an issue that people have to cope with and one that can have a detrimental impact on children's education.

If you don't have the basics, if you don't have food, warmth and shelter then you're not going to progress and go up the triangle to be the best that you can be. [EWO]

Young people's lack of confidence and internalising a sense of being a 'problem' or failure
Depressingly, some young people in the focus groups held very negative perceptions of themselves, their future and their neighbourhood. A kind of reckless hopelessness was very much in evidence. This is not to say that all young people in Whiterock feel this way and it should be reiterated that two of the focus groups that took place comprised particularly disaffected young people. However, they are not the only ones in Whiterock and so it is important to acknowledge that there is a percentage of the youth of the area who are switched off when it comes to a positive (post-school) outlook.

R: I'm hitting the bru.

R: Me too probably because we're bums.

R: I don't listen to no one ... to be honest … I don't care.

R: I go to Tech doing Essential Skills ... English, Maths, ICT ... but I just sit on Facebook and then I ... got fucked out ... because I was just hanging out the top of the window soaking people below and then I went to my work placement; it got to 11am and I walked out, I couldn't stay in it. [Youth focus group]

Some young people had particularly negative, unambiguous and graphic descriptors for the Whiterock area where they live.

R: Fuckin shite, there you go, sorry but it is. It's not a good place to be, there's nothing for kids to do ... that's why they end up drug addicts and all ... drugs are starting to get more popular so younger generations can do it ... like all kids are getting into drugs ... every drug on the market, I'm not joking ... anything and everything.

R: Like if you want an honest opinion, being completely serious ... it's a shithole. See the streets, they're disgusting; they're terrible ... you can't turn the corner without it smelling. [Youth focus group]

On some occasions, young people's disaffection appeared to stem from a sense of being judged negatively, as evidenced by comments like the following:

There's nothing to do for like us, like teenagers, there's nothing to do. There's a park and it's always closed ... Then you stand at a corner and then you be sitting there in a crowd and you're told to "go get to fuck", by all the wee old people and all. [Youth focus group]

There's nowhere for us to go so because we have to stand at street corners it's giving us a bad name ... you're made out to be hoodlums ... just because you're standing there in a group ... aye, like scumbags or something. [Youth focus group]

Some pupils from a grammar school reiterated this last point, reporting that this negative labelling sometimes resulted in people becoming involved in anti-social behaviour:

R: Me personally, I would go out on the street, but I'm not participating in any anti-social behaviour or anything, but there is that image that I am, you know what I mean?

R: Like, it's a bad image ... people immediately jump to conclusions that you are up to something, if you are standing talking to your friends on the street.

R: I think the area makes people go, "don't go near them, they're hoods, they're into drugs".

R: And people say, "Well if people think I am bad, well why shouldn't I be bad?"

R: And as soon as people hear your accent they are like: "Oh, she sounds very uncouth" ... people hear you". It's like: "Oh, she's not intelligent, because she hasn't got a proper accent". And I am like: "No ... you're wrong. Don't judge me". [Pupil focus group]

Some grammar school pupils also reported having a lack of confidence because of the area they grew up in, which continued throughout their school career and impacted upon their post-school choices:

R: There are very few people that actually go to Oxford or Cambridge.

R: It's not even the grades, I don't think, I think it's just your confidence.

R: I think people from Belfast are very like home birds. They don't like to go too far.

R: If you stay here everyone's from Belfast and no one's going to judge you, whereas if you go over there, they're going to be like: "Oh, you're from Belfast?" [Pupil focus group]

Poor parental support and skills (particularly low literacy)

Parents often try to do their best for their child(ren) but apparently there are situations where poor parental support and low-level skills interfere with the child's progression at school. Some family homes, it was claimed, are *'chaotic'* and may be characterised by *'instability'.* It is clear that some parents in the Ward (often on account of their own unhappy/unsuccessful time at school) are limited in terms of their capacity to support their children's education by, for example, helping with/over-seeing homework or encouraging reading or numeracy development in the home.

All of the non-selective school principals interviewed reported that they were working to address the issue of low levels of literacy and numeracy skills. However, one principal felt that it was becoming increasingly more difficult to do this; and another senior teacher outlined the impact that low literacy had on pupils' attainment in other areas, and the ways in which the school was trying to address the issue.

A lot of our young people don't read books, they read texts; they communicate through the internet and smart phones, whatever it might be. A lot of the parents have had negative experiences of school, and as such, don't, or haven't got the skills themselves to enhance the reading capacity of their children. [Principal]

I mean if their English is poor and their literacy is poor that will impact on how they do in history, geography, languages, etc. [Senior teacher]

EWOs in a focus group: talked about survey work they had done in relation to pupils not going to school and being taken to court, and in every case the parents' intention was that they wanted their child to do well, irrespective of the fact they weren't going to school:

R: People's intention and their practicalities don't always marry ... they have the intentions but they don't know how to support it or how to nurture it in their children … they don't know how to achieve that. [EWO]

R: They have no idea how to help them do that, usually because they haven't had the same thing themselves, from their own educational experience ... one issue is that there are a lot of families where there's no male presence within those houses. [EWO]

Intergenerational lack of aspiration/ low expectations of school & education

While not a key inhibitor, there were some references made to the challenges facing children's achievement levels if their parents did not place a high value on achievement or did not expect their child to do well. In this instance, a principal (and some pupils) made reference to the need for individual resilience and motivation if a child was to succeed:

The wider issues ... are parents being the first educators of their children and ... it's not valued in your home. That would probably have been the case in my home, except that it wasn't that my parents didn't read, my mother was an avid reader, but she didn't value education, it wasn't her priority; she always went on about her sister who was all into O-levels and A-levels and she thought this was nonsense and whatever, and I don't know whether that was a humility thing but she didn't believe it was for her family. [Principal]

I mean, there are primary schools in Belfast … where the expectations are that, "Mummy wants to know what homework", and "Mummy says the teacher's not giving enough homework", where that won't be the experience here. [Principal]

1.9. Summary of the findings from the Whiterock Ward

A range of macro, meso and micro-level factors are seen to impact on the educational attainment of young people from Whiterock. Across these three levels, it is clear that a number of these factors enable academic achievement in the Ward and others are seen to inhibit young peoples' progression through school. In terms of the macro-level drivers of attainment in Whiterock, the data evidence that there is a long-standing culture of collaboration and cooperation between schools and other agencies involved in the educational welfare of young people. This culture may help to explain the reasons why the most deprived Ward in Northern Ireland performs significantly better in terms of the proportion of young people (58%) who attain five GCSEs.[2] It is also clear that an important element of this culture is that there are several high-performing education institutions situated within the local Ward area. Indeed, more than half of Whiterock's school-age population attend schools less than one mile away; and out of a total secondary enrolment of 572, only 15 pupils attend a school which is three miles away. Moreover (and uniquely within the ILiAD Wards), Whiterock has: two grammar schools; a FE campus; a HE institution; and a designated Specialist School for Performing Arts very close to the geographical centre of the Ward. These highly regarded community resources were seen by many local residents as having a wholly positive influence on young peoples' aspirations. There are also multiple nursery schools and Surestart programmes within the Ward which are fully integrated into partnership arrangements with community groups and statutory agencies. Additionally, nursery place uptake for children born in Whiterock has not fallen below 75% in the last four years (higher than the other ILiAD Wards). Moreover, the quality of this provision is also very high and recent inspections have ranked the quality of education and pastoral care within these nurseries as 'very good' or 'outstanding'. The final macro-level driver was based on the claim that many young people from Whiterock benefit from the social mixing which is said to be a feature of the Ward's grammar schools.

Several macro-level inhibitors were also identified. The most significant of these related to the issue of academic selection where, it was argued, that the process typically creates upward mobility for the few and a sense of failure for the many. Here the Whiterock data are seen to concur with the other Wards in the ILiAD study which attest that the impact of this 'failure' can often have a pronounced and long-term effect on the self-esteem of young people. A further significant macro-level inhibitor is the pressure created by (a) the high numbers of local young people who require additional educational support; and (b) the under-resourcing of SEN and EWO provision. According to the data, 45% of Ward's school-aged population have been 'statemented' of are in receipt of additional educational support; the phenomenon of recurring family distress patterns is highly evident; and a lack of resources is preventing proper assessments, supportive interventions, and the effective diagnosis of SEN. Other macro-level inhibitors concerned: school closures and amalgamations; the poor physical environment of parts of the Ward; and the accusation among some residents that, notwithstanding high levels of connectedness in the Ward, it was sometimes difficult to participate in local political structures.

In terms of the school-level (meso) drivers of attainment, the data here also concur with the other Wards in the ILIAD study and suggest that the most important enablers are: schools' capacity to encourage and maintain parental engagement; strong leadership as evidenced by e.g. high expectations and discipline standards; the provision of vocational opportunities and transition support from nursery school to careers advice; and a staff cohort which is empathetic to the young people in their charge. The quality of the schools which serve the Ward was further highlighted in recent ETI inspection reports which claimed that leadership in the two most attended non-selective schools was 'outstanding' and 'highly effective'. Similarly, the capacity of local schools to encourage high levels of attendance is evident in

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[2] However, when English and Maths are included, this figure drops to 25.7%.

the education indices which show that, despite being the most deprived Ward, the nine schools serving young people from Whiterock has an average high-absenteeism rate. Arguably, these factors can be, at least in part, attributed to: (a) the centrality of schools in the wider learning community; (b) the standard of education provided with the CMS; conceptualisations of holistic pastoral care in schools therein which are further strengthened by (broad) community identification with this ethos. It is also clear from the Whiterock data that Extended Schools programmes and Full School Community Networks are making a substantial contribution, particularly, for pupils with limited parental support, and parents who want to become more involved in their child's education but are prevented from doing so on account of their own essential skills deficits. Notwithstanding the evident quality of schools in Whiterock, several meso-level inhibitors were also identified around: the inappropriateness of the school curriculum, particularly for less academically-minded pupils; the accusation that some schools and other agencies continue to work in *'silos'*; and the claim that some teachers appear *'disinterested'* and often struggle to manage classes with disruptive pupils.

According to the data, the key micro-level drivers of attainment in Whiterock are similar to the other ILiAD study areas. The individual resilience and self-motivation of high achievers; high expectations of parents; and parental capacity to support and encourage their children's education were frequently highlighted as significant enablers of academic achievement. Indeed, one of the distinguishing features of the Whiterock Ward is the familial commitment among many parents to schools and education. Two other drivers were identified around positive familial / intergenerational influences and (individual) identification with macro-level structures, for example, the phyco-social connections of the Catholic Church in schools and communities.

As evidenced in other ILiAD Wards, many inhibitors of attainment are simply the flip-side of specific drivers. Notwithstanding the above comments, many young people from Whiterock have a distinct lack of self-motivation and have instead internalised a sense of failure. Many school-aged residents have little self-confidence, aspiration or, indeed, expectations that they will succeed either at school or within the labour market. Similarly, many parents in the Ward have literacy and numeracy challenges which prevent them from providing the necessary level of support for their children. Further barriers to local attainment levels were identified around: poverty; mental health issues; adverse circumstances at home; anti-social behaviour; and the creation of 'no-go' areas. Violence, anti-social behaviour, and the misuse of drugs and alcohol in the Ward were reported by some respondents as having worsened since the ending of the recent conflict.

1.10 Social capital in Whiterock

The social capital model developed for the ILiAD study comprises four elements: bonding social capital to examine the (micro-level) immediate, familial factors which impact on educational achievement; bridging social capital to outline the school-level (meso) factors; linking social capital to determine the influence of structural (policy-level) factors such as the Ward's history, demography and access to decision making processes; and finally, negative social capital to highlight some of the concept's less desirable outcomes. In this theoretical framework, bonding capital relates to community-level conceptualisations of empowerment, infrastructure and connectedness. The data attest that there are high levels of bonding capital in Whiterock as evidenced by accounts of: a close-knit community; long-term tenures; high levels of community participation; and reliable networks (familial and community) of support. It is also clear that parental commitment and positive community norms around education are common among large sections of the Ward. Parental involvement with schools is seen as the norm among many families in the Ward; and many of the Whiterock parents interviewed had no difficulty imagining their children at third level education. However, there

are clearly comparisons with the other ILiAD Wards in terms of deprivation, sections of disaffected youth, and pockets of weak parental support.

In terms of bridging social capital (conceptualised here as schools' levels of engagement, accessibility and innovation), the Whiterock data make clear that the schools which serve the Ward have in place effective strategies to encourage parental involvement, inter-school cooperation, and collaborative practices with external agencies. This reinforces the wider claims made in a recent ETI report that, across West Belfast, collaboration between primary schools and nurseries, in addition to the sustained commitment of local business and community networks, are key aspects of strategic education planning in the area. Two other (meso-level) contrasts with the Protestant Wards in the ILiAD study were apparent. Firstly, a large number of principals and teachers of the schools which serve the Ward are former pupils who grew up, and in many cases, continue to live in West Belfast. In the Duncairn, Woodstock and Tullycarnet data, the middle-class backgrounds of some school teaching staff and the perception that few of them lived locally were viewed as inhibitors to educational achievement. However, in Whiterock, the perception of young people is that the teachers at *their* schools are from *their* community. The second key contrast relates to levels of absenteeism. The latest indices (2012-2013) show that in the nine schools which serve Whiterock there is a high absenteeism rate of 13.3%. This compares favourably with Duncairn (16.3%), Tullycarnet (18.2%) and Woodstock (21.3%).

The third element in the ILiAD framework is linking social capital and relates to the structural factors seen to impact on local attainment levels. Although deprived communities in West Belfast were, arguably, at the epicentre of the recent conflict, the data suggest that Whiterock has mediated its post-conflict transitions more successfully that some of the urban-based Protestant Wards. Intra-community tensions did not, to any extent, feature in the data; conflict-related spatial mobility restrictions were similarly absent; nor was there any sense of defeatism, abandonment, or perceived ethno-religious encroachment. Similarly, Whiterock has a young, expanding and settled demographic profile: 25% of the Ward is under the age of 15; and only 1.1% of the Ward was born outside the UK or Ireland compared to a Northern Ireland average of 7.1%. Moreover, Whiterock has an equally settled residential structure and only 8.9% of houses in the Ward are private rentals compared with 21.1% in Duncairn and 28.3% in Woodstock. With specific reference to educational factors, it is clear that stocks of linking social capital in Whiterock are increased via: high levels of inter-agency / inter-school cooperation, substantial provision of pre-school programmes, and perhaps most importantly, the propinquity of high-performing education institutions. The fact that the Ward has so many quality schools, literally, within walking distance from pupils' homes has important and positive consequences such as: (a) these schools being seen as assets of the community; (b) young people having a constant reminder that education is an integral part of their lives and living environment; (c) schools being accessible to parents and more able to also involve the community in events and initiatives; and (d) reduced transportation costs and journey times for pupils thus encouraging higher levels of attendance.

Looking at bonding, bridging and linking social capital together, it is clear that Whiterock faces many of the same barriers to attainment as found in the other ILiAD Wards. For example, there are: acute budgetary pressures for both schools and support services; local legacies of the recent conflict; a section of young people who are bereft of confidence, ambition, or parental support; and high levels of poverty and deprivation. However, the data also make clear that the Whiterock community has a range of 'critical assets' (Lochner et al, 1999)[3]. These critical assets are best understood in relation to the World Bank's (2011)[4] six

[3] Lochner, K., Kawachi, I., & Kennedy, B.P. (1999) Social capital: a guide to its measurement. Health and Place, 3: 259-270. (TS, AS)
[4] World Bank (2010) 'WDR Development Report 2010' accessed online on 16/10/10 at:
http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTWDRS/EXTWDR2010/0,,contentMDK:21969137~men uPK:5287816~pagePK:64167689~piPK:64167673~theSitePK:5287741,00.html

dimensions of social capital i.e. networks, norms, reciprocity, trust, pro-activity, and collective efficacy. Social capital can only be generated through voluntary, equal and lateral associations. It is clear from the data that such networks in Whiterock are cemented by the Ward's psycho-social connections to unifying forces such as the Catholic Church, Gaelic sports, and the Irish language. The interplay of these forces, all of which, crucially, have a distinct presence in the school-lives of Whiterock's young residents, are seen to engender, certainly among sections of the Ward, what Portes (2010)[5] describes as 'value introjection' - the internalised norms which inform e.g. young people's attitudes to education and obligate their behaviour in school. Similarly, reciprocity and trust are important facets of the neighbourliness and familial bonds which were also evident in Whiterock. Moreover, previous studies have established that the maintenance of social capital requires active citizenry within a participative community. In contrast to some sections of the predominantly Protestant Wards, pro-activity and grass-roots participation in Whiterock are visible community norms. The final dimension of collective efficacy was also highlighted in Whiterock where there is clearly a shared sense of 'collective competence' among residents, schools and community workers which encourages them to act in an 'integrated and concerted' fashion to 'meet the broader need' (Lochner et al., 1999: 264).

The final element in the ILiAD framework highlights the impact of negative social capital. The data suggest a higher value placed on education in Whiterock than was found in the predominantly Protestant Wards. However, the data also show that the academic progression of many young people in Whiterock is inhibited by area-based factors such as unemployment, poverty and deprivation which are seen to limit their aspiration and expectations. Although many disadvantaged young people in Whiterock are cognisant of 'broader opportunities', in some cases, their aspirations and expectations are suppressed by a depressed environment and a 'moral imperative' to 'maintain solidary bonds' with the people they live amongst. In such ways, negative social capital lowers their ambition because their individual aspirations and expectations are 'not universal' but are, to an extent, 'constrained by the limits' of their own community (Portes, 2010: 42-43). The data here evidence that Whiterock may indeed have substantial stocks of bonding, bridging and linking social capital; and these stocks, in all probability, help to explain the unaligned nature of local deprivation and attainment levels. However, despite these social capital and educational 'achievements', the Ward remains the most deprived in Northern Ireland. This highlights the limitations of social capital, particularly, in working class communities. For example: bonding social capital may be apparent in Whiterock but poverty and material insecurity are known to adversely affect social norms of reciprocity (Das, 2006);[6] bridging social capital in the Ward has clearly promoted outward-looking tendencies, however, deprived neighbourhoods tend to have networks which are spatially and socio-economically limited; and linking social capital in Whiterock may provide 'access to decision making processes' but this should not be 'conflated with a capacity to obtain resources in the social structure' (O'Brien and Fathaigh, 2005; 68-71).[7] In other words, there are manifest formations of bonding, bridging and linking social capital in Whiterock but these are often significantly constrained by the context of socio-economic disadvantage.

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[5] Portes, A. (2010) Economic Sociology: a systemic inquiry, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
[6] Das, R. J. (2006) 'Putting social capital in its place', Capital & Class, Vol. 30: pp 65–92.
[7] O'Brien, S. & Fathaigh, M. (2005) 'Bringing in Bourdieu's theory of social capital: renewing learning partnership approaches to social inclusion', Irish Educational Studies, Vol. 24 (1) 65-76.

2.1. Local Context

Deprivation Levels

The multiple deprivation measure for The Diamond is one of the highest in the ILiAD sample; it is 12th in Northern Ireland in terms of severity, but it is one of the best in the sample in terms of education and skills training – since 2001, the GCSE pass rate has been consistently near 60% or higher. In 2009/10 it rose to 68%, and in 2012/13, the pass rate was 85%. For education and skills deprivation, the Ward is ranked 101/582 Wards – just within the top 20% for this domain. The biggest issues in the Ward are the living environment (it is the 3rd worst Ward for living environment in Northern Ireland); employment (it is 4th highest in Northern Ireland for employment deprivation); crime (5th highest in Northern Ireland for crime and disorder deprivation) and health and disability (it is 16th highest in Northern Ireland for health and disability deprivation). With its central location, proximity to services is rated the best in the ILiAD sample, at 570 out of 582. It is thus very closely matched to the Duncairn Ward in terms of social issues and both Wards also have interface areas (although The Diamond outperforms Duncairn). Furthermore, although it has a higher level of deprivation than the other urban, predominantly Catholic Ward of Rosemount, GCSE achievement is at approximately the same level.

Figure 2.1 shows a map of the Output areas within The Diamond Ward, colour-coded by intensity of deprivation. The colours of the Output areas refer to the severity of deprivation, based on their multiple deprivation score (ranging from 1.5 to 81.73, with 81.73 being the most deprived) as calculated by NISRA (all statistics are based on the 2010 measures unless otherwise indicated).
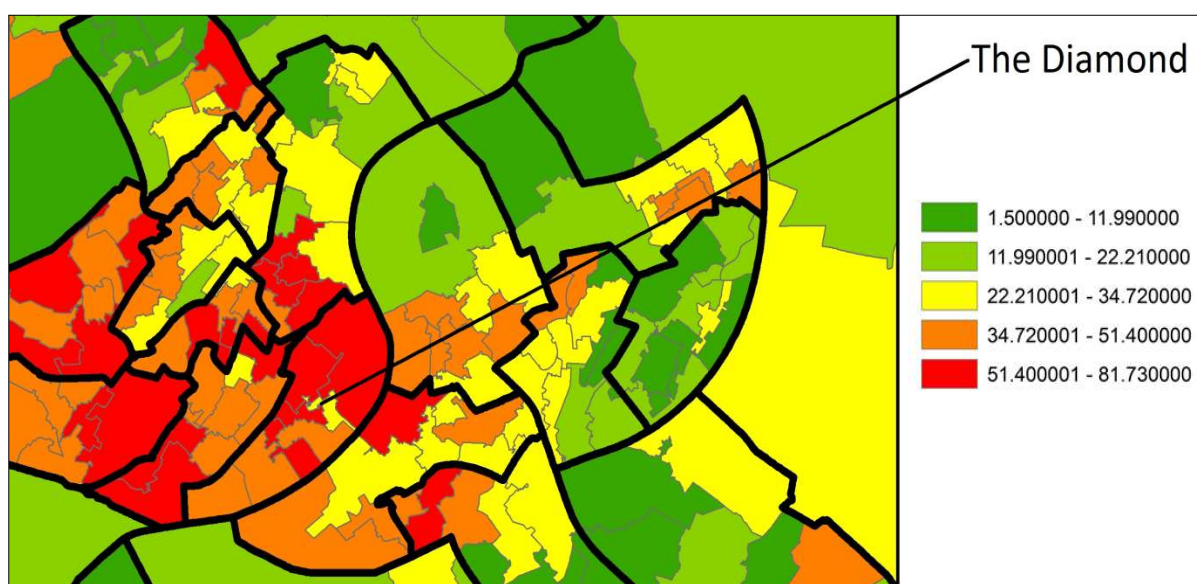
Figure 2.1: Multiple Deprivation in Output Areas: The Diamond Ward

The Diamond Ward encompasses the main urban centre of Derry-Londonderry, bordered by the River Foyle to the south and east, Bishop Street to the west (which transects the area encompassed by the old city walls) and the Guildhall and bus station area to the north (see the red Output area to the north-east of the Ward map). There is an interface area located between the Fountain estate (located within the red Output area in the north part of the Ward map) and Bishop Street. As of June 2011, the Peace Bridge across the River Foyle connects The Diamond Ward at the Guildhall to Ebrington Ward (at the area which used to be Ebrington Barracks), a predominantly Protestant area of Derry-Londonderry.

Demographics and local facilities

The Diamond is a mainly Catholic Ward, with 81.2% of residents from a Catholic background according to the Census 2011. Most Protestant residents (364) are located with the Fountain estate area of the Ward – they make up 15% of the Ward's population. The Ward has a much lower than average percentage of residents who were born outside of the UK or the Republic of Ireland (3.6%, compared to the NI average of 7.1%) or born in EU ascension countries[8] (0.4%, compared to the NI average of 2.1%). There is also evidence of multiple changes in housing tenure within The Diamond between 2001 and 2011 (according to Census statistics). The percentage of owner/occupier housing decreased slightly (from 42.6% in 2001 to 37.2% in 2011), but the percentage of privately rented housing almost doubled, from 16.8% to 30.2%. The percentage of social rent housing substantially decreased, from 40.3% to 29.7%.

The population density within the The Diamond is 30.6 persons per hectare, the second lowest population density of all the Wards in the ILiAD sample (possibly due to the higher number of commercial premises within the Ward). It also has the second smallest population among the sample of seven Ward s, at 2551 persons (NISRA, 2011). The percentage of young people under the age of 15 is 14.5% according to the Census 2011, the second lowest of all Wards in the ILiAD sample (after Rosemount) and below the Northern Ireland average of 19.6%.

The Diamond is located within the Triax-Cityside Neighbourhood Renewal Area of Derry/Londonderry. During 2012/13, the Department for Social Development invested £1,670,070 of funding for projects and organisations that include the area in their remits. Perhaps because of its central urban location, the Ward has a vast range of non-mandatory services that could be associated with educational engagement and attainment. The most common categories of services include work training and skills support (12 service providers); mental health/drug and alcohol/emotional support services (12 service providers); and intergenerational/youth in the community activities (11 service providers). Some of these are naturally based in the city centre which will obviously serve youth from all over the city, but many are linked to the residents' community centres and churches. The Longtower Youth and Community Centre, the Gasyard Development Trust, the Youthlife Centre, and the Cathedral Youth Club are some of the providers which deliver a wide range of activities and services across thematic areas. The Longtower Youth and Community Centre is an Alternative Education provider for the area, as are the Strand Foyer Family Support Services and the Foyle Youth Council.

School Provision, Intake Characteristics, Achievement, and Destinations

The Diamond has one of the smallest numbers of pupils within post-primary schools out of all the Wards in the ILiAD study (147 pupils in 2011). As with some of the other ILiAD Ward, this points to the need for some caution when interpreting achievement results, especially as the number of pupils completing GCSEs in a given year will be much lower than this total enrolment figure; any extreme results could impact severely upon averages.

Seven schools served young people from The Diamond in 2011 (four of which are single sex - the Catholic-maintained schools of St Joseph's, St Cecilia's, St Mary's and St Columb's - see Table 2.1 below). The Diamond is very similar to Rosemount in terms of the number of young people who attend secondary schools from the Ward (70%) and also in terms of the main schools that serve these young people – three of the four main schools are the same. In 2011, 30% of young people from the Ward attended grammar schools, the second highest proportion of the ILiAD sample after Rosemount. Lumen Christi College, a Catholic-maintained, co-educational grammar school which frequently tops the GCSE and A Level

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[8] Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia

results league tables in Northern Ireland, is located on the Ward boundary at Bishop Street, just outside of the Ward itself.

Table 2.1: Schools serving young people in The Diamond

Miles to school	% GCSE pass	Enrolment (2011)	
0.5	100	11	Lumen Christi College
1.5	60	27	St Joseph's College
1.7	85	35	St Cecilia's College
1.7	78	21	St. Mary's College
1.7	92	11	Foyle & L'Derry College
2.2	34	20	Lisneal College
2.6	93	22	St. Columb's College
Total Grammar enrolment		44	30%
Total Secondary enrolment		103	70%

The research team decided to choose a geographical mid-point within each Ward area, and to map the distance from this point to the schools that serve each Ward area (see Figure 2.2) to look at the relationship between distance, enrolment, and GCSE attainment. The Diamond Ward shows a mostly positive picture in terms of the schools serving the young people in the Ward, the distance travelled to schools, and attainment, as all the bubble (apart from one) are in the top left corner of the chart. Two schools, St Cecilia's and St Joseph's Colleges (secondary schools) could be said to have slight dominance in terms of enrolment of pupils from the Ward compared to other schools. It should also be noted that for the 2011-12 school year, the percentage of young people from St Cecilia's and St Mary's who got any five GCSEs rose to over 90% for the first time in each school – 95% and 92% respectively, so their bubbles would be higher in the chart if that year was used instead. All of the schools are under three miles from the Ward centre, which is perhaps unsurprising given that The Diamond is located in the urban centre of Derry/Londonderry, although pupils who wish to attend a Controlled school (i.e. Foyle and Londonderry College or Lisneal College) have to travel slightly further to these schools than they would to most Catholic-maintained schools.
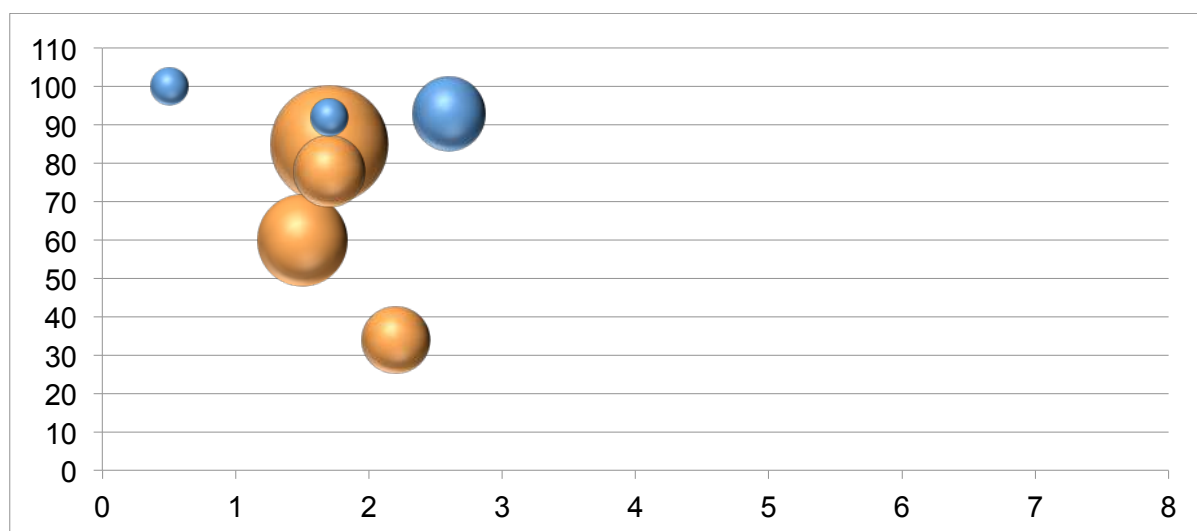

Figure 2.2: Schools in The Diamond GCSE Pass (A*-C) rates 2011 by miles from Ward centre and enrolment numbers. Blue – Grammar schools Orange - Other schools

Looking at average GCSE achievement rates in The Diamond for the three years prior to the ILiAD research commencing (2008/2009/2010), 62.2% of school leavers achieved ≥5

50

GCSEs or GCSE equivalents (at Grade C or above), the highest rate in the ILiAD sample. When considering 'pure' GCSEs only, this figure dropped slightly, to 54.1% (one of the smallest variations within the Wards, indicating that there is not a high provision and/or uptake of GCSE equivalents with the Ward). The GCSE pass rate across the three-year period decreased to 51.0% if English and Maths are included – this variation of 11.2% is the second smallest variation of the sample Wards, after Tullycarnet (a 7.9% variation).

There was also a very small variation in the performances of females and males from The Diamond across the three-year period. Looking specifically at female school leavers, 62.5% achieved any five GCSEs at A*-C (the third highest amongst the ILiAD Wards, after Rosemount and Whiterock), and 50.0% achieved five GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths. For males, the pass rate for any five GCSEs was 62.0% (the highest performance rate out of the ILiAD sample), dropping to 52.0% with the inclusion of English and Maths. The Diamond therefore is an anomaly amongst the ILiAD Wards in that females and males perform at approximately the same levels, with males slightly outperforming girls when English and Maths are included in the GCSE performance rate.

In contrast to these small variations, The Diamond has highest percentage of school leavers entitled to free school meals (FSM) across the years 2008-2012 of all ILiAD sample Wards, 46.7%, and the Ward has one of the biggest differentials in GCSE performance between FSM and non-FSM entitled pupils across the same time period (22.4% variation; 75.6% of non-FSM pupils achieved five or more GCSEs at A*-C, compared to 53.2% of FSM-entitled pupils). Looking at FSM/non-FSM performance differences by gender, non-FSM males did much better than FSM males (75.0% to 36.4%), and non-FSM entitled females outperformed all other categories (76.3%). FSM-entitled females in The Diamond also far outperformed FSM-entitled males (55.2% compared to 36.4%). The Diamond (along with Rosemount) therefore shows a lower level of equity in achievement than other Wards in terms of whether a pupil is entitled to FSM – pupils (particularly males) entitled to FSM perform at a much lower rate in this Ward than pupils who are not entitled to FSM. Notwithstanding this inequity, The Diamond Ward also exhibits the highest levels of achievement levels for pupils who are entitled to FSM compared to the other Wards.

Across the years 2008-2012, approximately twice as many school leavers from Rosemount and The Diamond (36% in each Ward) entered higher education than school leavers from other Wards (19% in Duncairn; 14% in Dunclug; 12% in Tullycarnet; 17% in Whiterock; and 14% in Woodstock). During the same time span, 29.8% of school leavers from The Diamond entered Further Education (the second lowest percentage, after Whiterock); 25% entered employment or job training (the third lowest, after Rosemount and Dunclug); and 8.6% entered unemployment or were in an unknown destination, the lowest rate of the ILiAD sample, less than the other urban Catholic Wards (the rates were 12.0% in Rosemount and 14.4% in Whiterock).

Given that St Cecilia's College is especially prominent in terms of enrolment numbers in The Diamond and has a high percentage of school leavers who enter Higher Education, in addition to the fact that St Mary's College has a third of its pupils entering Higher Education too (33%), this factor might help to account for why The Diamond and Rosemount have the largest overall percentages of young people entering higher education than any of the other ILiAD Wards (see Figure 2.3 below).
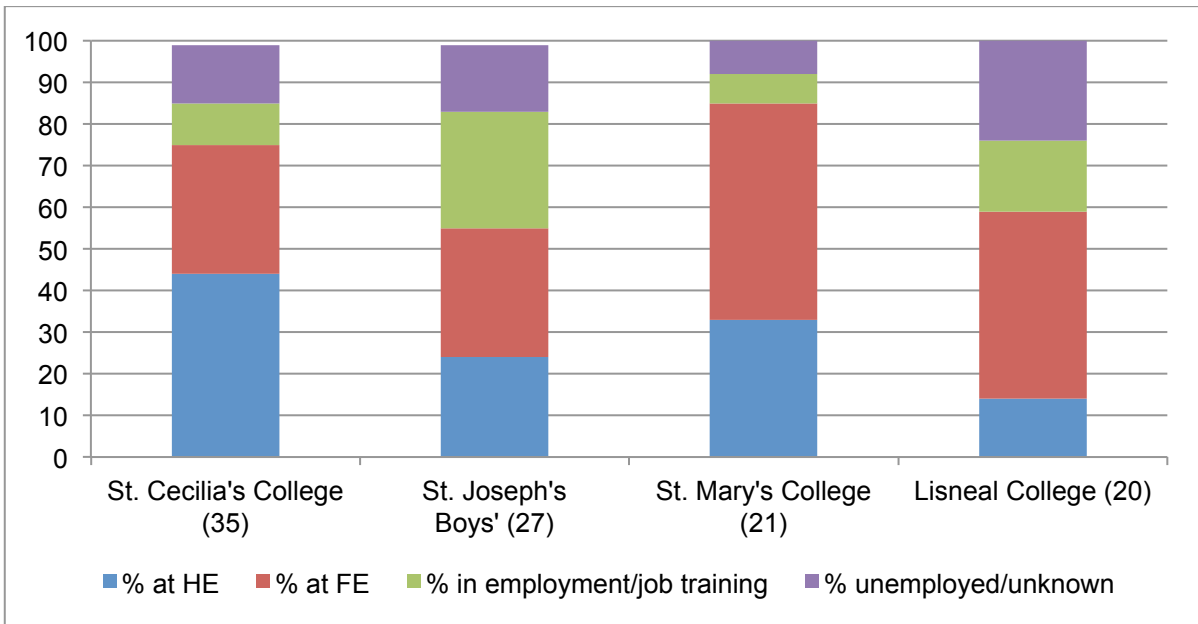
Figure 2.3: Destinations of School Leavers 2012 from non-selective schools serving The Diamond Ward

The Diamond however differs from Rosemount in that Lisneal College and Foyle and Londonderry College serve young people from the Ward (predominantly those from the Fountain area). Lisneal College has a slightly lower percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals compared with the NI average (27.4% to 28.9%) and a lower number of pupils with any SEN than the NI average (23% to 30.8%), but the number of pupils who achieve five GCSEs including Maths and English has been, until recently, about 9 percentage points lower than the NI average for secondary schools (see Figure 2.4 below), and almost a quarter of leavers from the school (24%) were unemployed or had an unknown destination in 2012 (see Figure 2.3 above).
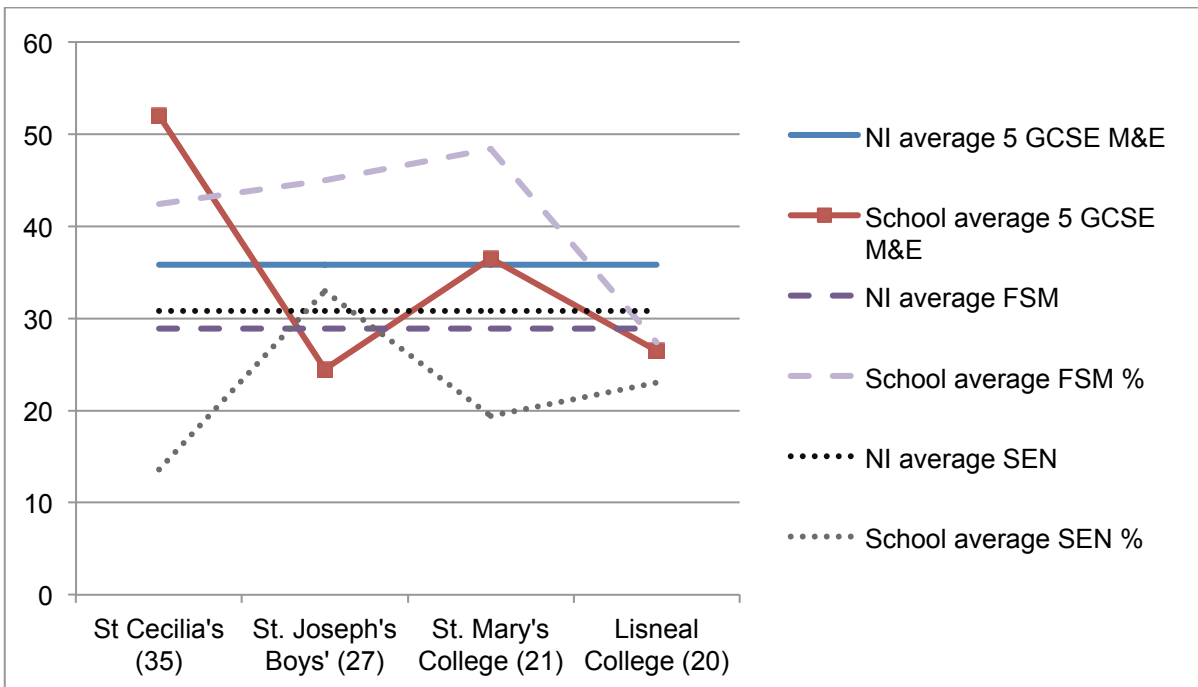
Figure 2.4: 2008-2012 average percentages of 5 GCSE (including Maths & English) attainment, Free School Meals eligibility, and pupils with any Special Educational Needs – The Diamond non-selective Schools against NI secondary school averages
The following sections outline the key drivers and inhibitors of achievement that were identified from the thematic analysis of interview and focus group from key stakeholders within The Diamond (see Table 2.2), alongside secondary data analysis. The drivers and inhibitors will be presented as macro-level (structural) factors, meso-level (social/community/school) factors, or micro-level (individual/family/peer) factors.

Table 2.2: Profile of participants in The Diamond

School level	Community level
Nursery school principal interview x 1	Community worker interview x 4
Primary school principal interview x 2	Parent of high-achieving child interview x 1
Post-primary principal interview x 4	Parent focus group x 2
Post-primary pupil focus group x 4	Youth workers focus group x 1
Primary pupil focus group x 1	EWO x 1

2.2. Force-field Analysis of drivers and inhibitors of achievement in The Diamond Ward

Drivers

Macro-level

a) Historical legacy of the Education Act 1947 (for Catholics)
b) Inward investment and resources
c) Social mixing in primary /post-primary schools
d) Equal number of grammar avenues for males and females
e) Recession as a driver
f) High attainment performance of grammar sector

Meso-level

a) Transition support between key educational stages
b) Good pastoral care and close relationships with teachers
c) High discipline standards and academic expectations of the part of the schools
d) Rewarding effort and success in areas other than academics
e) Cooperation and links between schools
f) Monitoring individual needs, using school data & target setting
g) Intergenerational engagement with schools
h) School-community collaboration
i) Pupils feeling listened to in school
j) Breadth of curricula and interactive teaching styles
k) Low rates of high-absenteeism

Micro-level

a) High levels of youth club involvement (Fountain area)
b) Individual resilience and motivation
c) Family support and high expectations of parents
d) Positive adult education experiences of parent/mother are changing norms
e) Feeling connection to a community
f) Positive early education experiences of nursery and primary school

Present situation – 85% five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13); 14th Multiple Deprivation 2010

Inhibitors

Macro-level

a) A lack of community cohesiveness and a fractured community identity for Protestants
b) Continuing division/conflict between communities
c) Felt effects of academic selection
d) Current culture of education policy – perfectionism in a time of cutbacks
e) Official statistics hiding key issues
f) Recession and poverty – role models not coming back to the area
g) Unstable or inadequate funding for early years, youth and community providers

Meso-level

a) Belief in a finite, 'natural' ability level of a child
b) Overuse of IT
c) Schools struggling to engage with parents
d) Historically, schools that served children from the Fountain had a negative reputation
e) No transition support
f) Boys feeling pressured into doing STEM subjects
g) 'Average' children falling through the cracks at school

Micro-level

a) Anti-social behaviour
b) Adverse circumstances at home
c) Intergenerational 'switching off' from education

2.3. Macro-level drivers of attainment in The Diamond

As the force-field analysis on the previous page shows, six macro-level drivers of attainment in The Diamond were identified relating to: the historical legacy of the Education Act (1947); inward investment and resources; social mixing in schools; equality (gender) of grammar avenues; the idea that the current recession acts as a driver; and the high attainment performance of the local grammar sector.

Historical legacy of the Education Act 1947 [for Catholics]

Principals of a Catholic maintained school and a state controlled school made reference to the strong meaning of education for Catholics living in Derry. This was linked to past experiences of discrimination the transgenerational norm (begun by the Education Act of 1947 and reinforced by the nationalist community's politicians) that education was something powerful which could not be appropriated by others.

Part of it [Catholic pupils outperforming Protestant pupils], is to do with the perceived legacy of discrimination at the time when the Education Act came in in '47, at the time when the likes of John Hume were the first generation to come to this school here, there was a very clear perception that the only way that you could get out of the situation you found yourself in was through education ... giving those kids access to opportunities ... they hadn't previously had. [Principal]

Inward investment and resources

There is clear evidence that schools, communities and the city of Derry/Londonderry in general have been very successful in securing resources that have had a direct or indirect positive impact on educational facilities and opportunities. For example, in 2008, £38 million was announced for two new girls' schools which opened in 2010.

Education, I would say, is more accessible ... have you been to [named school]? It's like a five-star hotel! [Principal]

Four schools which serve the Ward area have been also been granted specialist status in the past, and as such, received £100 per pupil over the four years of the grant in addition to a grant of up to £75,000 to add to the £25,000 sponsorship raised to enhance provision in the specialist area. Other examples of inward investment include the Neighbourhood Renewal funds for communities, the City of Culture 2013 funding (the total funding committed to run it was £16.4m, with most of that money coming from the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL)). Furthermore, the Arts Council pledged £450,000 to the city's cultural programme which was match funded by Derry City Council, resulting in a £900,000 total for a joint Legacy Fund. The Fund has been established to ensure continued investment in the arts and cultural sector in Derry-Londonderry, to build on the achievements of the year as UK City of Culture 2013 and help achieve the long-term targets of Derry's Regeneration Plan: The One Plan ('One City One Plan One Voice').

Social mixing in primary /post-primary schools

Many of the principals of the schools serving The Diamond talked about the broad social mixes in their pupil populations in terms of socio-economic background and ability ranges. They emphasised the importance of this '*rich tapestry*' within their schools in terms of it being a '*great leveller*;' it gave the pupils of all backgrounds a window into the lives of others, broadening their ideas and aspirations. Whilst having a 'local' school was recognised as important, the principals were loath to lose the benefit of a geographic mix.

We would have a mix. Now, I wouldn't say it's 50/50; it's about 60% local and about 40% not local. That has been the tradition in the school. And I know the CCMS want us to go towards people from Derry applying, "it's your local school" and all, and they want us to push that

forward. I can understand where they are coming from, but our Governors are saying that's not the character and ethos of our school. And they've sort of resisted it. [Principal]

This principal recognised the challenges of creating a more complex school curricula and structure that would cater for the needs of different pupils.

If you were to look at an ETI inspection of any school, you will see ... the performance of kids who are on free school meals, so they are beginning to look at, that you're doing something in particular for that group, that you don't have a broad-brush approach, and hope that they all benefit, that you'll notice, "oh, well, that group, it needs that, whereas that group needs that". Trying to have those two different approaches is challenging. [Principal]

Equal number of grammar avenues for females and males
The principal of a coeducational grammar school explained that although Derry has a large number of single sex schools, (which previously disadvantaged females who wanted a grammar education). Both sexes are now offered the same number of grammar places.

[That it is coeducational] wasn't accidental ... the reason for our existence is that in the mid-1990s, what was happening in Derry was that Catholic boys who were getting grade B's in their transfer tests were going to [named grammar school]; Catholic girls who were getting grade B's couldn't ... traditionally girls tended to outperform boys in the 11+, so while the girls were getting the grades, they weren't getting into a grammar school. And there was kind of uproar about that. [Principal]

Recession as a driver
Poverty was described as a factor in increasing people's determination to achieve. As a community worker pointed out: *'There's a determination in people, and they want more than their parents wanted'.* However, being aware of the education routes available to them is also important. This community worker argued *'that if people from The Diamond had more experience, knew how many mature students there are, this would help inspire them'.*

Communities, and schools, have a responsibility to open that up and show it to people, and let them see it's not a pipe dream, that these programmes and these degrees are accessible to the ordinary people that haven't had that opportunity before. And I think that if we talk that language to young people, parents, they begin to believe it. [Community worker]

This idea was reinforced by one mother's explanation of how they feel that the fact that guaranteed, low education type jobs no longer exist can act as a motivator for young people to gain education: '*I think, the children that's going to children now, they know there's not that many jobs out there, so you need your education'.*

High attainment performance of grammar sector
As outlined above, the best three performing schools in the Ward (in terms of % GCSE pass 5A*-C) were the three grammar schools – Lumen Christi College (100%), St Columb's College (93%) and Foyle and L'Derry (92%). Similar to the Whiterock Ward, the high attainment performances of these local grammar schools were highlighted by several grammar sector respondents as a driver of attainment in the Ward.

2.4. Meso-level drivers of attainment in The Diamond

A total of 11 meso-level drivers were identified around: transition support; pastoral care; high discipline standards and academic expectations of the part of the schools; the rewarding of

effort; cooperation between schools; monitoring individual needs; intergenerational engagement with schools; school-community collaboration; pupils feeling listened to; breadth of curricula and interactive teaching styles; finally, low rates of high-absenteeism.

Transition support between key educational stages
This theme included several sub-themes. Firstly, parents, pupils and principals spoke about how the primary schools serving the area generally had an expectation that pupils would sit the transfer test at 11. However, principals and pupils had mixed responses in regard to help with transfer test. Although schools are no longer permitted to prepare children for transfer tests, previously in some primaries the class wasn't divided according to who was or was not sitting the transfer test, but in other primaries the P7 class was divided and young people felt that this helped them. It is an example of the paradox presented by the transfer test; whilst it presented an opportunity for some children to achieve very highly, others were *'left behind'*.

My class was Primary 6 and Primary 7, and in that class, I might have had about two every year that were going to be pushed on ... as hard and as fast as they could go. What was I doing with my other sixteen? They had to be taught. [Principal]

They did separate out the classes, they took everyone who was doing the [transfer] test and ... everyone who wasn't ... and put them in separate classes ... there was a clear divide in the three classes where they ... put all the ones who struggled with one teacher who was very nice, and then all the ones who would work, with other teachers who would make them work. Primary 6 was the first time that people kind of were separated. [Principal]

Everyone just remained in the same class and just people who were doing tests, practice ones, they would be doing the tests while the other people would just move to the back of the class and read. [Pupil focus group]

Furthermore, one principal talked about bringing pupils from one part of the Ward to her home for a few hours each day over the summer holidays to prepare them for the transfer test, as their parents would not be able to afford private tutors. Some pupils referred to help such as afterschool tutoring clubs, being given tests to do at home once a week, and extra packs of practice tests over the summer. There was also evidence that extra support is currently being given to key subjects in some primary schools and several parents spoke about schools '*pushing them on in Maths'.*

After pupils completed the transfer test, several principals spoke of the wide variety of ways that schools and organisations in the wider community communicated in order to make the pupils' transition between these key stages as smooth as possible. This included: (a) visits by teachers between schools, *'because there's a lot of information she can't get [on paper] because it's confidential ... the number of problems in quite high'*; (b) *'there are a couple of local groups – one from Pilot's Row and one from the FACT[9] project, based in the Gas yard, that come and do preparation for transition ... how to manage a timetable, the bell is going to ring every 35 minutes, they do all that. We also have a counsellor we employ through Extended School who works here every Wednesday';* and (c), a combination of activities and visits throughout the school year to help primary pupils feel comfortable within the larger post-primary schools, such as summer schools, sport, drama and choir sessions, science lessons, and post-primary pupils coming into the primary schools to help coach younger pupils during their literacy and numeracy clubs.

After pupils transferred to post-primary school, principals described the ways in which they helped not only the pupils to settle in and achieve their potential (e.g. through meeting with their form teachers, one-to-one mentoring and short-term target setting with a teacher) but

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[9] Families Achieving Change Together

also helped to increase parental engagement. For example, parents being invited to meet form teachers one-to-one, and attend assemblies or Masses in Catholic maintained schools.

Lastly, part of this transition support included help with subject or career choices both early in pupils' education as well as in the latter stages of post-primary school. One principal of a controlled primary school described how she would say to children, *"If you go in to the top class in the secondary school and put you head down and keep working, you're still going to get to University".* Pupils in focus groups described how their schools would bring in past pupils to speak at assemblies about their careers, and were held up as role models; and principals of post-primary schools described the guidance they gave to pupils.

I think they would all have aspirations but as to where they direct it ... I think a lot of them leave in Year 13 and haven't a clue about what they want to do ... they're not making the right choices and therefore they're not accessing the kind of courses they should be, maybe getting the kind of results they should be getting ... that's where Careers comes in as well ... One of the things I do is I interview all the pupils ... It's a great, great opportunity to sit for fifteen minutes with a child who maybe has never had a chance to talk to the school principal before ... you get a real sense of their hopes and their fears. [Principal]

Good pastoral care and close relationships with teachers
A further driver related to the pastoral ethos within a school and the existence of good pupil-teacher relationships. Principals claimed that: *'the results come from the relationships, not the other way* around'; and that it was impossible to teach children '*without actually loving and caring for them'.* Community workers also communicated a strong sense of attachment to the communities in which they work; all were from the local area or other parts of Derry, and all demonstrated a strong passion to improve the lives of the people living in the Ward.

One principal stated that recruitment of teachers in her school was based on their relationship and communication skills: *'I work on the assumption that you can teach your subject. I'm more, I'm much more interested in how you're going to react to your students, and 80% of the interview for teachers appointed to our school will be relationships-based, like problems, like 'what would you do if?' 'What would you do in a situation?'* Principals believed that pupils *'will go that bit further for teachers because they believe that there's a relationship there'.* Principals also described the ways in which teachers in their schools go the *'extra mile'* for the pupils, providing afterschool clubs, staying behind with pupils after class, helping pupils get work experience placements, and so on. Pupils corroborated these points during their focus groups: '*if you do have a question for a teacher they make it as easy as possible, they're not interrogating you about it, so it's not that bad, and there's always extra classes and stuff'.* Another principal spoke of the ways in which she believed that Catholic values positively impacted upon her pedagogy and on school relationships.

I once chatted with a principal in Washington, I went there for a week ... it was obviously a public school, so by definition it's secular ... from my point of view, faith and relationships are themselves inseparable, and faith and relationships and academic attainment are inseparable, and the particular school was the highest achieving public school in the States ... by the end of the week I was thinking to myself, "I'm going to have to rethink my whole philosophy because this is a secular school and the working relationships are wonderful and they're all working together". It was only at the very last leadership team meeting where there were sixteen people ... thirteen of the sixteen were very committed Christians and twelve of the thirteen were Catholic ... no one had thought to ask about it at the time, but it's almost one of those things that becomes ... part of who you are and part of what you believe ... that imbues how you teach. [Principal]

The mothers who were interviewed from both community backgrounds in The Diamond also singled out the role of the principal in terms of playing a vital role in their children's

achievement: *'She's very, very good ... a principal who is on the ball'*. The absence of overt hierarchy also seemed to be key in how the mothers felt about the school and particularly the principal. They placed importance on the fact that the principal is '*approachable, understanding and knowledgeable and a normal guy that you can talk to'*. They appeared to appreciate the fact that *'he went through the ropes too as a teacher'*. This was very different to how mothers from the Fountain area described how the principals they had experienced in the past had an aloof manner.

High discipline standards and academic expectations of schools
It was clear from interviews and focus groups with pupils and principals that many of the primary and post-primary schools serving the Ward had high standards and expectations.

I: You feel like it is a strict school then?

R: Aye, so then if they cover everything then it's just to repeat and just do it all again, so they're like, ready and set up for their GCSEs and all that there. [Pupil focus group]

The principal of a school serving young people from The Fountain described the positive impact of implementing more structure and discipline when little had been in place before.

We loved [the pupils], they were disciplined, they were highly disciplined; a few people actually objected to the discipline ... you don't run around the room, you say please, you put up your hand, say thank you ... common courtesy really. [Principal]

Principals of both primary and post-primary schools were keen to make the point that it was important to highlight success in academics and to strive to do better in academics, even if the school holds a broader, more holistic notion of achievement.

I noticed that come the end of the year, we had a lot of awards that were acknowledging youngsters who were cooperative, who were trying their best ... but we actually had no excellence awards for curriculum. So, we designed special badges ... the youngsters really treat them as special. So, we have a badge for ICT, a badge for Maths, a badge for literacy ... the person who scores the highest scores who get the badge. It is wee things like that to try and push them on. [Principal]

A huge part of achievement for us lies in public examination of results that students attain. If that was the be all and end all of us, then the criticism of us being a kind of examinations factory, which is levelled at us, would be true ... the children who come to us are able to cope with the pace of academic work which we set here ... I don't apologise for the school's results ... there's that sense that sometimes you have to. [Principal]

In terms of academic performance, we're not ever going to be as strong as [a grammar], but we do have a huge extra co-curricular provision ... parents want them to do as well as they can academically ... but they have a sense that we can provide a holistic education for their child ... this year ... we want to improve our examination performance, we're having a big focus on teaching and learning ... and it's trying to balance that ... in a way that allows both elements to coexist and thrive and not jar against each other. [Principal]

Rewarding effort and success in areas other than academics
Although principals stressed the importance of driving academic achievement, they were also keen to state that a school could not reward excellence in academics alone; this was not deemed healthy for anyone, even top academic performers.

There's the very competitive child who will not be happy with an 'A' if there's an 'A' to be got ... you've then got to guard against the perception of failure by those students who ... have*

got 6 'As' and 4 'Bs' ... we have to guard against switching off the child who is achieving academically wonderful results but not at the [highest] level. [Principal]

Principals described the different ways in which they made attempts to acknowledge effort including: changing the structure of prize day by disinviting parents and instead inviting all pupils to '*kind of a big party for everybody*'; making particular attempts to verbally praise boys, '*you can see them growing in stature, you can see the chest popping out, that they just feel that they are getting a wee bit of recognition, and that does, even for the older boys too, that's what makes the difference*'; developing a points system of reward for attendance and punctuality. The importance of these alternative forms of recognition was believed to be down to the boost it gives pupils '*confidence in themselves*,' which, as a result, *'improves them academically'.* For another principal, *'you look at people [and] they have other intelligences ... it's not all academic, but it was just a matter of trying to find them something ... that they were good'.* A mother from the Ward also expressed that while it is important that children come out of school with basic education, not all children are academically inclined; finding a balance between pushing, encouragement and choice thus appears to be important: *'it just wasn't in his nature ... he's never been on the dole, he's a hard worker, but academically ... he just couldn't sit and the concentration wasn't there'.*

Cooperation and links between schools
Principals reported at length the extent of the partnerships and links that had been made between schools across the Derry/Londonderry area; and made frequent and particular reference to the positive impact that the Foyle Learning Community had made. The Foyle Learning Community: is a collaborative initiative between 14 post-primary education providers to progress the Entitlement Framework; provides appropriate courses for all pupils; and is one of the biggest collaborations of its type in Northern Ireland. Principals reported the benefits of opening up more vocational routes for pupils in grammar schools, or more academic subjects for pupils who can't access them in secondary schools.

We've one pupil in Year 14 who's going out to [named school] to do a Social Care course that we couldn't possibly offer in here. [Principal]

The applied route has really suited [some pupils], for the coursework, the work that you do as you go along, doing that is perfect for them, whereas the traditional A-level, no matter how hard they've tried at it, isn't ever going to get them the same level of success ... Not all students are necessarily going to access them, but for those that can access them, applied courses are really, really working. [Principal]

Indeed, a community worker in The Diamond reported that one of the ways that young people from the Ward could be better served educationally was if they were directed towards more vocational jobs such as such as *'bricklayers and joiners'.* In itself, there is sound logic and caring in this idea, but some questions might arise around whether this in itself is underpinned by subconscious or subliminal low expectations. This statement by the genuinely concerned community worker might be seen to reflect and uncover issues pertaining to the very deeply rooted problem of how to deal with equality in education when conditions appear so acute and insurmountable. Several of the principals reported that pupils *'never had any issues'* with sharing classes with pupils from other schools, because many of them would know each other socially outside school anyway. The benefit, however, of involvement in a cross-school initiative such as the Sharing Education Programme was that it *'widens their experience'.* Principals highlighted several reservations about cross-school collaborations among: '*the older generation because our society here hasn't allowed that to happen really';* and some schools because of a fear of not being accountable for the results that pupils obtained in subjects they study for elsewhere.

I insist that they do three A-levels on-site ... and they can choose another A-level off site, and that's again my paranoia in the sense that I can stand over the results which are here and I'm accountable for ... the teachers who are here are accountable for the results. I can have little influence over what happens in another school. [Principal]

Monitoring individual needs, using school data & target setting

Principals described in detail the different methods they employ to assess pupils' learning needs and the interventions they then use to help pupils achieve the best they can.

We try as far as possible to treat every pupil individually and to look at what their problems are, what their aspirations are, what their needs are and so on. [Principal]

It was clear from the data that community workers also provide a key role in identifying factors within their community which negatively impact upon the individual and collective educational progression of young people. Their work includes: an ongoing monitoring of the young people and children in their area; and their provision of intervention-type services aimed at steering these young people away from destructive pathways. In doing this, they provide alternative activities and personal support and mentoring and appear to have a community guardian-type role. One school used a 'pupil pursuit' method of monitoring the needs of particular groups of pupils.

We have six teachers who are assigned to a particular pupil, and they the follow the pupil around for a day, the pupil doesn't know they're being followed around, they [teachers] then report back on how much the pupil interacted with the teacher on that particular day; did they not ask questions? Were they isolated? [Principal]

Other schools used particular computer programmes and tests to both track pupils' progress and stretch their individual capabilities.

Success Maker Enterprise is basically an adaptive computer system ... we use it every day. [Pupils] are timetabled, every day, for 15 minutes a day for six weeks ... it does both ends of the scale; it stretches your more able, and it also provides extra support for your weaker ones ... the teachers will identify what area they want to focus on and then they set at that level ... This is a system that has been proven to work. [Principal]

We pick up the information from the feeder primaries, things like reading scores. Then we do CAT tests. We then have a grade cycle ... there times a year, teachers put in grades and we then produce a spreadsheet, and then we ask teachers to identify underachieving pupils ... there are two strands to that ... underachieving in one particular subject or underachieving right across ... It's the ones who are underachieving right across that would be our target group ... to see what programme we can put in place ... It would tend to be the most disaffected children. [Principal]

Other principals said that they reflected on their school strengths, structure and intake characteristics to see where extra support could be put in place.

History ... has been a very successful subject ... there's something happening in History that we need to replicate in other subjects. The question that we now ask ourselves is "what is History getting right that we can share with other areas of the school to try and raise performance across the board"? [Principal]

Another principal stated that, in some subjects, they have allowed pupils to sit exams after one year of study instead of two, as their internal data had shown that some pupils' (particularly boys') performance began to fall after one year of an A-level course. A third principal claimed that their school had a growing reputation for looking after pupils with

special educational needs, which was a change in direction from their usual intake, and as such, '*we're going to have to look at a different model of provision for them'*. Tracking pupil progress was also a key part of these monitoring processes. A few principals mentioned using baseline data, particularly data from Year 10, to see which pupils may not be on target to get Cs or higher in their GCSE exams. In one school, the following support was put in place: '*We would then provide a mentoring programme for them, so a number of teachers would mentor students one-to-one, for fifteen minutes of whatever, every two weeks or half an hour every two weeks, and the teachers volunteer to do that'*. Tracking individual pupils' progress in the years before GCSE was deemed to be a challenging task because of the huge amount of data involved across ten or more subjects.

Intergenerational engagement with schools

A key theme in regards to drivers of achievement within The Diamond was the level of connection that pupils' families had with the schools they attended.

Our average attendance for parents' night would be 95% ... there would not be a single parent that I could identify who would have opted out of their child's education once the child has come through the gates. [Principal]

However, as one principal stated, given the issues facing some parents, sometimes '*the child has to be congratulated for getting to school in the first place'.* A child's sense of connection to a school could be a result of other family members having attended previously or being currently at the school too, or having parents or grandparents who regularly engaged with the school, not just as parents of pupils, but as school staff: '*we tried to bring them in as classroom assistants, dinner ladies, just an extra pair of hands'.* Some principals identified areas where parents could support their children in their education, and ran courses based on addressing those needs. Another principal spoke about courses for parents that were not directly focused on supporting the child's learning, but on giving the parents qualifications for themselves.

Now our parents ... do their courses, I think they could've started NVQs ... It had a greater effect on the parents, it gave them self-esteem, and I suppose that had to rub off on the children, because if you hadn't, you know, where would the children have been? [Principal]

Pupils from both primary and post-primary schools talked about their immediate and extended family members who attended their schools, and how this had sometimes encouraged them to want to go to a particular school or added to their enjoyment of school. One mother described how working positively with the teachers can promote a tailored and realistic educational path for children. The Catholic mothers from The Diamond who were interviewed described the primary schools attended by the children as being '*absolutely brilliant', 'really supportive',* and '*very approachable'.* A difference to note between Catholic and Protestant mothers was that Catholic mothers discussed the school environment as a place with which they seemed to be more engaged in and that this was an expectation of the school on parents of the children who attend it. The Catholic mothers spoke of how they '*make you come into school'* and they embrace this describing it as '*another good thing'.* There appeared to a more open-door policy within the Catholic maintained school their children attended, which made these mothers feel that they '*could be up talking to the teacher every day if you want to'.* Getting an appointment to meet with a teacher seems easy and without stress in that '*if I can't get you that day, I'll make an appointment, I'll make sure I'll see you';* this is encouraged by school staff/teachers from '*the first meeting'.*

There is also appears to be a close monitoring from the Catholic primary schools on their pupils' progress and they make time to engage face-to-face with parents around their child's welfare and education. One mother described attending '*at least four or five meetings*

throughout the year' and claimed that *'everything's very closely monitored in the school'*. An interesting point was made by one of the Catholic mothers about the necessity to distinguish the roles of the parent and the teacher/school in the child's education; placing emphasis on the importance and influence of the parent; and equating her role in her child education on the same level as the teachers'. She stated: *'I think it's a parents' job to educate their child. It's the teacher's job to teach them, they don't control, if they don't have the support of the parents, they can't do it on their own'.* This respondent displays a strong sense of control and confidence in her ability as a parent educator and in dialogue with teachers:

"Listen, you may think I'm overbearing, it's my job to make sure that my child is educated, it's your job to teach them ... if they've no homework I'm going to be asking: Why have they no homework?" That's my job. I have no problem doing it. [Parent]

Community workers from the area described how the process of engagement with local parents that started from primary school could ultimately lead to community capacity building and a sense of shared vision for the future which can then be brought back into the community and hopefully create *'the next generation, the next level of community development workers in the area'.* A principal of a Catholic maintained primary school serving the area reported however that in the 1990s when the school's parent-teacher association was started, *'they were fantastic, the hall was packed'*, but more recently, people have become *'fed up with the whole emphasis on trying to get people involved ... It's hard to get people in now. And the ones you get in are the ones who don't need to come in'.*

We had grandparents' day there Friday week ago. The place was packed out ... this year we did the Wake up and Shake up ... It's a children's aerobics programme, we invited the grandparents in to do it ... there was mass at 9.30, we did a big assembly for them. And then the choir sang for them and then we had a cup of tea and biscuits. And it's always a great day ... And we audited the parents there for our development plan, and we got a really good response. We tried to make it, things we do well, things we could improve ... some of the stuff was totally out of our control, like less holidays. But some of it was really thoughtful. Most of it we have been able to act upon. [Principal]

Another principal recalled knocking on doors to introduce herself before their children would be applying to go to school, or to ask why children had not been at school and to remind parents of their responsibility to send their child to school. This principal also recalled the beginning of the parent-teacher association, which gained traction because of the effort parents could see the school making to help their children embrace new things which had not been done before. Similarly, another principal outlined the efforts made to engage parents and how this impacted on a child's success.

Once the parents could see that we were going to pantomimes, or we were going to have music, that we were able to sing ... the parents came on board. Because they said, "you actually love them". I think for the first-time parents realised that somebody really did love their child just as much as they did. [Principal]

When I was vice-principal, I spent an awful lot of my time meeting parents on an individual basis to try and re-establish a relationship ... some parents just don't connect with the school ... maybe it's something to do with their own experience of school ... but ultimately both we and they want the same thing, we want their child to do the best that they possibly can, and if you can work together and the child can see that you can work together then ... you've a better chance of getting the child to succeed. [Principal]

School-community collaboration
Amongst pupils from a local primary school, there was a sense of allegiance and pride in their school and they felt that their school was the preferred school for people in their area.

There was a sense that the school was viewed as a community space in that most of the children from the local community attended it. From the pupil's perspective, the school was attended by their friends and *'everyone in The Fountain goes to this school'*. A principal of another primary school described the ways the local community uses the school facilities.

There is a community choir that uses [the school] two nights a week, Monday and Thursday. We have a local singing group who have their yearly show here. We've had local community groups ask to use the hall for meetings, and that's never been a problem ... Under Extended Schools, we had the Bridge to Health programme, and that had things aimed at parents; we had Fantasy Football to try to get fathers involved in the school work ... There's a great sense of community and always was in this area ... you come into this school and there is homeliness and warmth. [Principal]

A principal of a post-primary school explained that partnership with local community groups helped to tackle social problems and provided much-needed counselling to pupils and families, especially given that teachers don't have the expertise or time to adequately deal with family issues.

We're trained as subject specialists and then we're trained as teachers, we're no trained as social workers and we're not trained as counsellors, but you do spend an awful lot of your time trying to support families and trying to access the kind of support out there. We would work very closely here with the greater Shantallow Area and Partnership, who would be able to put in place the kind of support that some families and kids need. [Principal]

Community workers divulged that, sometimes, they have provided access to psychological /intervention services for young people and families for needs which had not been picked up in school, perhaps, because the young person had already disengaged from school. They stressed that these needs *'should have been picked up in the early stages, to help support the young people'.* The positive impact that Extended Schools funding has had on involving the community in school life was also reported by principals.

There are different projects going on that provide support or advice to a parent who's having a difficulty with a child. Last year we opened the 3G pitch which we put up with the support of Sport Northern Ireland ... at night time, our car park is completely bunged ... three or four nights of the week you have all the local primary schools in, you have footballers in, you have Gaelic in ... Within a very short time that becomes self-financing, and it's a great resource for the community. [Principal]

Other school-community collaborations were particularly focused on addressing underachievement, building the self-esteem of males and re-engaging them in education.

We had a programme called the Life Programme which involved the Fire Service ... it was a Year 10 group and you can just see that their self-esteem was enhanced by being part of that … It's the kind of thing that we have to do with this group, especially boys. [Principal]

There's a Waterside group involving the local feeder primaries and the secondary and we are trying to build relations with the local community groups ... it's about those boys that feel disengaged. They don't see any future ... It's trying to change that mentality. [Principal]

The old Gas yard has been developed for community use, and it is the Bogside/ Brandywell Initiative. That's the umbrella group, and others operate under that, for example, the health forum have done fantastic work, for everybody ... Now, within the same group, about 12 years ago, they identified underachievement in the area, and they had funded a programme called Success Maker Enterprise, for [names five schools serving the area]. [Principal]

Pupils feeling listened to in school

There was a sense from the school-level data that some of the schools serving The Diamond were making a conscious effort to provide a range of avenues for accessing student voice and taking pupils' views more seriously. Pupils gave examples of reward schemes that had been implemented; and principals reported how they had asked for pupil feedback on how to increase the effectiveness of the teaching in the school.

I'm in the school council ... we made an award scheme and we took it from [named school] they gave us the idea ... It's better than getting bad comments and good comments, like wee stickers ... just a wee bit of confidence boost. [Pupil focus group]

There's a free-standing response sheet ... and we've revamped the student council just last month ... we have a student development plan ... the aim is precisely that, we want them to look at how do they learn best. [Principal]

With 1500 pupils you've a very rich source of evidence on their experience of teaching and learning, and that's something that we have to be, have to be aware of as well. And one of the things that makes those interviews with the 200-odd boys for UCAS worthwhile is that I do get those insights, without looking for them, you do get a sense of where there is good practice going on or where there are issues. [Principal]

The challenge for one particular principal was asking for pupil feedback on the teaching within school without victimising teachers.

Every year in the last term, partly through the student council ... we would sit down with Sixth Formers and ask them about their experience of the school, without becoming personalised to individuals, about how they think that we could do things better, and we do listen to that. But ... it's fraught ... it's a very fine balance. [Principal]

The empowerment and elevation of the voices of the wider community was also seen as important. Effective consultation, it was claimed, could more accurately target areas of need or find out: Why people are not using services already there? What works and what does not work? And how to improve it Community workers described how funding initiatives have focused on building capacity and promoting empowerment of interface residents. The aim of these projects is to build better relationships between Catholic and Protestant communities, and such programmes see education as an integral part of what they do.

Breadth of curricula and interactive teaching styles

Across both primary and post-primary schools, pupils stated that one of the key things which helped them to work hard at school was simply '*enjoying it'*. Enjoyment of school was created through two mechanisms: studying subjects which interested them; and being taught in creative ways by teachers who engaged with them.

I was really excited [to start post-primary school] because no more staying in one class all day and getting bored ... I'm getting more or less straight A*'s now. [Pupil focus group]

We've a Spanish teacher, we love Spanish, but she doesn't make it enjoyable. She is strict ... she gives orders; she doesn't help us. [Pupil focus group]

Post-primary pupils made reference to the subject specialisms that several school across the city of Derry/Londonderry offer, and that these specialisms were what made them want to apply to go to those schools in the first place. Interest and enjoyment of school at the primary-school level was also linked to the people who they shared their school experience with; children stated that one of the things they most liked about school was '*meeting new friends and teachers'.* The nature of academic work was also important. Children and young

people: reported enjoying creative subjects and kinaesthetic learning experiences such as art and science; and recalled learning activities such as human body lessons and CPR demonstrations. When asked what would make school more fun or enjoyable, the dominant focus of their response was aimed towards having more diverse learning topics such as: *'more human body work';* more *'easy'* work *'like temperatures';* and more diverse learning approaches. IT access was also reported as having a positive impact on learning in terms of making learning fun, especially for boys.

Alta Maths ... we find that has had a significant impact. They do the quizzes and the parents can go on and check it. When it comes to writing ... the boys were fed up getting it finished ... It was killing them. Now ... word-processing ... you don't have the hassle of having to have all the writing right ... it has spell check and punctuation check. [Principal]

Introducing a competitive element to learning was also claimed by one principal to have a positive impact on the engagement of boys.

A few years ago, we looked at our library borrowing, and the girls were nearly three times the rate of the boys. We brought in Accelerated Reading and the Fantasy Football ... and, for the first time ever, our boys passed the girls in borrowing books. It's fantastic ... there's improvement all around. But it definitely has narrowed the gap. [Principal]

Another principal argued that exposure to a range of new activities and subjects had the potential to raise pupils' self-esteem: *'all of a sudden they were being trained up [in choir] and put in [for competitions] ... they certainly ... made a very good representation of themselves'.*

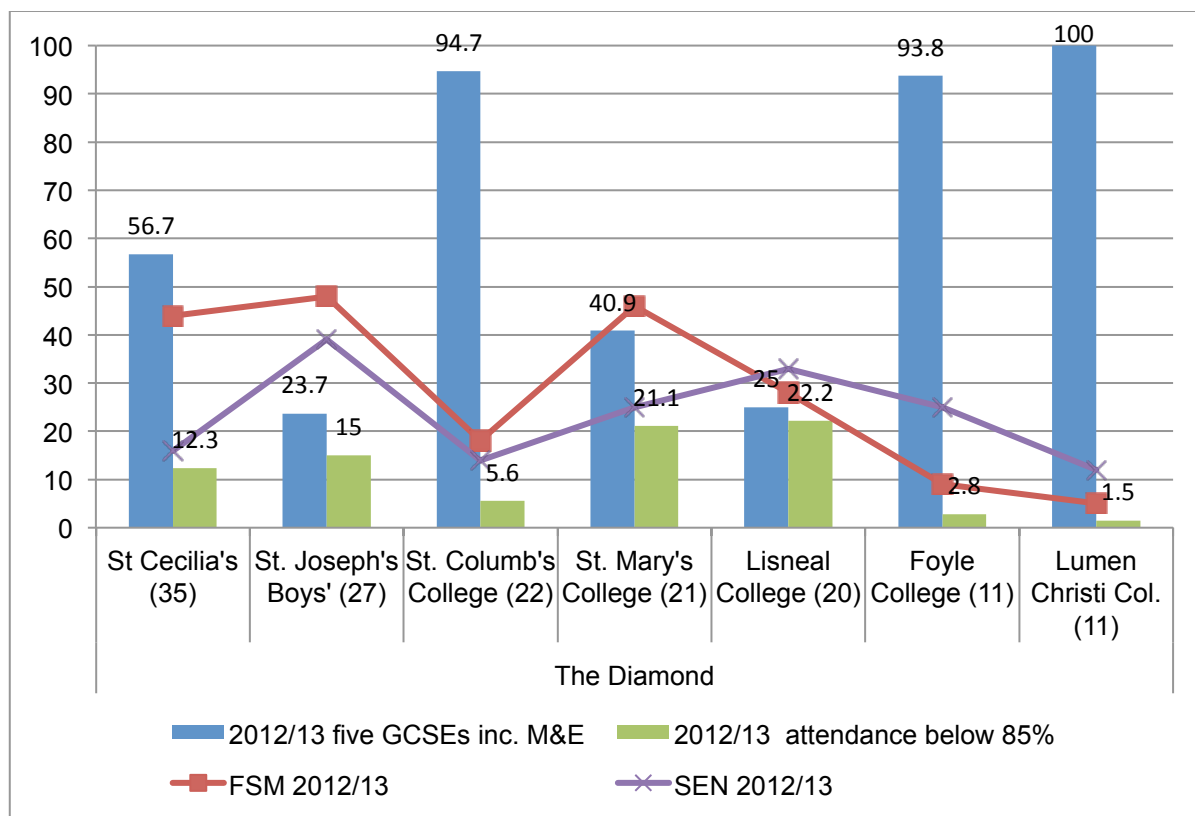*Low rates of high-absenteeism*

Figure 2.5: GCSE attainment, attendance, and average FSM entitlement rates – The Diamond

The rate of high absenteeism in the Ward for the 2012/13 school year averages 11.5%, ranging from 1.5% in Lumen Christi to 22.2% in Lisneal College. This is one of the lowest in the ILiAD sample. Figure 2.5 above shows a positive relationship between FSM entitlement and high absenteeism in The Diamond – one increases as the other increases – and that these variables have a negative relationship with attainment – as they increase, attainment rates generally decrease. However, some schools have similar rates of absenteeism but have different rates of GCSE attainment (including Maths and English). For example, St Mary's College has an absenteeism rate of 21.2% and Lisneal College has an absenteeism rate of 22.2%, but St Mary's College has a GCSE attainment rate of 40.9% (St Mary's also had a much higher rate of FSM-entitled pupils, but a slightly lower proportion of pupils with any SEN compared to Lisneal). The data indicate that there are perhaps other factors at play within these schools that can help explain the differential achievement. St Cecilia's and St Joseph's Boys schools also have similar absenteeism rates and similar FSM rates (although St Cecilia's had more than 20% fewer pupils with any SEN), but St Cecilia's (a girls' school) has almost double the rate of pupils getting five GCSEs including Maths and English as St Joseph's (a boys' school). This indicates that the percentage of pupils with any SEN in a school should be considered when schools are compared against each other in terms of their achievement rates. More generally, the results also suggest that absenteeism must be factored into any explanation of why Catholic Wards of high deprivation (in this instance, The Diamond) are out-performing Protestant Wards of similarly high (or lower) deprivation.

2.5. Micro-level drivers of attainment in The Diamond

The Diamond data identified six micro-level drivers around: high levels of youth club involvement; individual resilience; family support; positive adult education experiences; feeling connection to a community; and positive experiences of nursery and primary school.

High levels of youth club involvement (Fountain area)
Principals and pupils from The Fountain area of The Diamond highlighted the role that the local youth club played in promoting achievement.

It's a very good youth club ... Part of it is just about keeping those young people engaged and away from the interface ... We have identified those young people who are at risk ... and we are trying ... to come up with programmes ... whether it's revision programmes ... where, instead of them staying here after school, we would talk to the youth leader and we would say, here is the particular programme that this guy needs to do, you do it with him ... They prefer that environment to being in school. [Principal]

Pupils themselves reported the ways in which their youth club activities currently link with their schoolwork, and ways in which they could integrate their activities more. Several pupils mentioned how attendance at the youth club or youth groups is an integral part of their daily or weekly routines: '*well today, I'll go home, and then do Scottish dancing, go home do my homework, then get my dancing shoes and my dancing uniform on and go'; 'I go home, do my homework, get changed, get some money, go on my bike, go and call for someone and then I would go to the youth club'.* However, pupils acknowledged that there were certain obstacles and decisions that they made which made homework difficult. Generally, there was a sense of them taking some responsibility for this. Attending after school activities and non-prioritisation of homework had consequences: '*don't go to youth club afterschool and don't stay too long, because then when you go home your mum might not let you do it and then you'll have to do it in school in the morning'.*

Principals, pupils, and community workers all made reference to particular personal characteristics of high achievers from the area. The consensus was that these were the people who had an individual drive, resilience, and a motivation to do well.

I have one girl in University in London ... she wasn't going to do the Transfer [test] ... she went off to Foyle, she was quite a lively character. But she got there on her own strength, there was nobody pushing her for home ... all sorts of problems, but she made it. [Principal]

I want to be a footballer or an athlete ... but I still want to do better in my grades so I can fall back on something. [Pupil focus group]

Primary school pupils reported that academic ability needed to be coupled with emotional maturity in that certain skills are needed to achieve highly, such as good listening skills. The highest performing students, they claimed '*would always listen to the teacher*' and '*don't get distracted*'. They also highlighted as essential an ability to be organised and to maintain learning consistently throughout the school. Moreover, some pupils reported that the drive to work hard came from within them, not from their families.

R: Wherever I wanted to go, it was down to me, and they were never forceful or anything, I would just always go and do my homework, it was never a bother.

R: It's just down to the individual.

R: I was never expected to do anything ... so they just kind of said, "Do what you want". I enjoyed school, still enjoy school ... .and I kept doing it. [Pupil focus group]

However, it was reported that an overly strong drive to achieve could lead to problems such as social isolation. One pupil described how he '*left my friends*' because they '*started to do worse stuff*'. A grammar school principal spoke about pupils who put themselves under too much stress and pressure caused by '*an individual kind of competiveness' which, he concluded, 'we would perceive as a problem in the school*'. However, a degree of competition may sometimes be a form of positive peer pressure, as reported by one pupil in a grammar school: '*if you're in a class and everyone else is getting 90s and you're getting 70, [you then think] Right, I have to try harder to make sure I stay at the top level*'.

Principals reported that sometimes they know a pupil has the ability to achieve very highly, but they do not have the motivation or self-esteem to achieve their learning aims. In these cases, pupils '*need to be encouraged ... you have to push and cajole*'. This can be achieved, one principal stated, by '*building up good habits of study ... No matter how good you are you still need to have the discipline to spend a certain amount of time tonight doing a certain amount of work*'. Community workers in the area spoke about their provision of programmes which have been strategically created in order to work towards building a young person's sense of self-esteem.

Teaching young people about self-respect, self-esteem, self-confidence, looking at long-term strategies to break that vicious circle ... a lot of young people that we have caught early on have changed their ways and have gone down the route of education. [Community worker]

Family support and high expectations of parents
Many respondents spoke about the importance of family support and high expectations in driving education success. For some pupils in The Diamond, parental support and high expectations around education were norms of family life.

Being from disadvantaged areas ... has less of an effect than what your parents attitude is, because I'm quite lazy, and if my parents didn't make me do stuff I probably wouldn't.

It was a lot more just the expectation that I would work hard and do well in school ... there was never really any, "Aw, go and do your homework", because you have to do your homework, that's just what you have to do. [Pupil focus group]

Parental expectations were believed by principals to be as important as individual ability in terms of succeeding academically. However, one pupil highlighted the risk that overly high-expectations could be detrimental.

Getting into the grammar school is, as much about parental aspirations ... the single most important factor is if you have students wanting to be here and supportive parents. [Principal]

There are people I know whose mummy and daddy picked their A-levels for them and really influenced what they wanted to do ... they didn't do really well and now they're repeating. Sometimes mummy and daddy can have a bad influence. [Pupil]

Principals reported that while high expectations were one thing, parents also needed to help their children embed good study habits.

It is important there to ensure that they are working at home, that the work that they're doing at home is reinforcing what they're doing in school ... by the time they come to University, if they haven't got good study habits put in place a lot of them just can't cope. [Principal]

Some mothers from the Ward explained that the drive to see their children achieve highly came from: (a) not wanting them to make the same mistakes they made in the past; and/or (b) a desire to ensure that they will not experience the same negativity in school that they experienced. For example, one mother recalled how as a child, she witnessed children being separated in primary school into ability groups; and was *'left at the back of the classroom'.*

All of the pupils from a primary school focus group unanimously stated that they received support at home with their school work. Their home schedule had some structure and planning to it; their support came from parents and grandparents; and, for some children homework tasks took place in different houses. Mothers from the Ward also reported that they bring in the siblings to help with homework thus creating extra layer of support within the family and situating education as a family task.

Having a close relationship with family members also helped to drive pupils to achieve because *'I want to make them proud, because if you get an A*, I just love going home and telling my mummy and daddy'.* Mothers from both communities stated that their biggest driver in supporting achievement was the love that they had for their children and their wish for a happy and secure future for their child. For mothers from a Catholic background, the instilling of a sense of ownership over their educational path in the child's Early Years' was seen as key factor in facilitating their likelihood to achieve. The 'path' referred to a visual concept in which the child is actively travelling on and therefore has an inbuilt sense of a forward direction, moving forward, towards a goal. Embedding this in their children in the early years was very important to them. One Catholic mother stated that she feels that the children *'have to have something to work forward to'* beyond *'signing the dole or going into a call centre'.*

Positive adult education experiences of parent/mother are changing norms
Parental education levels and positive experiences of education were identified as drivers of achievement in The Diamond. Some pupils talked about their parents' qualifications and

jobs, and how the insights their work gave them helped them think about what they did or did not want to do with their own lives.

My dad switched careers a lot, he was a computer scientist and molecular biologist and now he's self-employed, so he's worked all over the world, I wanna be in a job ... like that because my parents have travelled and they've got all these interesting stories. [Pupil]

None of the mothers from The Fountain area who participated felt that they had achieved their full potential in school. There were different reasons forwarded for this which included: cultural, gender, and family expectations; fractured teacher/pupil relationships; and inappropriate teaching styles. Their aspiration was to leave school and go *'straight into work',* a job which did not require a high standard of education. It was also evident that a combination of their personal ability to reflect on their current needs as well as having access to resources provided by the local community centre, led these women to redefine themselves as adult learners, therefore, diminishing some of the negative feelings that they had carried with them from their own school experiences. Two of these mothers spoke about their current experience of being engaged in Adult Education programmes at the local community centre facilitated by a tutor who came from the local technical college. Both women describe this experience as having a positive impact on their lives, increasing their levels of self-confidence as well as enabling them to participate more fully in the education of their children.

Catholic mothers from the Ward generally appeared to have more confidence in how they approached the education of their children and demonstrated a greater sense of feeling empowered. They seem to accept their own role in their decision to leave school without education and recalled that at the time they thought *'I'm going into the factory to get money',* because *'the craic was good and you had your style that your mother couldn't afford to give to you'.* There is a sense of both a personal and group resilience which appeared less robust in the mothers from The Fountain. They appeared less likely to accept or honour power structures which might exist in the education system; and were determined to challenge poor practice as a result of their own experience. This is a marked change in their acceptance of the cultural norm of leaving school early at the age of sixteen; and provides an insight into how these women have used their personal awareness of inhibitors to their own education as a powerful driver, both for their own education, and for that of their children. This is underpinned by a capacity to learn from experience and a capacity to understand that they are active agents in their own educational future, and the future of their children. Consequently, these parents appear to feel both empowered to challenge and willing to engage with schools leading to them having a more direct input into their child's in-school education.

It was clear in both Protestant and Catholic communities that education was understood, by some, as something beyond the norm, and that third level education was still in the early stages of being introduced into this community. However, there is a noted difference in the stage of development between Catholic and Protestant mothers. Catholic mothers appeared more likely to have returned to adult education and appear, as a result, to have more confidence and knowledge in dealing with aspects of the educational system. There is a sense that the Catholic children are benefitting from their mothers having had exposure to adult education and its benefits regarding improved self-esteem and job prospects. Equally, there is a sense that the notion of education as a life enhancing is newer to the Protestant mothers. However, negative community attitudes around education are being challenged; a new sense of determination is evident; there appears to be a shift in mind-set in terms of educational pathways; and many families from the Fountain now perceive that level education is attainable. Indeed, one mother from the Fountain suggested that University was now becoming a *'natural part'* of young people's educational ambition.

Feeling connection to a community

Derry/Londonderry was described by a community worker as being made up of *'proud people'* within *'small communities, parish like, even though it is a city, people know each other, families stay in and around the city'.* Mothers from the Fountain stated that: their grandparents and parents have lived there; and that in some cases, families have been here for at least four generations. One EWO described The Diamond Ward as having *'old established families'* and being *'quite settled'.* This knowledge offers a deeper understanding of how norms of achievement have been embedded in family patterns. Life in The Fountain was described by pupils with a sense of familiarity and intimacy and there was a very strong sense of belonging to the area. The pupils liked the fact that people and places, including their schools, were convenient and accessible to them. There was also a sense of emotional bond as some of the children had family living close by as well as friends; these relationships were easily accessible, tangible, as their friends and family members lived within walking distance. Their conceptualisations of 'area' included their street, their community (The Fountain), *'Northern Ireland'*, and social areas within the community, such as the youth club. Generally, these pupils embraced the challenge of meeting new people and talked about: friends from [named Catholic maintained school] who they frequently *'meet in the shop';* and *'going over to the Waterside to see friends.* However, these respondents made no reference to the geographically neighbouring communities of The Bogside and The Top of the Hill. In contrast, when asked to describe the area that they felt they belonged to, post-primary pupils from Catholic maintained schools commonly claimed that they *'just feel like Derry ... There's not a really big divide between Creggan, Bishop Street, everybody just knows everybody, kind of'.* In summary, while close-knit community can be a driver of achievement in terms of peer motivation and support, community workers reported that if problems occur, it can lead to *'people withdrawing, being harder to reach'*.

One principal of a Catholic maintained school linked the school's academic success to the ethos of the school as a school which contributes to wider society, not just the local area.

[Success] also comes from our belief in ... providing an opportunity for our pupils to contribute to society. They are talented, they are very able children, and, therefore, they have a responsibility to use those talents and use those abilities for other people, and that's a huge part of our ethos from the very first day they came in here. [Principal]

This particular principal also referred to the Catholic ethos of the school, which she believed helped the pupils *'know that they are valued, they are talented, they are part of a community'*, 'community' here being referred to in more of a psycho-social way.

Positive early education experiences of nursery and primary school

Pupil participants in the research reported positive early experiences of nursery and primary school and a sense of attachment with the school environment. All of the participants stated that they had wanted to come to the school they currently attended; and most had attended the adjoining nursery for one or two years prior to entering Primary One. Pupils were able to recall memories of particular events such as being introduced to new experiences such as *'chicks being brought into the school from outside'* and that they were *'able to touch them'*. They also recalled their play experiences of nursery positively. Furthermore, pupils reported the benefits of having people in their class who were in the same nursery and/or primary school as them, in terms of helping them to settle into life in a different school.

2.6. Macro-level inhibitors of attainment in The Diamond

The following seven macro-level inhibitors were identified in The Diamond data: a lack of community cohesiveness and a fractured community identity for Protestants; continuing division/conflict between communities; academic selection; current culture of education

policy; official statistics hiding key issues; the impact of recession and poverty; and unstable funding for early years, youth and community providers.

A lack of community cohesiveness and a fractured community identity for Protestants
It was clear from the data that several macro-level factors have together led to both the 'siege mentality' within the Fountain area of The Diamond and a broader fracturing of community identity for Protestants which has limited the access to certain educational opportunities for the community. For example, one principal noted that '*there's a strong community identity*' within the Fountain, but across the wider geographic area of Derry/Londonderry: '*you are talking about different Protestant communities that are all different ... when it comes to getting them to work together, they would prefer to apply for the money in their own community than come under the umbrella of the school, and that's just the way it is ... apart from the community groups there wouldn't be connections'.* The same principal felt that the Protestant churches were also partly to blame for the lack of wider community cohesiveness: '*The churches ... are just not engaging. When I started teaching all the local clergymen came in on a Thursday morning to take classes ... Now they'll come in maybe once in a blue moon to take an assembly ... Our children think they are Protestant but they don't even know what church they belong to*'. Furthermore, another principal reported that even within the Fountain area there were divisions and class differences between families and young people which detracted from the cohesion.

You would find ... children in the Fountain that didn't attend the youth club ... because you didn't really want to be associated with those children, because there are tiers ... there is like a pecking order within the Fountain ... there were those children who played in the streets and there were those children who didn't play in the streets in the Fountain, and so ... there is a difference, and that's even within the community itself. [Principal]

The history of the demographics on the west bank of the city were also referred to as a contributing factor behind the differential achievement levels of children from The Fountain compared to other parts of The Diamond area and Derry/Londonderry more generally.

The [primary] school was built in the housing estate to keep the Protestant presence in the west bank, because over the last 20, 30 years we have seen a definite shift of the Protestant population to the Waterside. The problem now is that there are not enough pupils in the estate to fill the primary school, so people are being bussed over ... The children from the Fountain have a completely different outlook from the other pupils ... they have this mentality; they see themselves as the only Protestants on the west bank ... it's this thing about being under siege and so on. [Principal]

School amalgamations and falling demographics have left one state-controlled secondary school serving Derry City (and the ETI inspection report shows that numbers within it have been falling). According to EWOs and principals, the spatial detachment of this school from pupils from The Fountain has engendered several negative consequences.

People travelling long distances to the school, so their community may not be where their school is as well, they're going home to a different community. [EWO]

This poses challenges in that they have to deal with the attitudes and situations that they have been exposed to as part of their identity with their particular community. [EWO]

[This distance and separation] detracts from parents' ability to understand the role that they can play in supporting the education of their children ... If the school is just down the road, you feel a connection ... we tried to run things in the evenings, but it's too far for people to come. [Principal]

The children would be very loyal to their own particular areas, but it's trying to get them to have a loyalty to the school which is becoming more and more difficult. [Parent]

However, mothers from the Fountain demonstrated: an awareness of the Inspectorate report for the school their children attended; and a sense of pride in the reported improvement, indicating a certain sense of attachment, belonging, or identification with the school.

The provision of only one state-controlled secondary school for the city gives little choice to parents and pupils from The Fountain. An EWO described how children from feuding families and *'problem families'* are brought together in this situation, and in some cases, be taught in the same class, and that this in turn can be very disruptive for whole class. Options for state-controlled schooling at the primary level and state-controlled grammar school options were also limited for parents. For many Protestant parents in The Diamond Ward, there are: a very limited number of places available; and considerable distances involved to travelling elsewhere, further compounded by the fact that *'a lot of the parents don't have cars'.* Indeed, one principal pointed to demographics as a structural barrier against Protestants in the education system.

I think it is easier for Catholic pupils in Derry to transfer to non-Catholic schools than it is for non-Catholic students to transfer to a Catholic school, simply because of the numerical superiority of Catholics in Derry ... it's a harder decision for non-Catholics from the Waterside to transfer to a Catholic school. [Principal]

Within the data from focus groups with mothers from the Ward, both Catholic and Protestant respondents referred to the fact that they felt they had experienced discrimination because of their religious identity, but this was much more prevalent in the accounts of the Protestant women and they described the experience of discrimination to still be prevalent in their children's experience of education today.

Continuing division/conflict between communities

Pupils and principals gave multiple examples of continuing aggressive behaviour and sectarian tension within the Ward, particularly in and around the Fountain area. This included bomb-scares, petrol bombings, bricks and glass being thrown. The children from the Fountain identified three particular events which they did not like: '*The Twelfth of July'*, *'Lundy's Day'*, and '*The Riots'*.

I live beside the walls and sometimes at night time, people throw glasses around or start rows [Pupil].

There are problems at night; petrol bombs and so on ... So, they bring all these underlying problems as well to school [Principal].

I don't like The Twelfth of July because there's drunk people and they always get jailed and all ... that's what I hate about it. [Pupil]

The children also reported a fractured relationship with The Bogside and the Top of The Hill, (neighbouring nationalist communities):

That's why the put the fence up, because all The Bogside people tried to come over and tried to kill people and all; they (people from the Bogside) hate The Fountain ... we're surrounded by all them, that's why we get riots. [Pupil]

Some post-primary pupils reported being unbothered about or desensitised from these types of occurrences, but one pupil explicitly stated how it had affected her schoolwork.

Most of the time it's grand, but ... two years ago when I was doing my GCSEs, the night before my English Literature exam there was a bomb scare in my street and there was police and everything, I just couldn't revise, it was like a nightmare. [Pupil]

Some pupils talked in-depth of their scepticism regarding the structural (and school-level) efforts that had been made to encourage better community relations.

I think the City of Culture made Derry out to be all grand and brilliant, but living here, it's not like that ... there's still the whole divide between the Catholics and Protestants in Derry, like City of Culture didn't change that at all. [Pupil]

More should be done to make the two groups come together more because you're just growing up in two separate communities. [Pupil]

We were at [a cross-community event] the other week, it was so bad ... everybody just stayed in their own social group and it was boring. [Pupil]

It was clear that insularity and separation of the communities is deeply embedded. One principal of a Catholic maintained school reported having *'no Protestant children in the school'*: *'we would be very welcoming, but they just don't want to come here'*. Another principal of a controlled school said that some pupils from the Fountain *'had never been on Outer Bishop Street ... they had never been beyond the school ... Going back to what it was like 1980-1990'*. The historical context of the Ward and continuing legacies of the recent conflict, thus, place many local children at an educational disadvantage.

Academic selection

There was evidence within the data that the legacy and continuance of academic selection at the end of primary school has further disadvantaged many of the children from The Diamond who were already disadvantaged in other ways.

A principal of a primary school described how the perceived pressure and culture of grammar school simply put some children off even doing the transfer test. The principal stated that this was exacerbated by their belief that *'they felt they weren't socially good enough'*. The example was given of one pupil from the school who had gone to a grammar school, but who later left it because *'she missed her friends, she missed everything, she just couldn't do it';* another example was given of a child who had a *'very, very high intelligence'* but whose parents would not send her to a grammar school because she *'just wouldn't fit in'*.

I would've liked them [the pupils] to go to the secondary school [because] in the grammar school, you were given the information; you were guided as opposed to taught; our children needed taught; they'd enough to battle with in life without that [pressure] as well. [Principal]

While this belief was obviously borne out of concern for the children's wellbeing, it may have inadvertently reinforced children's expectations that a grammar education was not for them.

I wanted to go to [named grammar school] at one time but ... my friend went there the year before and it was way too hard for him. [Pupil]

Primary school pupils from the Ward associated various emotions with the transfer test, such as the effort required to prepare for and sit the test, outcomes of the test and the consequences of not getting the grades for the grammar school. There was a sense of finality associated with the grade or result they received; the grade predicted where they would go to school; and that this in turn predicted who their friends might be or not be. Some pupils talked about how, at age eleven, they didn't realise the impact that doing the transfer test would have on their life until they went to post-primary school.

I don't think I realised how impacting it was until after I had done it because I just came here and did it and I didn't realise that it was sort of determining my academic future; I didn't know about [named grammar school] until after the test and then I found out that this school only took people who got A's. [Pupil]

Pupils from the Ward who attended grammar schools had a perception about the '*easiness*' of secondary schools. It was also evident that the awareness of 'transfer test doers versus non-doers' or 'grammar versus secondary' created social cleavages between young people.

I don't go out on Bishop Street at all, it's just ... young people ... they'd be like, "Why are you out here in a [grammar school] uniform"? I don't know very many people round here that actually go to [named grammar school] ... I still think it would have been better if I went to [named secondary school]. [Pupil]

One principal explained how even teachers within a school '*could have a perceived notion of what the children from [the area] would be like*'. As a result, if children got to a grammar school, '*those that have got into the top classes will certainly detach themselves ... from that clique, and the others [who went to a secondary school] will probably stay together*'.

Another principal highlighted that a broader disadvantage was that the transfer test is an inflexible method of assessment and only rewards those who were good with written word. However, a grammar school principal claimed that academic selection provided social mobility.

There was a family; completely dyslexic, very bright, very intelligent, but just the written word meant absolutely nothing. [Principal]

My own view is that academic selection gives an opportunity to children from any social strata, once they get into the school; I think it benefits them enormously. [Principal]

Current culture of education policy – perfectionism in a time of cutbacks
Principals of schools which serve The Diamond had a number of concerns regarding current education policy, and felt that multiple changes were needed. Firstly, some principals described how the statutory curriculum was '*packed*'; teachers were too stretched, covering too many topics, and were left with little time to cater for the individual needs of pupils. One principal was primarily concerned that the focus on 'perfectionism' within schools had taken away the autonomy of pupils and responsibility for their own learning.

We have dumbed down what we expect in terms of responsibility and taking ownership of their learning. With PDMU it is supposed to be the other way around. I think that's a shame ... I think we are under scrutiny all the time, and we always have to be accountable, held accountable, for everything that is going on. [Principal]

The same principal was concerned that the current educational culture of '*always having something positive to say*' about every child's efforts at school, rather than highlighting the '*best of the best*' was not preparing children for the reality of life and work. Another principal reported that they could not devote any staff development days to '*softer issues*', because there was no time anymore: '*in the early years ... you didn't have that kind of huge academic grind or focus*'. A lack of time, space and teaching staff was highlighted by another principal as being a significant inhibitor of achievement, particularly in his school where there was a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs.

The idea of having a bigger unit or a bigger focus on kids for different reasons is fine in theory, but we don't have the space to put them in, and even if we did have the space to put them in, we don't have the people to provide that bespoke education. [Principal]

Several principals outlined that: the same funding formula is applied to secondary schools as it is for grammar schools; and that there is one curriculum for all at the post-primary level students despite the curriculum being unsuited to many of the pupils who attend secondary school. This, they further claimed, was particularly unfair to those pupils who were not academically-focused.

There are relatively few countries which have a dictated, standardised curriculum for all students at 13, 14 years of age. By that stage, many of them have already chosen particular routes; our students don't have that facility. [Principal]

A student in a secondary school who is struggling with English for the previous five or six years is expected to do GCSE French, that's nonsense. [Principal]

We embraced a skills-based curriculum at key stage 3, the moment it came out. We changed our focus in terms of the pedagogy of the classroom to meet that [Principal]

The difficulty in the education provision is ... the same curriculum for kids who aren't necessarily ... capable of doing the same curriculum ... and you're not providing any more funding ... I don't think anybody would really be annoyed to see secondary schools getting additional funding to deal with the additional problems that they have. [Principal]

Another principal explained why he believed the format of examinations at A and AS-Level were particularly unsuited to what he described as the study culture of working class males.

What it takes to get a kid good GCSEs is not the same thing that gets you good A-levels. The attitude of the boys ... is lastminute.com, and for a boy with reasonable intelligence, lastminute.com will still get you decent GCSE results ... but that simply does not work at A-level and too many of them ... don't pick up on the fact that they have to work steadily from the start of Year 13 if they want to make ... progress. [Principal]

Official statistics hiding key issues
Several principals who were interviewed believed that there were multiple issues with some official statistical reporting, particularly in regard to poverty within the Ward. Firstly, the Free School Meals (FSM) indicator was regarded as masking actual poverty levels.

Most of our intake ... is not what you would define as the sons and daughters of solicitors and dentists and well-to-do families. They are two working parents, largely, and they're not on free school meals. [Principal]

We are finding it very difficult to get parents to avail of FSM. We are sitting on 27-28% but I know the figures should be much higher. It's a Protestant mind-set. There's some stigma attached to FSM, but there shouldn't be. The other disadvantage we face is Extended Schools criteria, the way we were judged to get Extended Schools money is on the postcodes in deprived Wards, but I know there are pupils in more affluent areas where the house they are living in is being let out to the housing executive ... so even though their postcode is Knightsbridge, they are from a deprived background. We need to look at how we define deprived children. Postcodes don't do it and FSM doesn't do it. [Principal]

Another issue that was raised concerned how 'achievement' was officially reported. Principals felt that what is measured in schools is not the full range of skills that a child has.

What schools measure is what's valued, and often what's valued is not the whole range of skills that a child has ... they start focussing in Primary 4, they start focussing on the transfer test. [Principal]

A post-primary principal felt that the Inspectorate should give more attention to the 'added value' that a school brings and the progression made by children (rather than standardised achievement levels), especially if there is a broad intake in a school ability-wise.

Because we have a broad intake, all our kids aren't going to leave here with 3 A's at the end of A-level ... there'll be other kids who get B's and C's and that will be them having had value added to where they were at the start, and that's something that the Inspectorate seems to be getting a bit of grief about ... are they really aware of the value that's been added to a child that comes in on one level and leaves on another but maybe isn't a high flyer at the same time? [Principal]

Decreasing numbers or small numbers in a school can also result in a *'bad year'* making things look *'awful'.* However, one principal felt that educational authorities were now more aware of this.

If there were only ... five in the year, and only one child succeeds ... do that as a percentage, and the percentage looks absolutely horrific ... The Inspectorate knows about this, they've got tighter within this last few years. [Principal]

Recession and poverty - role models not coming back to the area

Poverty was understood to be experienced by both Protestant and Catholic communities in The Diamond Ward area. Community workers and principals claimed that those who do manage to get out of poverty commonly decide to leave the area.

A lot of the people within the Fountain area have genuinely left because they want to have children, they want their children to have gardens, and they want bigger homes even though there is a great community spirit, great neighbourhoods. [Community worker]

In the Creggan ... those that achieved ... moved on moved out ... In the Fountain ... they move out and they move away and they aspire to other things. So, you're left with a low attainment catchment area. [Principal]

This suggests that the cycle of poverty continues as the benefits from those who have managed to get out of it do not stay around to share it with the community. The positive aspects of their experience, their knowledge on how to beat poverty and achieve, is seen to be, therefore, lost to the community, stays in the immediate individual's families' life, it is not transferred or given back. This raises questions around the impact that this leaves on the psyche of the community left behind; they are not good enough, something to be left behind. It might be interesting to tie this into the psychology of the Fountain in terms of what is described by one community worker as its *'siege mentality'* and feelings of being *'left behind'* and '*isolated'.*

Moreover, for the current generation, the economic climate is very challenging; jobs are scarce and competition for them is high. Grammar school pupils also claimed that they wanted to leave Derry, and whether they ever came back was contingent on labour market prospects. These pupils also expressed a preference to leave Derry to attend University.

R: Unless you get a computing degree, there aren't any jobs really, are there?

R: You look at Magee as not a great University; that's just the way Derry people think.

R: Depends where the jobs are; I want to get out of here for a little while. [Grammar pupils]

Unstable or inadequate funding for early years, youth and community providers
The Diamond Ward and the wider area have been relatively successful at securing inward investment recently that could indirectly improve educational aspirations and achievement. However, one principal emphasised the need to pour more resources into education from preschool into primary; and another principal made reference to the continuing negative '*legacy'* of the past when investment levels west of the Bann were lower than in Belfast.

I think it's very difficult to restore the imbalance that a child has experienced by 11 years of age, you need to pour resources ... you need to look at methodology from children as young as four onwards. You're now playing catch-up at this stage. [Principal]

There was an awful lot of deprivation, and I think that has had an impact. [Principal]

Community workers in the Ward also described how their work is impacted by the ongoing cycle of inadequate and insecure funding. As a consequence, their jobs and the initiatives they roll out in the community have a distinct sense of vulnerably. These community workers described how they have spent years building up relationships with young people and helped them negotiate through educational and life stages. It is equally clear from the data that young people from the Ward have a *'feel good factor'*, in terms of their relationship with community workers and the support network they provide. To remove the funding which sustains these networks is likely to further persuade young people that their personal and educational development is not prioritised.

2.7. Meso-level inhibitors of attainment in The Diamond

Analysis of the data from The Diamond Ward identified a total of seven meso-level inhibitors of attainment: belief in a finite, 'natural' ability level of a child; overuse of IT; schools struggling to engage with parents; the (historically) negative reputation of schools that serve The Fountain, inadequate transition support; boys feeling pressured into doing STEM subjects; and average' children falling through the cracks at school.

Belief in a finite, 'natural' ability level of a child
Related to the macro-level inhibitor of academic selection, one of the meso-level inhibitors was the reported belief by one principal of a school (that had served predominantly Protestant children from the Ward) that children had a 'natural' ability level beyond which they could not achieve. This was seen to concur with the previously reported evidence of a subliminal, embedded sense of low expectations for this community.

A child is born with certain intelligence, there is very little you can do ... that is the child's natural intelligence ... if a pupil is going to succeed, they're going to succeed. [Principal]

Overuse of IT
A primary school principal from the Ward stated that they were reducing the amount of time that pupils spent on computers, and were refocusing on handwriting due to the educational benefits.

Handwriting never was a big thing for me. I thought "why worry about it, we can word-process it". Until a year ago, we had dyslexia training at school, and as we went through the course I thought "hold on", the associations with handwriting and ... other areas of learning such as spelling ... So, this year we have focused on handwriting things. [Principal]

Primary school pupils reported that they played with game consoles, computers and TV after school and that this extended to late and unsupervised at bedtime. The number of hours and

reduced sleep time implied by the children's responses here are likely inhibitors of achievement at school.

I actually don't want to say this ... I come in at 9 and then just go up to bed and my mum thinks I'm sleeping because I'm lying really quiet but I actually stay up till 12 o'clock with my computer. [Primary pupils focus group]

I come in at 9 and go up to bed and play on my Xbox and play Fifa and Call of Duty. [NB Call of Duty is age 18+ and therefore is not age-appropriate] [Primary pupils focus group]

Schools struggling to engage with parents

One principal of a school that serves Protestant young people from The Diamond described having issues with trying to engage parents in school life. This could be a result of the geographic spread of the intake of school populations in Derry/Londonderry, but this principal described having little success with any method they tried.

It's trying to get those parents who are disengaged with school themselves or who have had a bad experience with school. It's about getting them to see that school is a welcoming place. We tried classes like alcohol and drugs awareness and that didn't work very well and then we thought 'let's try something different, a wee bit softer'. So, we introduced Zumba classes to try and get them to come in ... but it's a struggle. It really is. [Principal]

Some parents reported concerns about their child's education not being closely monitored by schools, but there also, sometimes, seemed to be little engagement or communication about the actual whereabouts of the child, which in itself raises questions about the child's health and safety as well as them feeling valued. There is a sense that poor communication creates a vacuum in which children seem to have periods of not being monitored. This is made clear by one mother's reference to her child '*dobbing*'. She explains, *'he dobbed for seven weeks because he found it too hard, and after seven weeks, the school phoned me. It should've been picked up on before it got to seven weeks'.* Other mothers also referred to cases of poor communication channels.

I phoned the school, I'm still waiting for them to phone me back today, and that was two years ago. [Parent]

There's been a couple of situations that the headmaster should've phoned me back on regarding his A-level and his GCSEs, and I'm still waiting today for it. [Parent]

Another mother discussed her attempts to deal with issues around teaching and preparation for exams in a meeting with a teacher. She explained that when she raised issues of concern the teacher '*was raging that I brought it up and she didn't want to talk to me again'.* This mother describes that she felt her concerns were not addressed and that *'there was no kind of support from the teacher or reassurance'.*

Historically, schools that serve children from the Fountain had a negative reputation

The principal of a school that had serve young people from The Fountain described how, in the past, the schools that served young people from the area *'were a laughing stock ... to the rest of the city'.* However, he also claimed that the parents of children there completely trusted educational institutions to do the best for their child and that '*they would have put their faith into their schools and that would've been it'.* Interviews with mothers from the area revealed that their own school experiences correlated, at times, with how they view their children's experience of education. There is evidence that they feel that education provided to Protestant children at secondary level is of poorer quality than the education provided in Catholic maintained schools.

The highest [performing] schools in Londonderry's all Catholic ... Why is that push not there?' There has to be something a wee bit different being done down there. [Parent]

Several mothers also made reference to the poor attitude of some teachers, suggesting that some of the teachers lack the motivation to teach their children. Others had a sense that: the importance of education is not being reinforced in schools; little emphasis is placed on helping the children understand the relationships between education, employment and life quality. There was a distinct lack of positive comments about the school experience from these mothers, with only one of these mothers describing her child's school experience as good enough: '*my boy's gone through and he's been alright'.*

Generally, the mother's accounts revealed that they feel there is a wider issue within the schools which their children attend towards meeting the needs of children who are struggling. These mothers felt that some teachers have developed a negative attitude and adopt stances such as: '*Well, if they can't be bothered, why should I waste my time on them'?* And '*If they're going to just mess around, then we're happy to let them'.* This reveals issues around how some teachers are coping within their school environment and alludes to a sense of despondency in their approach when faced with such challenges.

No transition support
Some pupils who took part in focus groups reported that at key transition stages of their education, it was *'sink or swim'*, and they had to have resilience to deal with that.

I: When you transferred to post-primary, how did you find it in terms of dealing with all the new subjects and even the size of the school, was it a lot bigger than what you'd experienced before?

R: It was a big change but you get used to it.

R: I just remember being thrown into it.

R: I remember being left in the middle of a corridor and just told to go to my next class.

Other post-primary pupils made reference to the amount of resources they had to pay for when they got to post-primary school, and that this has caused them difficulties: *'the hardest was for the Art because you needed to get folder and paintbrushes'.* Primary age children who talked about leaving nursery school and entering primary school could also recall feelings of loss and separation in that they remembered relationships that they had built with other children who did not go on to attend the same school as them.

Boys feeling pressured into doing STEM subjects
One of the difficulties for males in terms of their achievement was the influence of what one principal called *'the STEM agenda'.* This principal believed that this agenda *'directed too many down the road of believing that "I must do Science, Technology" ... but it isn't necessarily the right subject for all those boys and getting a good Maths result at GCSE isn't a guarantee of a good Maths result at AS or A2 level, and equally, when it comes to Physics, again, a very, very difficult subject'.* This principal also claimed that: a lot of boys do STEM subjects because it is the growth area for jobs; but that if it is not where their talent lies, then changing subjects during the school year can result in a lot of *'catch-up'* for them to do.

'Average' children falling through the cracks at school
One principal spoke frankly about how having a broad ability range in a school can leave young people who are at the lower end and upper end of the ability range receiving the most attention, which may result in those in the middle not getting the attention they really need to achieve their potential.

Because of the size of the school you are focusing an awful lot on the kids at the bottom end of the ability range ... and you're also pushing the kids that are described as gifted and talented at the top. You've still a huge mass of kids in the middle who are never going to be your high-flyers, who are never going to become first in the subject or first in the year group ... but who are achieving good things and deserve as much recognition ... and that's why ... the vast majority of kids in the middle are not getting the kind of attention that you want to give them. [Principal]

2.8. Micro-level inhibitors of attainment in The Diamond

Three micro-level inhibitors to attainment in The Diamond Ward were identified around: anti-social behaviour; adverse circumstances at home; and intergenerational 'switching off' from education, particularly, among some parents within The Fountain.

Anti-social behaviour
In addition to the sectarian violence that continues, periodically, in and around The Fountain area of The Diamond and the parks in particular, principals and pupils gave examples of anti-social behaviour and attacks on school buildings. What was interesting was how children became visibly more engaged during their focus group while talking about this activity. Their voices elevated, and the level of conversation became more interactive with the pupils appearing eager to tell their story. As stated previously, the general communication from the pupils was that they harboured intense feelings of being under attack. These fears stemmed mainly from the neighbouring nationalist community but also, to a lesser degree, from within their own community. For example, several pupils stressed the anti-social element in the community in terms of the physical impact to the environment. This included the new play park being vandalised and alleged issues with drugs:

R: I really don't like the park, they broke the swings ... People found drugs there and that's why I'm not going to it.

R: When people walk, they just throw litter all around the gardens. [Pupil focus group]

One principal who had tried to address bullying issues that were occurring in a local park *'didn't have any cooperation* [from parents]' who told him that *"it's none of your business; sure, it's outside of school hours".* The physical environment and layout of the Ward abetted the anti-social behaviour, as '*no one can see them ... our [school] grounds drop way beyond the hall and they can't be seen. So, it's the perfect place for glue sniffing or whatever'.* A post-primary pupil from the area described how he would '*just sit in the house and either play my game or do my homework'* because he didn't want to be involved. However, he was also aware that because of where he was from, he was often unfairly judged.

People in my area would think we wear hoodies and all and throw stuff at the police, but I wouldn't do that. [Pupil]

Other male pupils reported that the anti-social behaviour was sometimes borne out of boredom, *'because there only is a field to play football, and that's always wet because it's raining, so there's nowhere, there's nothing to do'.* This particular pupil also reported that young people he knew from the Ward who did get involved in anti-social behaviour had had problems completing their schooling.

My friend's friend, he's got two suspensions already, and he isn't really my friend, he used to beat everybody up in primary school and all that there, and I'm not sure what he did, I think he throws things at the police. [Pupil]

One principal was concerned that criminal activity created new role models in the area.

Role models are important ... But our idea of a role model won't be theirs ... One pupil went to Stranmillis, but he wouldn't be seen as a role model ... It's the drug dealers that they see as role models ... That's what they aspire to ... They don't need to get a job because so and so down the street has loads of money and a flash car ... He's into drug dealing ... It's trying to change that perception of what a role model is. [Principal]

Adverse circumstances at home

This theme related to the difficulties that some children and their families within the Ward are dealing with on a daily basis which may relegate education to something which is not given priority. Principals gave multiple examples of social issues, such as family breakdown, mental health issues and suicide, or drug and alcohol dependency; but some participants in the research spoke of the hopelessness and damage to self-esteem that can take root as a result of poverty and deprivation.

You do have a lot of difficult family situations which impinges on kids' ability to work effectively and their esteem. [Principal]

Some of these young families are ... living in deprivation and feel that they're so far down, so far trodden down in poverty that they feel hopeless and disempowered. [EWO]

These feelings in turn lead families to isolate themselves from community networks. However, *'pride'* was understood by one community worker to work against these families, as they *'try and hide',* their financial difficulties. He also stated that, the trans-generational nature of poverty and its impact on education must be understood and challenged in ways which cater for these poverty-experienced families and communities. He also questioned how education is valued and understood within these families especially by the children.

There are families that haven't managed to break that cycle, and these children that go to these schools are the third generation of people that have suffered unemployment, that have suffered poverty, that they're in a vicious circle and can't get out of it. [Principal]

This correlates with the account provided by a community worker from The Fountain area, who described a *'forgotten youth',* who were not encouraged to progress with their education or work towards job security.

Everything was given to them, these boys were basically coming out of school, maybe doing a training course when they turned eighteen; they were basically queuing up on their eighteenth birthday, getting a house or a flat, and that was that. [Community worker]

In this way, the state is seen to have provided quick-fix financial solutions, creating a sense of dependency which, without sustained investment into their education, has left these youths struggling to become independent adults. Thus, the *'vicious cycle'* of deprivation, dependency and accompanying sense of lack of exclusion from the educated world, is continued. Principals talked about the importance of needing to understand the additional needs of these children and young people and acting accordingly to address them.

It's amazing what you hear these kids are subjected to ... They come into school and you are expected to treat them like every other child ... when you know there are horrendous things going on in the background ... It's trying to deal with their self-esteem. [Principal]

When you talk about social deprivation, your dog would have a better life than some of the children that come in here ... I think it's about understanding those children. [Principal]

One principal suggested that teachers need extra support to know how to help pupils who are coming from particularly difficult backgrounds. Another believed that males suffer more social problems and adverse circumstances than females

There are times when you're dealing with horrendous things ... I think teachers need a lot more help and support in, because they are facing that more and more. [Principal]

The research shows that girls will actually achieve better anyway ... our girls would have higher aspirations than the boys. Its boys from working class socially deprived areas that are the problem. We're still talking about a minority of pupils, but it's those pupils who have more problems than the rest. [Principal]

Two other principals also gave the examples of low levels of literacy and the poor physical health of families as circumstances which were not conducive to children's educational development.

We have youngsters this year who have very, very poor language coming into the nursery. Again, it is down to parenting, not talking to the youngsters, not reading to them or singing to them. All the time they are stuck in front of a TV. And it is sad ... we are seeing it more and more ... a lot are not ready for reading because they don't have the sounds in their minds of rhymes, and the rhythm of words. [Principal]

We would have worked with the health forum and they would have workshops with parents on how to prepare a lunch, how to prepare a meal ... I notice youngsters aren't anywhere near as fit as they were 8 or 10 years ago ... we did a boot camp last term with parents and youngsters, and unbelievable, how unfit some of them were. [Principal]

Intergenerational 'switching off' from education
Generally, both groups of mothers who were interviewed (Catholic and Protestant) described their experience of education as one which was predetermined for them. For the second generation, now parents, their experience of education was that it was not a priority because securing a job in the factory was not a challenge. There was no expectation of them to continue on to third level education, therefore low level educational achievement has been embedded in the psychology of the community. Both sets of mothers talked about the expectation on them to leave school at sixteen; the Fountain mothers stating that they went *'straight into work'*, and their parents held little value in education, '*I wasn't pushed or nothing like that, it was the culture at the time in Derry'.*

For the Catholic mothers, the experience was similar; however, there appeared to be more refection/acceptance of the decision as their own choice. These mothers referred to *'leaving early'* and they spoke of *'regret'.* One Catholic mother stated that she left school because she *'wanted to'.*

I was intelligent enough to know that there wasn't much money going on in our house and there was plenty of work in factories that paid good money and that's the road I took, and it was, I suppose in one sense, it was to help and support, and in the other sense, it was for myself to get money and style. [Parent]

In contrast, a sense of generalised discontent, resentment and lack of control pervaded the accounts of the mothers from The Fountain in relation to how they experienced their own education and how they perceive the education of their children. Mothers from The Fountain agreed unanimously that they *'didn't achieve',* at school, alluding to a sense of failure in their own educational path. There is a particular sense of detachment from responsibility or lack of control over their poor outcome, poor academic attainment gained from school, in both their own cases and that of their children.

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They [school] put me in a class that I couldn't do my GCSEs, so I haven't nothing. [Parent]

I did want my GCSEs ... and I hold responsible the headmaster of the school at that time for it. [Parent]

There is also a sense that they feel that staff did not reinforce or develop their understanding of how important education could be to them in terms of their future life opportunities.

If the teacher had have pushed you and says, "Look, you can do this, there's more opportunities", you probably would've aimed for something higher. [Parent]

In addition, they felt that the educational system and school staff were not adequate. In providing example of this, several parents described some of their teachers as having a poor attitude and poor teaching skills. Alongside this, they felt that the school staff displayed favouritism towards pupils and often treated them differently. The Fountain mothers had a lot to say about their experiences of discrimination because of their religious identity as a Protestant; and claimed that they feel that their own child currently experiences similar discrimination. One mother claimed Protestant identify directly impacted her opportunity to succeed in school when she and another Protestant were moved down a class. This view was supported by another mother who recalled a similar experience.

It came out that there were too many Protestants in the higher classes, because two of us were Protestants that were moved down. [Parent]

I was put in a class with children that couldn't read but I passed my exams. I know somebody else that was a Catholic and failed every one of his exams, and he was moved up a class. [Parent]

Several principals of schools that had pupils from the Fountain area identified this 'switching off' effect as being present in the current generation.

That mentality is already there by the time they come to us ... Whether it's the home background or the particular community they live in. They are coming in with a number of values where they are already switched off from education [Principal]

The Protestant youngsters in this city don't see anything for them ... They don't seem to understand that when they do go for a job the Catholics are going to get the job because they are better educated. They don't see that ... it's just that despair. They don't see education as important. [Principal]

Another principal claimed that whether or not a child breaks out of the cycle of low educational expectations and aspirations is down to individual motivation and resilience: '*a very small band can see, yes, there is a different life out there; it all depended, it's how competitive are you*'. A third principal claimed that there was a lack of local working role models within the Fountain.

If I take my own family, where they were not succeeding academically in school, there was somebody there to pick them up and guide them and to put them into an industry ... even to get an interest in becoming, you know, even to go along as a plumber's mate, go along with your uncle, go along with whatever, there isn't anybody there to do that with. [Principal]

However, some community workers had, primarily through adult education, become high achievers, studying at third level education, and now, were working in their community. These individuals had a deep understanding of: the learning needs of young people and children in the area; the barriers that they face on the route to achievement; and what is

needed, personally and practically to overcome these barriers. These community workers can be seen to signpost success by communicating and providing evidence to young people that negative cycles of underachievement can be broken; and that they are just as capable as anyone else. Being able to demonstrate how they, a local, have tackled similar obstacles, can role-model success and help other young people to envision realistic progression routes in terms of their educational and employment prospects.

2.9 Summary of the findings from The Diamond Ward

The data evidence a range of macro, meso and micro-level factors which impact on attainment levels in The Diamond Ward. Some are seen to enable achievement and others are seen to inhibit school progression. In terms of the structural (macro-level) drivers of educational success in The Diamond, it is clear that, certainly for large sections of the Ward's Catholic population, the key historical legacies of the Education Act (1947) are a widely held belief in the value of education and qualifications in general and in the Catholic education system in particular. This legacy is also reflected in the secondary data which indicate that, similar to the Whiterock Ward, The Diamond performs significantly better in terms of educational attainment than its deprivation rank would suggest. Although The Diamond is the 12th most deprived Ward in Northern Ireland, the latest indices (2012-2013) show a five GCSEs pass rate of 85%. Moreover, the proportion of school leavers in the Ward who entered Higher Education was 36% - more than double the corresponding figures for Tullycarnet (12%), Whiterock (17%), and Woodstock (14%).

There are several high-performing schools located within the Ward (some of which are new-builds). The seven schools which serve the Ward (including three grammars schools) are all within 2.6 miles of the Ward's geographical mid-point: five of these schools have a five GCSE pass rate of over 90%; and several have been given specialist status and, accordingly, receive additional financial support. Other macro-level drivers were identified around: the *'rich tapestry'* of social mix that characterizes many of the Ward's schools; and the equal number of avenues to grammar school education that are now available to girls in the Ward. This parity is also reflected in the attainment data which show that The Diamond is the only Ward in the ILiAD study where females and males perform at approximately the same levels.

However, the data also highlighted a number of structural inhibitors to educational attainment in the Ward, some of which specifically relate to the relatively small Protestant population. For example, the fractured nature of their community identity; their lack of community cohesiveness, particularly, in contrast with the Catholic community; continuing inter-community division and conflict as evidenced by sporadic sectarian tensions around the Fountain area; and the fact that there is only one controlled secondary school serving the Ward. Indeed, it was accepted by several respondents that: the demographic profile of the Ward (i.e. 81.2% Catholic) presents a structural barrier against Protestants in the education system. More broadly, the issue of academic selection was also seen as a barrier to local attainment levels. It was commonly reported that: the *'pressure'* of the transfer test prevents many from attending grammar schools; a number of these pupils do not realise the impact of the transfer test till after they reach secondary education; the test itself creates opportunities for some but frequently serves to reinforce privilege; and that social cleavages have been created between transfer test *'doers'* / grammar attendees and *'non-doers'* / secondary school attendees. It is also clear that, in addition to inadequate funding for Early Years, youth and community provision, there are concerns around some official statistics, in particular: the neglect of value-added in inspection reports; and the Free School Meal (FSM) entitlement measure masking poverty and distorting Extended Schools funding criteria.

In terms of the school-level (meso) drivers of academic achievement, the data evidence that high standards of pastoral care, transition support, inter-school cooperation, and equally high expectations in terms of attainment and discipline are common characteristics of the schools which serve the Ward. In the Catholic schools, pastoral care and transition support were seen as integral elements of their holistic Catholic ethos. In terms of inter-school collaboration, the data outline the positive impact made by the Foyle Learning Community which: involves 14 post-primary schools; engenders effective cross-school linkages; opens up vocational opportunities for grammar school pupils; and provides a wider range of academic subjects for pupils in the non-grammar sector.

One of the most striking features of these data was the close relationships some schools, particularly those in the Catholic sector, have with pupils, their families and the wider community. Several principals: highlighted the value of a Catholic ethos in schools; claimed that teacher interviews are increasingly based on relationship-building qualities; and argued that faith, relationships, and educational attainment were inseparable. It was commonly recounted that, particularly in the Catholic schools: teachers demonstrate *'love'* towards their pupils; there are high levels of intergenerational engagement with schools; and a culture of collaboration exists between schools and the communities they serve. Several secondary schools encourage former pupils to address assemblies around career advice; secondary pupils *'coach'* primary pupils in (after-school) literacy and numeracy programmes; and many teachers *'go the extra mile'* by staying on to help out in such initiatives. Similarly, a number of Catholic parents spoke about the open-door policy in their child's school and claimed that getting an appointment to see teacher or principal was a straightforward process; community workers highlighted that school facilities were widely used by the community; and principals recalled well-attended parents' evenings, *'packed grandparents' days'* and that many former pupils and family members have continuous engagement with schools as classroom assistants or dinner ladies. Other enablers of local attainment included: conceptualisations of achievement beyond the academic; the breadth of curricula and interactive teaching styles; and the effective monitoring of individual needs.

However, several meso-level inhibitors were also identified. Again, these barriers were seen to have a more pronounced effect in the Protestant schools. For example, it is clear that schools which serve children from The Fountain have previously had a historically negative reputation. Moreover, parental engagement in these schools is significantly weaker than the Catholic schools. The data suggest two reasons for this lack of engagement: firstly, negative familial norms around education - informed by e.g. their own, often unhappy and unproductive, school experience; and secondly, that many young Protestants in the west bank of the city have to attend a secondary school which is located in the Waterside. Several parents from The Fountain also claimed that some teachers were detached, unapproachable and *'disinterested'* with low expectations for the young people in their care. More broadly, the data from across the Ward suggest that in some schools: there is inadequate transition support; many, boys in particular, are pressured into doing STEM subjects for which they are ill-suited; and that *'average'* children are *'falling through the cracks'* at school.

The data from The Diamond also identified a number of micro-level enablers of attainment in the Ward. Similar to other Wards in the ILiAD study, the individual resilience and self-motivation of young people to succeed against the odds; and familial support / high parental expectations were seen as the most important. Among large sections of the Ward, there is parental cognisance of their (pro-active) role in their child's education and a general acceptance that *'no one opts out'*. The data also highlight nascent attitudinal changes among some Protestant parents which are beginning to be reflected in terms of increased engagement. Other micro-level drivers were identified around: high levels of youth club involvement; the impact of positive adult education experiences; notions of connectedness to the wider community; and young peoples' enjoyment of their time at the local nursery and primary schools.

Three micro-level inhibitors of attainment in the Ward relate to: adverse circumstances at home; negative community norms and anti-social behaviour; and intergenerational disengagement from education. A section of young people in the Ward live in home environments which are unsupportive, chaotic, and unconducive to their learning – commonly related to poverty, family breakdowns or mental health issues. Principals spoke about three generations of unemployment and that many young people from the Ward enter primary school with weak language development, poor health, and a complete absence of listening skills. It was also highlighted that across the Ward young people who do succeed at school tend to leave the area and not return. This, of course, deprives such communities of visible successes and positive role models and creates a situation where, in some parts of the Ward, *'drug dealers with lots of money and flash cars'* become the only role models young people can aspire to.

The data from The Diamond Ward highlighted some anti-social issues, which were also indicative of weak school-community linkages. For example, in response to persistent bullying in the park in the Fountain area, a principal recalled that his intervention was rebuffed because parents told him it was out of school hours, not on school premises, and therefore, none of the school's business.

2.10 Social capital in The Diamond

In the ILiAD model, bonding social capital relates to conceptualisations of empowerment, infrastructure and connectedness. The data confirm the central role of parental support in a young person's academic progression and indicates that many parents in the Ward have high expectations for their children's education and play a positive and pro-active role therein. For example, it was commonly claimed that getting to grammar school is as much about parental expectation as it is about individual aptitude. Related to these parental expectations, another important indicator of social capital in the Ward is the high percentage of young people who go on to University. These proxy indicators align with the wider social capital literature. For example, Putnam (2002)[10] saw education as a key factor in creating social capital, and higher educational attainment as one of the concept's most important outcomes.

Similarly, youth and community workers in the Ward are seen to make an equally consistent contribution in terms of instilling within many young people cognisance of education's value and a sense of confidence that application will lead to success; and several parents from both Catholic and Protestant backgrounds argued that they were driven to more fully engage by a desire to ensure that their child did not share their experience of lower streams and subsequent educational failure. Many Catholic parents, in particular, appear to have utilised any negative experiences constructively. Many of these parents are actively engaged with the education system and see themselves as equal players in their child's education. However, some parents from the Fountain area continue to harbour a sense of resentment and are noticeably less engaged in the school lives of their children. There were similar differences in terms of community-level bonding capital. Of course, The Diamond Ward is not one unified socio-spatial unit and instead encompasses a number of satellite communities each with their own unique characteristics. Close-knit communities and settled family networks are a feature of The Diamond Ward and the impact of these ties is seen to make these satellite communities, particularly the Ward's Catholic ones, stronger, more confident and inter-dependant. However, the data suggest that some young people from the Fountain have a different set of connections to and perceptions of their community. A siege

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[10] Putnam, R.D. (2002) Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society, Oxford: University Press.

mentality pervades sections of the Fountain community; positive role models are thin on the ground and some families have completely disengaged from education.

Bridging social capital in the ILiAD framework relates to schools' levels of engagement, accessibility and innovation. The data show that many schools which serve the Ward have forged: loving and committed relationships with their pupils; trusting engagement processes with parents; meaningful school-community linkages; and effective inter-school and inter-agency collaborations. These schools are seen, even among those parents with limited academic capacity and negative school experiences, as approachable and understanding. Moreover, a range of innovative practices have been adopted to sustain and further improve schools' relationships with young people, their families and their communities. The data also attest that a critical factor in these relationships is the commitment of teachers and principals who, it was claimed: knock on doors to introduce themselves to parents prior to enrolment; invite pupils to their house during holidays for extra tuition; and, more broadly, demonstrate explicitly that they genuinely care about the young people in their schools. It was also claimed that this commitment was, at least in part, due to the Catholic ethos which was said to: provide a (psycho-social) unifying force in the community; frame the setting of school values; and imbue teaching practice. However, the data also highlight factors which are likely to diminish stocks of school-level bridging capital and suggest: ridged pursuance of STEM subjects can create difficulties; and that many middle-band pupils are neglected as teachers concentrate on the highest and lowest achieving students.

Linking social capital concerns structural factors such as history, demography, and access to political decision-making. While it is clear that the recent conflict has impacted both sections of the Ward, the data suggest that the Catholic community has mediated its post-conflict transition more successfully than their Protestant neighbours. Similarly, demographic shifts in the Ward have affected the two communities in different ways. For example, the Catholic community (in general) perceives itself as confident and in control of its own destiny. However, sections of the Protestant community, particularly in and around the Fountain area, sees itself as isolated, in decline, and subject to political, cultural, and demographic forces over which it has little or no influence.

According to Savage, Warde and Devine (2005)[11], stocks of social capital in a community are informed by the Capitals, Assets and Resources (CARS) at its disposal. The propinquity of high-performing schools is a salient example of CARS in the Ward. The spatial relationship between these schools and the communities they serve: is an important factor in the valuable triangular linkages that exist between schools, families and the community; and, at least in part, explains the high attainment and low absenteeism levels in the Ward. However, these CARS do not inform the social capital of young people from the Fountain: there is no visible presence of high-performing schools in their lives; it is considerably more difficult for their parents to engage with schools; and more broadly, learning is seen as something that happens beyond the confines of their community. In such ways, the social capital value of these CARS (i.e. centrally located, high-performing schools) in the Ward is, to an extent, diminished because the 'capital' created is not entirely inclusive.

More broadly, it is clear that the Ward has benefited from its capacity to secure macro-level support such as Neighbourhood Renewal, City of Culture designation, and regeneration initiatives. However, these funding streams, cultural programmes, and planning interventions appear to have had little impact on the ethno-religious separation which remains a feature of many working-class communities in Derry/Londonderry. Two other macro-level issues are seen to weaken linking capital in the Ward. Firstly, sections of the Ward are characterised by acute poverty and unemployment which has been compounded by the latest recession. As

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[11] Savage, M., Warde, A. and Devine, F. (2005) 'Capitals, assets and resources: some critical issues, The British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 56 (1) pp 31–47.

Portes (2010)[12] has argued, even limitless supplies of social capital are rendered if there are no resources to share and no jobs. Secondly, although academic selection may indeed give the most privileged and able children in the Ward the chance to realise their potential, The Diamond data show it also causes: social cleavages among young people and their families; and a sense of failure among those who either fail or do not sit the transfer test.

The final element in the ILiAD framework relates to indicators of negative social capital and the data from The Diamond Ward highlight three specific examples relating to bounded solidarity, negative role models and an absence of collective efficacy. Firstly, the data have outlined innumerable examples of neighbourly bonds and a strong sense of community belonging. However, in sections of the Ward these bonds interplay with notions of besiegement, demographic fatalism, and stigmatisation. And, as a consequence, a bounded solidarity is created which engenders hostility and distrust of outsiders, insular tendencies, and a community outlook which supposes only continual and unstoppable decline.

Secondly, it was also clear from the data that in the most deprived areas of the Ward it is common for young people who do succeed at school to leave the area and thus deprive the community of positive role models. In parts of the Ward, the absence of these positive role models is compounded by the presence of negative ones who have been 'successful' in criminal enterprises. The social capital literature attests that the signals produced by such individuals have a profoundly negative effect on local young peoples' conceptualisation of achievement and personal fulfilment (Portes, 2010).

Thirdly, according to Halpern (2005),[13] an important element of social capital is the 'collective efficacy' of a community which emboldens them to pull together to, for example, lower street-level crime or general anti-social behaviour in their neighbourhoods. However, in sections of the Ward: there is little evidence of this collective efficacy; criminality and anti-social behaviour are recurring features; and the community's inability to address such problems is obvious. Previous examinations of negative social capital have shown that communities characterised by deprivation, besiegement and stigmatisation are likely to lack: the confidence to personally intervene; faith in the criminal justice system to protect them; and the levels of aspiration required to envision themselves living in a substantially improved environment (Das, 2006).[14]

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[12] Portes, A. (2010) Economic Sociology: a systemic inquiry, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
[13] Halpern, D. (2005) Social Capital, Cambridge: Polity Press.

[14] Das, R. J. (2006) 'Putting social capital in its place', Capital & Class, Vol. 30: pp 65–92.

3.1. Local Context

Deprivation Levels

Rosemount is ranked 44th for multiple deprivation out of 582 Wards in Northern Ireland, meaning that it is one of the less highly deprived Wards in the ILiAD sample, though it is within the top 10% of Wards for multiple deprivation in Northern Ireland overall. General crime and disorder rates in Rosemount are within the highest quantile across all Wards in Northern Ireland, and over the timeframe of the ILiAD research, the nearby Creggan and Strand Road areas have been particularly affected by dissident republicanism, which has included bomb alerts, bombings, and sectarian violence and intimidation. However, given that the Ward is ranked at 102 out of 582 for crime and disorder deprivation, crime is not as severe an issue here as it is in other Wards of the ILiAD sample. A severe issue in Rosemount appears to be the standard of housing and availability of suitable housing – it is the 6th worst Ward in Northern Ireland for living environment deprivation. Another problem issue is employment, with the Ward ranking 26th in Northern Ireland for employment deprivation. The education and skills deprivation measure is about average in Rosemount, when compared across all Wards in Northern Ireland, at 236th out of 582. Income deprivation and health deprivation scores for Rosemount are 44th and 54th respectively, much better than Whiterock in Belfast (being another urban, Catholic Ward in the ILiAD sample).

Although Rosemount has a similar deprivation level to the Woodstock Ward, and has a substantially higher deprivation level than Wards such as Tullycarnet and Dunclug, Rosemount performs better educationally. For example, in the 2009/10 school year, 67% of school leavers from Rosemount achieved five or more GCSEs at A*-C, compared to 40% in Woodstock, 24% in Tullycarnet and 46% in Dunclug. Furthermore, results from the 2012/13 school year revealed that the pass rate increased substantially within Rosemount, to 91%, the best in the ILiAD sample.

Figure 3.1 shows a map of the Output areas within the Rosemount Ward, colour-coded by intensity of deprivation. The colours of the Output areas refer to the severity of deprivation, based on their multiple deprivation score (ranging from 1.5 to 81.73, with 81.73 being the most deprived) as calculated by NISRA (all statistics are based on the 2010 measures unless otherwise indicated).
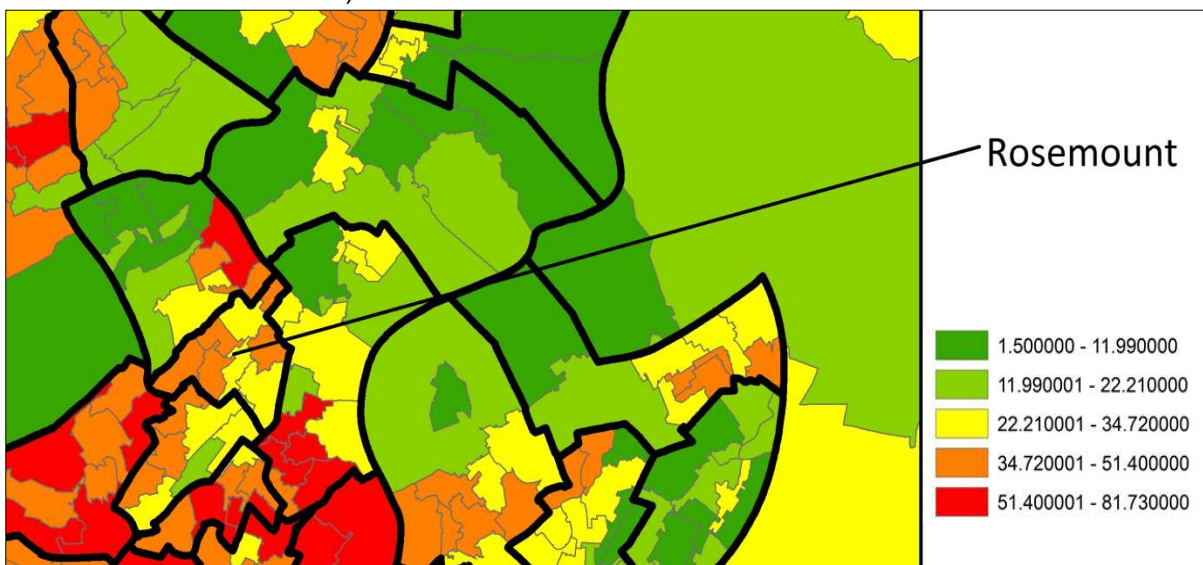

Figure 3.1: Multiple Deprivation in Output Areas: Rosemount Ward

Rosemount is situated on the outer north-west of Derry-Londonderry city centre. It borders more affluent Output areas to the north and east in the Strand Ward around Magee College and the North West Regional College. The very highly deprived Creggan Central Ward is to the west, and Beechwood Ward, which is of a similar deprivation level to Rosemount, is to the south. Rosemount Ward itself is split between residential housing (signified by the Output areas in orange in Figure 3.1) and areas of leisure facilities, schools, and nursing homes (the Output areas in yellow).

Demographics and Local Facilities
Rosemount is a mainly Catholic Ward, with 87.4% of residents from a Catholic background according to the Census 2011. The Ward has a lower than average percentage of residents who were born outside of the UK or the Republic of Ireland (5.6%, compared to the NI average of 7.1%) or born in EU ascension countries[15] (1.4%, compared to the NI average of 2.1%). There is also evidence of significant change in housing tenure within Rosemount between 2001 and 2011 (according to Census statistics). The percentage of owner/occupier housing decreased (from 55.4% in 2001 to 44.6% in 2011), but the percentage of privately rented housing more than doubled, from 17.2% to 37.2%. The percentage of social rent housing substantially decreased, from 26.7% to 15.9%.

The population density within the Rosemount Ward is 62.4 persons per hectare, one of the highest population densities of all the Wards in the ILiAD sample. It also has one of the smallest populations among the sample of seven Wards, at 2651 persons (NISRA, 2011). The percentage of young people under the age of 15 is 13.9% according to the Census 2011, the lowest of all Wards in the ILiAD sample and below the Northern Ireland average of 19.6%.

Out of all categories of non-mandatory, educationally-related local services available, the most common in Rosemount are mother and toddler and early years support services. In general, however, the number of additional support providers and services is low in comparison with other Wards in the ILiAD sample. The Rosemount Resource Centre, Rosemount Youth Centre, and Clooney Hall Centre are service providers across a range of categories. There are also two providers of Further Education in the area (the North-West Academy of English, and the North-West Regional College) as well as an Alternative Education Provider (Foyle Youth Council).

Rosemount is also a Neighbourhood Renewal Area under the Outer West Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership, funded by the Department for Social Development. The of the Rosemount-related projects funded under this include the Core Development Unit at the Rosmeount Resource Centre, also known as The Rosemount & District Welfare Rights Group (RDWRG). This provides a core management and development team within Rosemount Resource Centre which functions as an umbrella organisation representing the combined community infrastructure within the Rosemount area. It provides ongoing management, resourcing, co-ordination, liaison with statutory and voluntary and community organisations, support and development of existing programmes and planning new programmes and services. The funding allocation for this project between 2012 and 2015 is £263,558. A second Rosemount-specific project which is funded under Neighbourhood Renewal is Outer West Youth Provision (funding allocation 2012-2015 of £9,751). Under this project, the youth outreach worker coordinates youth interventions and outreach with other youth providers in the Outer West Neighbourhood Renewal Area. The project involves greater collaboration and partnership working between the different youth service providers in the Outer West area and the outreach intervention work assists to determine the barriers that young people face from engagement in community life, ascertain their needs and interests and develop programmes to bring young people out of risk and into involvement in

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[15] Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia

community life and positive activities. The project also encourages young people to develop personally and socially with the aim of guiding them away from anti-social behaviour and towards entering volunteering and training development opportunities leading to increase in labour market opportunities and to develop as individuals so they become involved in community life in a much more constructive and positive way[16].

School Provision, Intake Characteristics, Achievement, and Destinations

Rosemount has one of the smallest numbers of pupils within post-primary schools out of all the Wards in the ILiAD study (147 pupils in 2011), with seven schools serving these young people in 2011 (see Table 3.1 below). That year, 30.6% of young people from the Ward attended grammar schools, the highest proportion of any of the ILiAD sample Wards. The research team decided to choose a geographical mid-point within each Ward area, and to map the distance from this point to the schools that serve each Ward area – all but one of the schools serving Rosemount are more than two miles from the Ward centre.

Table 3.1: Schools serving young people in Rosemount
Blue – Grammar schools Orange - Other schools

Miles to school	% GCSE pass	Enrolment (2011)	
0.4	60	41	St. Joseph's College
0.5	85	23	St. Cecilia's College
0.5	78	23	St. Mary's College
1.6	93	17	St. Columb's College
1.6	100	12	Lumen Christi College
3.3	98	16	Thornhill College
4.7	46	15	Oakgrove Integrated College
Total Grammar enrolment	30.6%	45	
Total Secondary enrolment	69.4%	102	

From the data presented in Table 3.1 a bubble chart was created in Excel to graphically represent the distance (in miles) of schools serving young people from Rosemount from the Ward centre (see Figure 3.2 below). This distance was placed against the GCSE pass rate of the schools and the numbers of young people enrolled in each school, both grammar (in blue) and secondary (in orange). The chart shows that the three most popular schools serving young people from Rosemount are very close to the Ward centre – less than a mile away, and given that these lie in the top left-hand corner of the chart, they are also high-performing schools. This implies that these high-performing schools are highly visible to young people from Rosemount and that they form a central part of the community. The schools serving Rosemount also serve young people from The Diamond, with the exception of Thornhill and Oakgrove Integrated Colleges. A substantial number of pupils attend Oakgrove, which is quite far from the Ward centre. However, integrated schools have a particular ethos, and, being less frequent in number than secondary and grammar schools in Northern Ireland, the fact that 15 pupils make the choice to travel almost five miles for this particular type of education is unsurprising. St Joseph's is the dominant secondary school that serves the Ward, but the remaining two secondary schools and the three grammar schools that cater for young people from the Ward have relatively similar numbers attending them. Like The Diamond and Tullycarnet Wards, caution must again be exercised in the interpretation of GCSE results given that the overall pupil numbers in the Ward are low – as stated previously, only 147 attended post-primary schools in 2011.

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[16] See Outer West Neighbourhood Renewal Area Annual Report 2012-13 for more details http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/outer-west-derry-nra-annual-report-2012-13.pdf
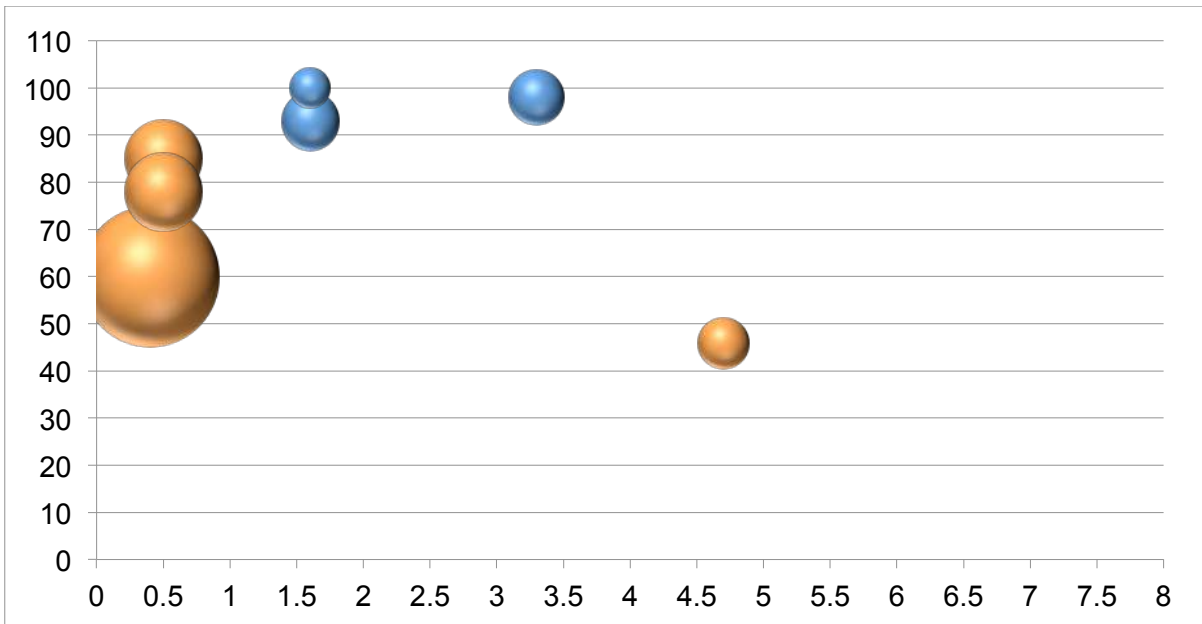
Figure 3.2: Schools in Rosemount GCSE Pass (A*-C) rates 2011 by miles from Ward centre and enrolment numbers. Blue – Grammar schools Orange - Other schools

Looking at average GCSE achievement rates in Rosemount for the three years prior to the ILiAD research commencing (2008/2009/2010), 63.3% of school leavers achieved ≥5 GCSEs or GCSE equivalents (at Grade C or above), the highest rate in the ILiAD sample. When considering 'pure' GCSEs only, this figure dropped slightly, to 54.4% (one of the smallest variations within the Wards, indicating that there is not a high provision and/or uptake of GCSE equivalents with the Ward). The GCSE pass rate across the three-year period decreased to 51.9% if English and Maths are included – this variation of 11.4% is the third smallest variation of the sample Wards, after Tullycarnet (7.9% variation) and The Diamond (11.2% variation).

This has however been a large variation in the performances of females and males from Rosemount across the three-year period. Looking specifically at female school leavers, 79.4% achieved any five GCSEs at A*-C (the highest amongst the ILiAD Wards), and 61.8% achieved five GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths. For males, the pass rate for any five GCSEs was 61.1% (the second highest rate out of the ILiAD sample, after The Diamond), dropping to 44.4% with the inclusion of English and Maths.

Rosemount has one of the higher percentages of school leavers entitled to free school meals (FSM) across the years 2008-2012 of all ILiAD sample Wards, at 39.0% (after the other predominantly Catholic Wards of The Diamond (46.7%) and Whiterock (41.9%)). Of all ILiAD sample Wards, the largest differential in pupil performance between FSM and non-FSM entitled pupils obtaining five or more good passes can be found in Rosemount (37.0% variation). For school leavers from 2008 – 2012, 78.7% of those not entitled to FSM achieved five or more GCSEs at A*-C, compared to 41.7% of school leavers who were entitled to FSM. Looking at FSM/non-FSM performance differences by gender, non-FSM males did much better than FSM males (66.7% to 25.9%), although non-FSM entitled females outperformed all other categories (91.7%). FSM-entitled females in Rosemount also far outperformed FSM-entitled males (61.9% compared to 25.9%) and did nearly as well as non-FSM males (61.9% compared to 66.7%). Compared to other ILiAD Wards, Rosemount therefore shows the least equity in achievement in terms of whether a pupil is entitled to FSM – pupils entitled to FSM perform at a much lower rate in this Ward than pupils who are not entitled to FSM.

As previously stated, just over two-thirds (69.4%) of post-primary pupils in Rosemount attend secondary schools, the lowest in the ILiAD sample. Figure 3.3 shows SEN and FSM rates against secondary school and Northern Ireland averages for GCSE attainment (including Maths and English) across the years 2008-2012. However, all of the secondary schools serving young people from Rosemount have significantly higher numbers of free school meals-eligible pupils than the NI average. St Joseph's Boys school and Oakgrove Integrated also cater for slightly higher than average number of pupils with a special educational need, although St Cecilia's has significantly fewer numbers of pupils with any SEN than the average for secondary schools (13.6% compared to 30.8%). St Cecilia's is an anomaly in the Ward for other reasons – on average, 52% of pupils achieve five GCSEs including Maths and English (the NI average for secondary schools is 35.8%), and over two-fifths of school leavers go on to Higher Education (44% - see Figure 3.4).
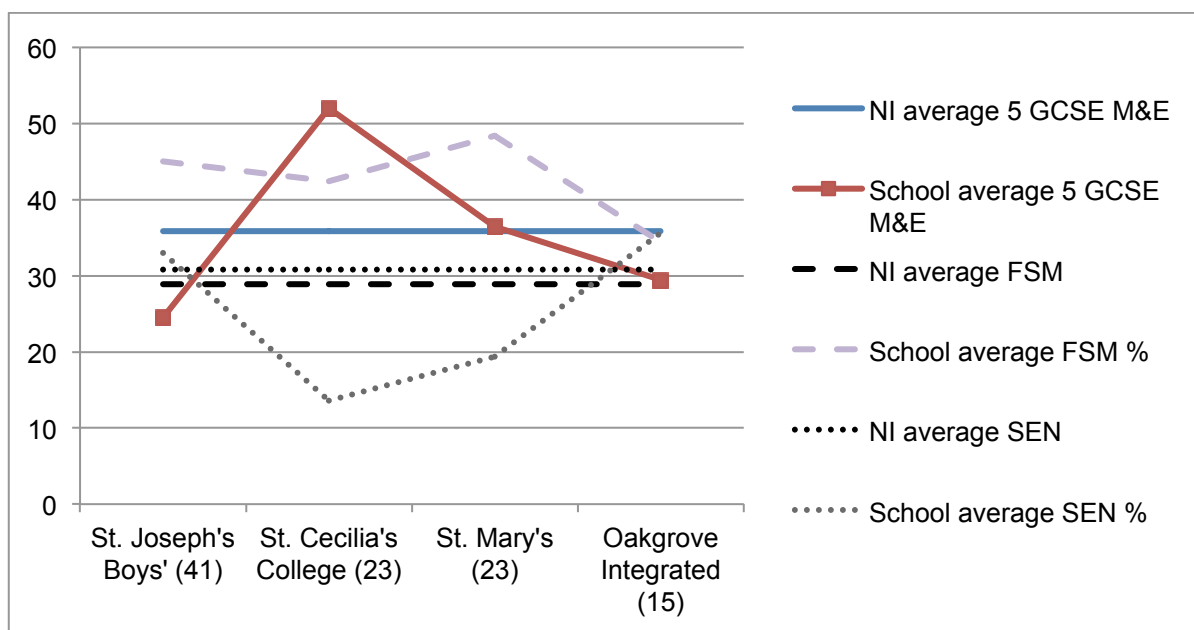
Figure 3.3: 2008-2012 average percentages of 5 GCSE (including Maths & English) attainment, Free School Meals eligibility, and pupils with any Special Educational Needs – Rosemount non-selective Schools against NI secondary school averages
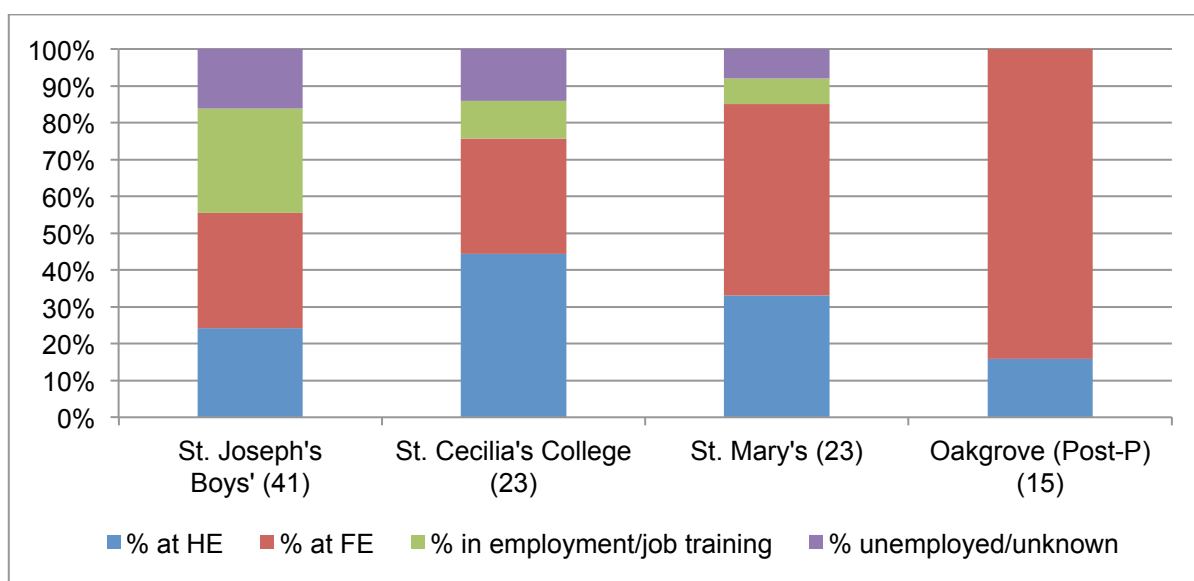
Figure 3.4: Destinations of School Leavers 2012 from non-selective schools serving Rosemount Ward

In regard to the destinations of all school leavers between 2008 and 2012, what is striking is the differential between the two Wards in Derry/Londonderry and the rest of the ILiAD sample; approximately twice as many school leavers from Rosemount and The Diamond (36% in each Ward) enter higher education than school leavers from other Wards (19% in Duncairn; 14% in Dunclug; 12% in Tullycarnet; 17% in Whiterock; and 14% in Woodstock). On average across the same time period, 31.2% of school leavers from Rosemount entered further education; 16.6% entered employment or job training (the lowest rate of all sample Wards); and 12% entered unemployment or an unknown destination (higher than the rate for The Diamond (9%) but lower than Whiterock (14%), the other urban, predominantly Catholic Wards).

The following sections outline the key drivers and inhibitors of achievement that were identified from the thematic analysis of interview and focus group data from key stakeholders within Rosemount (see Table 3.2), alongside secondary data analysis. The drivers and inhibitors will be presented as: macro-level (structural) factors to examine linking social capital; meso-level (school-level) factors in terms of bridging social capital; and micro-level (immediate/familial) factors, conceptualised here as bonding social capital.

Table 3.2: Profile of participants in Rosemount

School level	Community level
Nursery school principal interview x 1	Education welfare officer focus group x 1
Post-primary principal interview x 4	Parents focus group x 1
Post-primary pupil focus group x 5	Youth worker interview x 2
	Young people forum focus group x 1

3.2. Force-field Analysis of drivers and inhibitors of achievement in Rosemount Ward

Drivers

Inhibitors

Present situation – 91% five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13); 44th Multiple Deprivation 2010

Drivers

Macro-level

a) Effective youth service and education initiatives in the community

b) Inward investment

c) Physical locations of schools and educational institutions

d) Historical legacy of the Education Act 1947 for Catholics

e) Huge early years provision nearby

f) Recession as a driver

g) High attainment performance of grammar sector

Meso-level

a) Community-school linkages and Extended Schools

b) Warm ethos of school, combining pastoral care and academic success

c) Close relationships with teachers

d) Provision of flexible curricula and alternative qualifications

e) Measures to ease transition

f) School leaders' understanding of local needs

g) Schools and community workers promoting the voice of young people

h) Individual needs of pupils are considered

i) Peer role models in schools

j) Primary school expectations of and support for pupils sitting the transfer test

k) Low rates of absenteeism

Micro-level drivers

a) Family support and high expectations of parents

b) Intergenerational closeness and close-knit area

c) Feelings of connection to a broader community

d) Family connection to schools

e) Individual resilience/motivation

Inhibitors

Macro-level

a) Impact of academic selection

b) Community resources lacking for older teenagers

c) Changes in demographics

d) The lack of jobs in Derry

Meso-level

a) Curriculum (statutory and local) and school structure

b) Balancing 'labelling' and support in school

c) Poor relationships with teacher

d) Education system failing to pick up underlying issues early

Micro-level

a) Anti-social behaviour and negative peer pressure

b) Low self-esteem, low expectations, and sense of hopelessness

c) Adverse family circumstances

d) Low parental expectations or engagement with schoolwork

3.3. Macro-level drivers of attainment in Rosemount

As outlined in the force-field diagram presented above, a total of seven macro-level drivers of attainment were identified in the Rosemount Ward: effective youth service and education initiatives; inward investment; physical locations of schools and educational institutions; the historical legacy of the Education Act (1947); substantial Early Years provision; the argument that the current recession acts as a driver; and the high attainment performance of grammar schools serving the Ward.

Effective youth service and education initiatives in the community
Although the interviews with community and youth workers in the Ward were designed to uncover what the participants felt were the driving factors promoting achievement, the data revealed that the participants themselves and the work that they do with young people in the community actually form significant 'driver' influences themselves. This appeared to be determined by a number of factors including: the individual community leader approach; the level of insider knowledge of the community; an ear to the ground method; a caring and valuing approach; a positive reinforcement of what it actually means to achieve; achievement being seen as a fluid concept which can be utilised by the individual and the group/community; achievement understood as being specific to the individual and/or targeted group; bespoke models of intervention; promoting issues of the young people in their community to the wider public, especially those who influence funding and education; creating a sense of value and belonging in the young person themselves; and identifying and supporting the non-achiever for whom the education system has not worked.

The approaches taken by community workers can be seen as a driver to promoting achievement as they seek to support those who are most disadvantaged, who they deem to be '*near the end, they're dropping out of school, they're maybe not going on to Sixth Form'.* In this way, the community workers are seen to reinforce the importance of education, and promote the concept of education and achievement as something which holds value. Their aim was to find alternative routes of educational achievement for these young people for whom the education system hasn't been successful, where learning can occur and more positive relationships can be built. The community workers described working in a strategic and targeted way, with the purpose of redirecting young people who tell them that *'they like to drink; they like to take drugs'.* These community workers try to *'limit that damage',* and redirect them from choosing a life path which leads them further away from achieving.

Additionally, it is clear from the transcripts that the *'ear to the ground'* approach in the community is used as a tool. The community workers appear to be informed by their deep insider knowledge of the community and relationships with residents from the local area. One community worker discussed how he utilises community contacts to identify individual young people and groups which might benefit from community-based interventions. In this way, the community itself acts as an information giver, which in turn, supports the community workers to identify young people engaging in risk taking behaviour. The primary goal of such interventions is to identify '*why that young person is in the position he is'.*

The main thing is contact ... a relaxed environment where we have a chat and I find you do most of the opening up and most of the work ... around the pool table or when you're making a cup of tea or coffee and it's just offering support at that age. [Community worker]

Community centres appear to be exceptionally clued-in to the individual needs of the community itself; they create bespoke models of community-based socialisation; and group models appear to help them categorise stages of the young person's life within the community as a means of identifying the type of community centred approach they will need in order to support them. The community workers also utilise early intervention strategies; they identify '*the peer group'* as a critical influence which has the potential either encourage attainment or lead young people down a path towards educational disengagement. These

respondents also identified key times in the year as well as developmental stages, such as *'after the summer, towards Halloween';* and described noted change in behaviours.

[Young people] leaving Year 9, making the transition into Year 10 where ... they're semi-innocent. It's like a circle effect, a core and then around it you have a circle ... you'll see the young ones hanging around the perimeter watching what's going on and then over the summer you would slowly start to see them moving into the circle and towards the end, they mightn't have a drink but towards the end of summer some might. [Community worker]

It's almost like there's a switch turned before they go into third year and they all believe that they've grown up so much in the summer and they've matured so much and you'll start to see the drinking pattern then. [Community worker]

Community workers described how they attempt to deal with such cycles: they are very aware of the core group and how long they anticipate it will last. They also described a forward planning approach to develop intervention strategies such as inviting them to football, providing an alternative and more constructive place for them to spend their time.

We're actually in between a cycle at the moment where there are young people who are openly talking about taking their first drink or drinking this and drinking that. Now this is a group that's came through all year that were always adamant oh, we don't drink, we're not hanging around with those boys at night so you're starting to see the two amalgamate and the group is getting bigger and that will go right through to 16 until they're the age where they think they can go to the bars or be confident at nightclubs. So, we've got two years now ahead of us of this core group of young people in the area. [Community worker]

These community workers are also seen to monitor and address the issue of mental health needs of young people for example. For example, one community worker described how they identified '*increasing stress levels'* in young people and issues with underage drinking in the area. They also outlined a series of programmes designed specifically for these areas and highlighted a recent indicator of these programmes' success.

They received an award last year because we managed to decrease the anti-social behaviour in the Rosemount area by 50%. [Community worker]

The community centre in Rosemount provides accessible learning resources computers and this is successful community asset appears to be a well-used facility.

We have a computer suite at that end and we've a common room here but we can have anything up to 30 kids some nights in here, 40 kids. [Community worker]

However, they stress that they are not '*a mainstream youth provision*' and they are not '*high on educational outputs',* however, *'if we see a need for a course we'll put it on'.* Instead, their overarching aim is to create conditions where they young person can re-engage or at least not disengage from school, or where they have, help them towards an employment route or training in a particular area. Another community worker believed that the education system in itself can be viewed by young people as '*too formalised'.*

We have young people in here looking for OCNs and a whole range of subjects. Our senior group was asking to do suicide awareness, which schools don't offer. [Community worker]

Such community initiatives are also seen to support and promote independence for young people who are doing well in school through offering life skills classes.

That's really starting our seniors, going through a change in their life ... maybe going to University, maybe they're moving out of their house for the first time ... so it's cooking a meal, health and safety around ... even in simple terms, like changing a fuse in a plug, painting a wall ... all stuff that they're going to need for their life. [Community worker]

Community work in terms of adult education was seen to redress negative perceptions of schooling that adults and parents may hold. One principal claimed that adult education programmes can break the cycle of low expectations or low valuing of education.

I have to say that there has been outstanding work done in the community with adult education and engagement of some adults in education who were never engaged, and it's this legacy that we're having to address all the time ... just create a spark in the parents or those who have been disengaged. [Principal]

Inward investment

Similar to the findings for The Diamond Ward, it is clear that schools and communities across the city of Derry/Londonderry have successfully obtained inward investment that has had a direct and indirect positive impact on educational achievement within Rosemount. This has included, amongst others: Extended Schools money; City of Culture investment; Neighbourhood Renewal funds; new school buildings for several schools serving the Ward area; specialist school status (extra funding per pupil and capital investment); and funding for FACT (Families Achieving Change Together), which has been sourced from government departments by grassroots organisations. One principal reported that the community have collaborated to form a '*Triax community hub'*, which would facilitate joined-up approaches to addressing needs. Another principal explained that the school buildings were inspiring for pupils because they were all new builds, or impressive in terms of facilities.

We've now engaged with the health ... we have engagement with them and a commitment from them to this programme. [Principal]

I would be a great believer if the environment is right and you try and present people with the best environment they will keep it.

These forms of investment have also visibly opened up city spaces to young people, broadening the range of opportunities and facilities available to them as evidenced in the following extracts from a pupil focus group discussion.

R: St Columb's Park is good too, especially with the new peace bridge, because you can just walk straight over now, like there is loads and loads of grass and everything, so if someone has a ball with them it's really good to go and play football.

I: So, has the peace bridge really opened things up in the city?

R: It's so good, it's been really, really handy because you can just walk over the peace bridge and then come home

I: In what ways has the City of Culture stuff changed the city?

R: It's been a lot better, there has been so much stuff to do, and my mummy's been volunteering, she's been out every single week! There's just so much to do, the Big Weekend was amazing, I got tickets for that, it was so good.

R: It's been something for everyone, like the Lumiere, the Turner Prize for artists ... the Fleadh was unbelievable for musicians ... on every street corner there was someone busking ... it was unbelievable. [Pupil focus group]

In explaining how and where they source their funding, one community worker explains how they engage with Education Boards, City Councils, and agencies such as Children in Need to promote and develop a greater awareness of the needs of the community.

Physical locations of schools and educational institutions
While there are high-performing schools close to Rosemount Ward centre, some pupils from the Ward explained how attending a school that was further away forced them to be *'school ready'* when they arrived at school in the mornings and encouraged them to stay on later:

R: Maybe if ours [school] was closer, you would just have a thing of, oh, I'm done for the day now, I'll just go home, or I might just lie in today and go in later. Like, we need to get on the bus ... otherwise you are paying £6 for a taxi.

R: You can't go home for lunch and stuff like that.

R: If you go home for lunch you might [think] I'm free all afternoon so I might not go back.

R: If we have a free all afternoon then we just have to stay which is far better because it keeps you working to actually do something. [Pupil focus group]

Community workers also noted the benefits of young people attending schools which had a broad geographical intake.

School's a good social experience ... what I find now is young people don't tend to hang about on streets no more ... They're kind of widely spread about because their friends in school come from different areas. [Community worker]

A principal claimed that the widening of their catchment area '*completely changed the complexion*' of the school, and for some pupils leaving primary school whose '*world is small*', bringing them into a school with pupils from lots of different geographical areas and from both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged areas '*opens their world*'. In this way, it was also claimed that schools had helped the integration of communities and broadened their sense of community as they introduce young people to peers from different geographical areas of Derry/Londonderry.

We would have people that come here from Rosemount, The Glen, Creggan, as far away as Shantallow ... I think that's a positive ... young people are getting out into different areas, where previously they were just stuck in that one geographical area. [Principal]

The fact that there is a University within the locality of Rosemount Ward can be seen as a driver, as it makes attendance at third level education physically less challenging. It also creates a presence, a learning environment, and a physical space which local young people envision themselves and aspire to. However, it is worth mentioning that, proportionally, very few young people from Rosemount attend this University and so it is not a driver for all.

Historical legacy of the Education Act 1947 for Catholics
One principal of a Catholic maintained school that serves the Ward spoke at length about the 'powerful' meaning of education for Catholics and the powerful difference it can make to communities. This principal also claimed that this value had been championed by nationalist leaders such as John Hume and continues to have a powerful legacy today.

Teachers, years ago, were missionary in their zeal ... there always was a very strong belief in the Catholic community in Derry that education tackles poverty, education is what will end poverty ... John Hume would've said he was that generation that went ... to grammar school ... after the '47 Education Act [created] scholarships for grammar schools. [Principal]

Huge early years provision nearby
Although Rosemount has one of the smallest populations and lowest proportions of school-age residents in the ILiAD sample, one principal reported that given the range of early years provision in the area, children often had two preschool years before starting primary school, and preschool units and nursery schools therefore had plentiful opportunities to involve and engage parents in their child's education early on.

Some [children] would [attend] maybe a two-year programme, like Little Hands Surestart, our local Surestart based in [named primary school], or a local playgroup which is based in the Resource Centre ... Because preschool places are given out by electoral Ward, there is a large amount of preschool provision in this area very close by. [Principal]

Other macro-level drivers mentioned by individual principals included: the positive impact of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) on encouraging young people to stay at school; and co-educational schooling which was seen as a driver of boys' achievement in particular.

There is a settling effect on both boys and girls ... but mainly the boys ... that classroom environment where it's all aggression ... isn't there. But also, it makes the boys more sensitive, gives them a better understanding of how to conduct themselves. [Principal]

Recession as a driver
Several pupils who took part in focus groups mentioned how the lack of jobs on a local and national level has led to more competition and a desire to do well at school. Pupils also mentioned other educational benefits, aside from drive and aspiration, which have come from poor employment prospects. For example, there was the perception amongst these pupils that teachers in Derry are highly qualified because of the lack of other jobs. Moreover, the perceived lack of resources or part-time jobs in local community for older teenagers also resulted in having more time to study/ look to broader city for interests.

I think all schools in Derry have great teachers because this is one of the only jobs that are here, so anybody who's qualified comes back and does teaching. [Pupil focus group]

Basically, there's just nothing to do so you may as well just revise, instead of basically leaving it till the last Sunday before the test. [Pupil focus group]

High attainment performance of grammar schools serving the Ward
As indicated above, the best three performing schools serving the Rosemount Ward (in terms of % GCSE pass 5A*-C) were the three grammar schools – Lumen Christi College (100%), Thornhill College (98%) and St Columb's College (93%). Similar to the Whiterock and Diamond Wards, the high attainment performances of these local grammar schools were highlighted by grammar sector respondents as a driver of attainment in the Rosemount Ward.

3.4. Meso-level drivers of attainment in Rosemount

The Rosemount data identified the following eleven meso-level drivers of attainment: community-school linkages and Extended Schools; warm ethos of school, combining pastoral care and academic success; close relationships with teachers; provision of flexible curricula and alternative qualifications; measures to ease transition; school leaders' understanding of local needs; schools and community workers promoting the voice of young people; individual needs of pupils are considered; peer role models in schools; primary school expectations of and support for pupils sitting the transfer test; and low rates of absenteeism.

Community-school linkages and Extended Schools

According to the data, a key driver of attainment in the ward was the concept of greater integration and engagement of community workers/centres with local schools. Rosemount appears to have a highly developed team of community workers and volunteers who are trained in the delivery of particular programmes to provide support services to schools and families. There appears to be the sense that is has gone beyond the normal expectation of a community centre and developed into innovative community outreach support services aimed at targeting the Ward's most disadvantaged young people. These community workers engage with and receive referrals from social services and the local schools.

I would work with a lot of social workers, it's based on the kid and who their social worker would be, I'm working with about 5 or 6 different kids at the moment. [Community worker]

Community workers also felt that they can help identify young people who perhaps have specific learning needs by working with those who *'have issues'* but have not, as yet, been *'registered through the education psychologist'.* As a result of this, community workers reported that they are: (a) helping to target young people at an earlier stage; and (b) providing a service which the statutory agencies either do not or cannot provide.

We've actually been in the local primary schools now where young kids who have problems ... we've a place to work with them kids now for maybe 2, 3 hours a week to allow them something different, some alternative education. [Community worker]

We're trying to get the community to step in and get trained up and offer some kind of service. [Community worker]

We work along with the classroom assistants and the teachers and identify the kids who need that extra nurturing; maybe because they're dyslexic ... but it may be more emotional or their confidence or whatever. [Community worker]

One community worker outlined a new initiative where they co-design alternative education programmes such as *'The Growth Project'.* It was also claimed that the schools are becoming more engaged and informed by the insights which community based organisations can provide. There was a sense of ongoing development in this area which is informed by evaluation of completed projects and identifying areas which need addressed.

This year we have identified that we need to move earlier so we're actually working with second years and first years and now we're actually in the process of writing a peer mentoring programme for P7s ... called the Bridge Programme. [Community worker]

Here it is clear how the school and community centre are working together to *'identify young people who have problems with transition into secondary education and we'll be supporting them at the primary setting right through the summer'.* This will then extend into the first six months of secondary school and *'it'll be continued support right through for 5 years of secondary education'.* Principals also gave several examples of community programmes, groups and other schools or educational bodies they worked with and outlined how these linkages have helped to engage children and their families in school life and education.

We also work closely with Dunluce Family Centre, who would be the main proponents of LifeStart ... Obviously there are children who have needs who ... would need different things, transition booklets and things like that. It is something we have talked about with the primary schools ... about trying to get something together, booklet-wise. It's something we would do for children with autism ... things with pictures of "this is what your first day will look like" so that parents can take it home. [Principal]

What we're trying to do is help establish a Creggan community hub, which has now been broadened out into the Triax community hub ... This is a targeted intervention programme for community and families ... from nursery, primary, through to secondary ... through the FACT[17] programme, we would have a school liaison community worker ... we would do referrals for children that we know the issues are not school issues, it's family issues that they're sometimes coping with that they wouldn't talk to us about ... The hub is about trying to have an overall strategic view of what's needed and to have a programme, base and a coordinator in place that can allow a family's needs to be assessed and directed to the right people at the right time. [Principal]

Extended Schools funding and the external services and programmes it was capable of bringing into the school was also highlighted as a driver for improving achievement and targeting those in need of support.

The biggest difficulties our children would have are attention and listening. Getting a speech and language therapist through Extended Schools would be where we would be starting, because if they don't have attention and listening, then they have absolutely nothing else ... We would provide courses ... empowering parents to listen more to their children and to give them confidence in their parenting abilities. [Principal]

Indeed, where 'Extended Schools' money had been specifically used to increase parental engagement, the relationship building and skills development this enabled was regarded as a particular positive influence on achievement.

When we can engage with parents, and when we get the parents to support the education, then we can do great things with the children, we really can. It has given us the opportunity to engage with children better, and support them better. [Principal]

We have a 'Lads and Dads' programme, for those who don't have role models at home ... the Extended Schools coordinator would run it ... It's a very small targeted group ... But a significant male role model will work with them ... on literacy and numeracy and ... good relationship building ... getting dad to understand the needs of the child. It is difficult ... you need the right people, but when it works it does have impact. [Principal]

The revision and breakfast clubs supported by Extended Schools funding were also identified by principals and pupils as important drivers of achievement and engagement with schoolwork. This was because of the *'school-readiness'* such clubs engendered in pupils. Indeed, these clubs were identified by one principal as the most wide-ranging positive measures for increasing achievement, since other programmes funded by Extended Schools usually focused on increasing the achievement of smaller numbers of pupils and parents.

We run an Easter revision programme where we encourage some [pupils] to come in for 3 days over the Easter period to revise. It sets up that regime in their head of revision and study and prepares them for exam season immediately after that ... It is very relaxed, they come in without uniform, and they get a breakfast, a lovely lunch. They are relaxed and engaged and they are here because they want to be here. I have 140 [pupils] a year ... and we had ... about 55 for all 3 days. The breakfast club has also been popular; it sets them up for the school day. [Principal]

I'm not getting back into the house until 5.30 or 6 o' clock. I go to the homework club. [Pupil]

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[17] From Derry Journal article, 12th October 2012: FACT (Families Achieving Change Together) is one of the many projects based at the Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum and is a family support and intervention service for families with young people aged between 11-18 years old in five local post primary schools. Laura McGuinness from FACT FACT said the group works with families and young people who are experiencing difficulties, either at home or at school, and provides support and encouragement.

I just stay in, not for any kind of club or anything but just do homework ... you can get it done quicker because you're still in a working environment, instead of when you go home you might lay back for a while ... then you lose concentration, whereas just after school you just go straight up and it's just like another lesson. [Pupil]

Warm ethos of school, combining pastoral care and academic success

It is clear from the interviews with principals, pupils and community workers that the schools serving young people from Rosemount have created positive learning environments for pupils through: the close relationships that have been developed between teachers and pupils; and the way these schools combined high academic expectations with a holistic, pastoral definition of education. One principal described how she saw her job as *'in that traditional sense of vocation,* and that she sees *'people round me who are the same'.* Indeed, principals made reference to the fact that many teachers in the school went '*the extra mile'* for the pupils.

Students came in ... because of the very, very close relationships between our staff and our students. One of the things we did at the very beginning was that when we employed staff we ... committed them to providing after-school clubs. [Principal]

The same principal felt that while '*there's a warmth and a community atmosphere and an understanding of the needs of pupils',* this wasn't necessarily because of the '*Catholic ethos'* of the school; and concluded that it is the values of the school that matter.

It would be very clear that we're a Catholic school ... every child is made in God's image and likeness, and if we're trying to build the Kingdom of God ... [then] those values are very clearly about standing with the marginalized ... we would have a very high priority in pastoral care ... We treat each other fairly and honestly, we believe that we are gifted people, every single one of us; we believe that the school would be poorer if we weren't in it, we believe that every child ... makes a contribution to that. [Principal]

This warm ethos within a school was also reported as being a driver of parents' willingness to engage in their child's education. However, one grammar school grammar explained that it can be difficult to balance the pastoral and academic aspects of school ethos.

We would invite the parents in, for example, at the carol service ... a spring concert ... The Year 8 parents come in for the Service of Light, it's just a simple religious service where a child and the form teacher and a parent, they light up a candle and it's to kind of symbolise the beginning of a relationship that we want to sustain ... the relationships with parents are good, we would have a parent-teacher night for every year group ... out of a group of 200, you might have ten parents not there. [Principal]

The demands in here are ... pushing all the time for achievement. But we're dealing with exactly the same social problems that [named secondary schools] are dealing with, not in the numbers, but certainly in the substance ... when I became principal, my thing was to integrate, to finish this dichotomy between the pastoral and the academic. [Principal]

One principal described how their school recognises different types of achievement and claimed that this made pupils with a range of ability levels feel valued within the school.

We recognise achievement at other levels; you'll see attendance on every pastoral noticeboard and stars for attendance. At the end of every month some class will get a tin of sweets or something, who's the best class in that year group ... We have certificates ... for things like diligence or cooperation or ... who do we think represents the spirit of this form class? We have the pupil of the year; it isn't necessarily the academic star in the class, but it's the person who most epitomises the spirit that we're trying to engender. [Principal]

The young people's accounts also revealed that they felt that having an identity in school which is understood to be *'someone who achieves'* created a sense of expectation to continue to achieve. This 'expectation' was understood by the young people to: increase their motivation towards achievement; be located within the self; reinforced through belonging to a class/group of achievers; and, thus, becomes a shared expectation. For example, one young person reflected that because they were in a higher class: *'we're expected to do the work'* and *'everybody's in the same boat'.*

Close relationships with teachers

One pupil who didn't sit the transfer test felt that his school didn't have as high expectations as a neighbouring grammar school. However, he suggested that it is the close relationships with teachers in his school, which makes him feel comfortable enough him to ask questions if he needs to, and as such he is *'happy'* in school and is now in a *'higher class'.*

I applied for [named grammar school] first and I'm glad that I didn't get accepted ... it all worked out, so I'm happy with it ... The teachers, everything, I wouldn't change it ... teachers say that in [named grammar schools] they kind of expect you to do more, but in [my school] if you're stuck, you know it's OK to ask the question and get it clear, so I'm glad I got accepted here. [Pupil]

Positive relationships can be understood to be drivers as they encourage participation and a willingness to learn as revealed through one young person's statement: *'Teachers that are nice to you and motivate you, you do the work more and put in harder working'.* The following comments from pupils in one post-primary school illustrate the educational benefits of pupils feeling like they had approachable relationships with their teachers.

R: [The teachers] guide you ... they always want you to do your best.

R: You get really close to the teachers ... you're thinking, like, we're all a big family.

R: The teachers actually stress: "Don't leave the room without understanding what to do with your homework ... just ask me and its fine".

R: They do go out of their way like as well if you don't understand something ... they'll stay with you until you understand it.

R: They're not just teaching ... they have a job that they actually care about doing as well.

In a focus group with local primary pupils, most of the young people stated that they had had a very positive early education experience, saying that they had *'loved'* primary school, it was *'fun'* and the teachers were *'really nice'.* One primary school pupil also talked about the difference it made to their enjoyment of school when they left the class of a teacher whom they didn't have a good relationship with:

There was one teacher, I think it was in P2 ... she just didn't like me ... she blamed me for everything in the class, and I didn't like school after that ... I didn't enjoy school. But in P6 … we got a different teacher and then it was much better then. [Pupil]

These young people described mostly positive relationships with teachers and they were generally accepting of the difficulties that teachers face and stressed that their teachers *'try to do their best'.* In one young person's account, there is insight revealed into how they appreciate teachers who expressed a sense of interest in the person's individual needs through a more mentoring style approach. It is also interesting to note that this young person noted that it was only on refection at a more mature age that she really appreciated the teacher's investment. This young person claimed: that she was consistently and effectively

mentored '*the whole way through first year right up until Sixth Year*'; and that she was motivated by teachers '*asking you to strive better and do a bit better',* with encouraging comments such as *'come on, you know you have it in you'.*

One of the principals who were interviewed also described the way in which her school mentored senior pupils and why this was worthwhile.

The Year 12s have a senior management mentor, so we would meet them a few times a year and it's after their target setting ... And sometimes it's probably an aspirational target ... what we find is the children say, 'thank you', and they're a bit amazed that you're, as a senior person, talking to them, and it's a face-to-face relationship. [Principal]

Provision of flexible curricula and alternative qualifications
Some principals recognised an *'inflation effect'* on school achievement statistics in comparison to some other schools where a more vocational, flexible curriculum with GCSE equivalent qualifications are offered, rather than academic subjects only. One principal described the balance that needs to be struck between matching pupils with subjects and qualifications that suit their needs (which gives them a sense of self-worth) while maintaining standards in English and Maths.

The new benchmark is including English and Maths [at GCSE] ... Before, we would have adapted the curriculum to meet the needs of the children ... a lot of the schools around here would do the double award BTEC options too where they would come out with two GCSEs in the time it would take to do one GCSE, so there was a little bit of inflation in that aspect as well. But I'm not criticising that ... the children would have a sense of achievement and a sense of understanding that there is a worth in what they're doing, rather than being consistently met with failure. [Principal]

Achievement statistics may also change depending on which exam board is chosen in different years, i.e. whichever the heads of subject think are most appropriate.

We have gone EdExcel, AQA and CCEA. We leave it to the heads of subject to discuss with me which they think is the most appropriate. A number of them have changed, the Maths went back and forward for a while to get the best format for the children. [Principal]

One principal of a non-selective school claimed that a flexible curriculum was especially needed at sixth form; and that the Foyle Learning Community provided this opportunity.

We have had to change the curriculum at sixth form to meet the needs of the children as well. The client is different from the client that you would have at a grammar school coming through ... we had a whole lot of children who would've been getting two or three GCSEs that were now managing five or six ... And what we had to do then was realise that the choices that we were offering post-16 had to be right to meet their needs ... we've been trying to mix and match the academic A-levels ... instead of geography A-level which is still available in the Foyle Learning Community, we have A-level travel and tourism ... It's the equivalent A-level, BTEC. We also have A-Level ICT, vocational A-Level ICT ... we also introduced the BTEC ICT Level 3. There are a lot of options there for children who just cannot manage the A-levels. [Principal]

This same principal felt that there was a *'real openness'* between the schools and the relationships that had been built via the Foyle Learning Community which was key to enabling the right choices for pupils.

There wouldn't be any of them that I would be a stranger to, that I couldn't lift a phone call to, or ask a favour of, or try and get the best result for a pupil from. [Principal]

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Furthermore, it was evident from young people's accounts in a pupils' focus group that their enjoyment of school increased with variety (not necessarily subject choice, but also variety of teaching methods and extracurricular activities). However, these grammar school pupils recognised that '*bigger schools*' are able to offer more opportunities.

R: It's just really rare that we actually get something that's not to do with school.

R: We don't get enough school trips.

R: My brother goes to the [named secondary school], he's in the same year as me ... we're twins ... we got the same marks in the [transfer] test but he just wanted to go to [named secondary school] ... I think it's just because it's a bigger school, but he gets way more opportunities ... like they got to be extras, they were filming some sort of movie ... they get more cool stuff, but I think that's only to do with the size of the school. [Pupil focus group]

Measures to ease transition
Related to the previous driver of community-school linkages is the range of measures that schools have put in place to help children and young people deal with major transitions during their educational careers. While there was evidence of schools and community groups jointly providing transition support, principals described a range of methods they employed to ease transition between key stages within their schools. This included activities and support for not only the child making the transition, but their parent(s) or guardian too, to help them remain engaged in their child's educational journey through different stages. This began at the preschool stage, as described by a nursery school principal.

Parents are applying for their children at the moment to go into primary school. We would take each parent, we would have our first parent-teacher meetings at the start of November, we would have a chat with them then about the application forms especially if they are the first child in the family and tell them how to do it and get the application ... we would have a few children with quite sever special needs this year, and they were quite concerned ... it was maybe not picked up before they came to nursery. They want them to go to mainstream, but they will need quite a bit of support. [Nursery school principal]

This same source went on to highlight the value of collaborative inter-school relationships.

Next week we are up in [named primary school], their teachers would have come down here and done paired reading with the children, there is always a relationship there between the two main schools ... We would have a chat, send on the transition forms, and liaise with them, especially for children we thought would have difficulty settling in or with specific needs. It helps them to plan their resources for next year, and plan their complement of classroom assistants in case someone needs extra help. [Nursery school principal]

Post-primary pupils talked about the ways that they had been helped in settling into their new school environments. One pupil described how he had been given a positive impression about a local grammar school because of '*persuasion from the people who went there*'. Other pupils spoke of their relief that their post-primary school had placed children from their old primary school in their class, as this had made them feel '*more comfortable*'.

R: Nine from [named primary school] came here, and five of those were in our class.

R: Some of the other ones are in other classes with us as well, like in art, and I'm in class with some people for some other subjects as well.

R: I think we all had someone who was in the same primary school, even if they weren't in the same class as us. [Pupil focus group]

Two other important aspects of a young person's academic progression were also highlighted: several post-primary principals spoke about further transition support as pupils begin their GCSE studies; and post-primary pupils in a focus group described how early careers advice had helped them with subject choices and thinking about what the transition into what they would do after school.

Recently for the Year 11s as part of their induction, we had Ben Best in and did the Tree of Knowledge; it was all about aspirations ... he does a parents evening, and out of a potential 200 parents we had 80. Now that was very, very good, it was excellent, but the girls went home and sold it, that was one of the best things. [Principal]

R: I think the careers in here are really good.

R: Aye ... getting an idea of what we wanted to do.

R: Yeah, especially when you get up to sixth form, because it's all your careers that you are thinking about, and then you have to think about the courses you are going to choose and what you can apply to ... everything comes together. [Pupil focus group]

School leaders' understanding of local needs

Several of the principals from schools which participated in the research were born, raised, attended, and/or continued to live close to the school where they worked. These principals talked about their understanding of the needs of local people and also their deep emotional connection and commitment to the community. A further benefit of this, according to one principal, was the support they therefore received from the parents. In a similar vein, a second principal emphasised the important, positive role of the relationship-building element of working within and for the local community.

I was born and reared just beside here. I know the community completely ... I've a fuller understanding ... of the community background, of where the families and children are coming from ... I'm not saying it's absolutely necessary, but it's been very beneficial for me going forward ... the support that you get as a result of that is very good ... people believe in the school and believe in what you're doing. [Principal]

When I became principal, people would've said to me, "we were so delighted", because the paper did a whole profile ... "this local made good" type of thing. I keep saying to our staff, "look, this is a relationship, we're in the relationships business" ... This is a community and we call ourselves the school community ... So, every child has to be known, every member of staff has to be known, and, without prying into people's private lives, we have to know what people are carrying, and when we can support and when we can step in. [Principal]

Schools and community workers promoting the voice of young people

Pupils and principals gave examples of the avenues by which pupils (and teaching staff) can voice their concerns about school life or their education. One principal claimed that this was important for school improvement and enhancing the leadership skills of pupils and staff.

Well, we have a senior prefect team, senior leadership team, and head girl, and that team, the prefects are elected by the staff and pupils, we have a single vote each ... this is part of this identity ... and it's all kind of building leadership. [Principal]

We ran a course in school, building leadership capacity, and I targeted the year heads for it ... it meant then a substantial change to the pastoral programmes. [Principal]
The teachers that you have a good relationship with ... you would go to talk to them about something or if there was something that you thought should be changed. [Pupil]

Community workers appear to take on a *'guardian-type'* role for the young people of the Rosemount Ward and sought to ensure that the voice of the Rosemount youth is heard. In doing this, they sourced external agencies to support them and gained funding from the Arts Council and the National Lottery *'to do a documentary about what pressures are facing young people in Derry'.* This particular initiative will give young people an opportunity to actively engage with the issues that impact them, and thus promote their own level of awareness around the barriers they face. It was suggested that the young people feel supported and more confident in that they have made steps towards challenging these barriers rather than passively accepting them.

Individual needs of pupils are considered

Principals of all types of schools described the various ways in which they used data to identify needs and monitor the progress of individual pupils. They also had multiple systems in place to support these pupils with specific needs. One principal described how the school's official Special Educational Needs rate could be much higher because the school dealt with SEN cases with different levels of intervention. Another principal claimed that tracking also enables individual mentoring and personalised learning.

I'll be honest with you ... if I wanted to, instead of having a 36 or 37% special educational needs register, I could have a 70% very easily, very easily. What we have tried to do is not put [pupils] on the register at 1 and 2 unless it's absolutely necessary. If 80% of my pupils were in a different school environment, like [named grammar schools], they would be considered special educational needs pupils. But what we do is meet the needs of our children as far as possible in the classroom. [Principal]

We have a similar tracking system to SIMS Discovery that has been running for a few years now at Key Stage 4 ... we have use of the CATS and the predicted levels and we then have four stages where the classroom teachers are putting in whether they're on target, off target. We use that as part of our mentoring programme. We did a lot of development early on with the staff on CAT data ... Our focus for the CAT development now is to have that transition process better, that target-setting process better ... that idea of tracking right through is the way forward, that personalises the learning and that ensures that we're meeting the needs of each individual as they run through the school. [Principal]

A third principal explained how addressing the needs of individual pupils or small groups of pupils eventually leads to better levels of achievement amongst the wider pupil body.

We also have a programme which is targeted at a group of boys to engage them more in schools via afterschool activities by incentivising them. A lot of that Extended Schools work impacts on very small groups ... every time you impact on a disengaged child in the classroom, and turn them into an engaged child in the classroom, it impacts on every pupil in that classroom. Over a period of time, you understand, the disruption element isn't there, the role modelling of misbehaviour and disengagement and, lack of understanding of what education can do for you aren't exacerbated [Principal].

Peer role models in schools

Pupils talked about how older pupils or peer mentors in school, as well as school alumni, had a direct or indirect positive impact on their aspirations and enjoyment of school. Several young people referred to how their friends had encouraged them to apply to go to grammar schools when they were doing their transfer tests, when they hadn't considered it before.

To be honest, I came here, I'd never heard of the school at all, I think it was a friend that told me that she as going here and then I basically just came here because of her, and that's the reason why I'm here. [Pupil focus group]

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Some pupils said that: when they were in earlier year groups, older pupils had been assigned as their mentors to *'look after'* them and provide help or guidance; that in later years, mentors or *'buddies'* would provide more focused guidance within class or talk to them about choices; and that past pupil successes were held up as part of careers guidance.

They show ... successes that other people have had ... last week they had a woman in to talk about dreams and stuff and what we wanted to do in the future. So, it kind of made everybody think about what they wanted to do. [Pupil focus group]

One pupil claimed that information from his friend in an older class had a direct influence on his subject choices. Other pupils who took part in a focus group: described how participation in junior school sports teams enabled them to get to know older pupils in the senior sports teams; and claimed that these older pupils *'let [them] in on'* information. Finally, one of the school principals who was interviewed reinforced the importance of sixth year role models.

R: He would tell me what subjects he kept on as well and tell me if they were good or not.

R: They're actually really friendly and they let you in on stuff and all to treat you as you were their age, just like a normal person.

R: Through extra-curricular stuff, you get to know older pupils ... because it's like first to third years all do it together. [Pupil focus group]

I do believe actually that the sixth form is very important for a role model aspect for the children striving to ... achieve at that level and to have the ambition to go there ... I talk to them about seven years at school now, "you're going to stay the seven years", and they've an understanding of that. [Principal]

Primary school expectations of and support for pupils sitting the transfer test

During focus groups, pupils compared and contrasted the ways in which their primary schools prepared them to do the transfer test. It was clear that the primary schools which serve children from Rosemount had gone further in their efforts to prepare children for the test than other schools that pupils were familiar with.

R: Talking to my other friends that I met at [named school] they would say they hadn't put in as much work when they were building up [to the transfer test] as we did. Because I remember saying we did loads of past questions and tests and they were like, "we never got any of that".

R: We were always kind of just building up to it ... It was just basically past paper tests and ... corrections explained and everything. [Pupil focus group]

Afterschool clubs were the most common method of support for the majority of pupils in the focus groups, as opposed to a private tutor. Indeed, only one pupil here had a private tutor.

I: Did [named school] change when it was coming up to the transfer test?

R: It got harder, because we had an after-school club, which you had to go to if you were doing the transfer test.

I: Oh, right ok, was that a compulsory thing?

R: Well sort of ... you didn't have to, but they sort of like ... persuaded you. It did help though. [Pupil focus group]

Low rates of absenteeism

The seven schools serving young people from Rosemount had an average high-absenteeism rate (defined as attendance below 85% during a school year) of 10.2% during 2012/13, the best in the ILiAD sample, ranging between 1.5% in Lumen Christi to 21.1% in St Mary's. Figure 3.5 below shows a clear positive relationship between free school meal (FSM) entitlement and high absenteeism – one increases as the other increases – and that these variables have a negative relationship with attainment – as they increase, attainment decreases. The relationship between FSM entitlement, absenteeism and average rates of SEN also appears to be a positive one, if not as strong as FSM and absenteeism alone. It must be pointed out that some schools with similar absenteeism and FSM rates experience very different rates of achievement, and the major difference between them is the level of SEN in their intakes. For example, Oakgrove Integrated had an absenteeism rate of 13.6% and St Cecilia's had an absenteeism rate of 12.4%; St Cecilia's had a slightly higher FSM entitlement rate, but Oakgrove had a substantially higher rate of pupils with any SEN; and St Cecilia's has over a ten-percentage point advantage in terms of GCSE attainment. The results suggest that low rates of absenteeism must be factored into any explanation of why Catholic Wards of high deprivation are out-performing Protestant Wards of similarly high (or lower) deprivation, and particularly why Rosemount is performing so well.
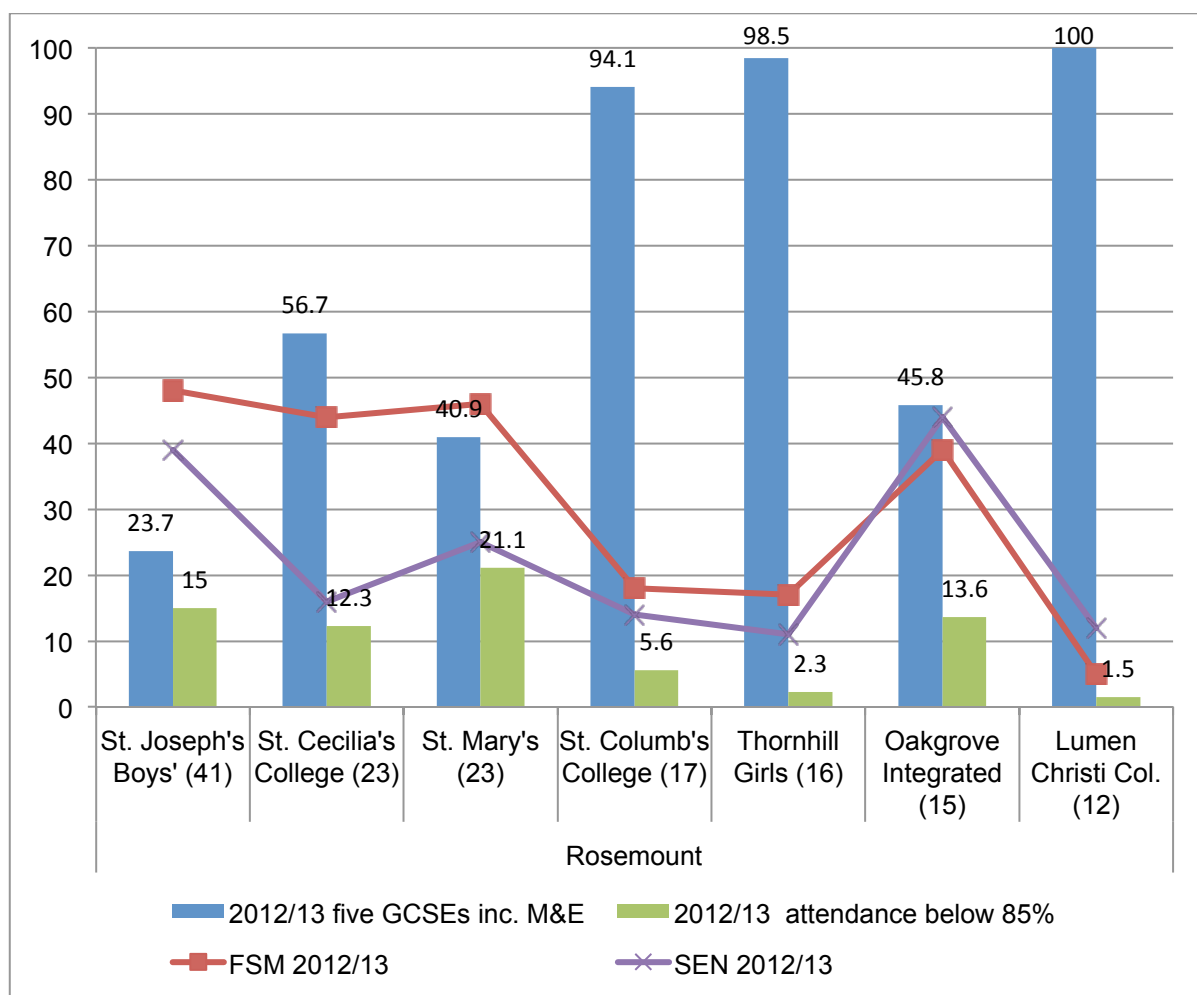

Figure 3.5: GCSE attainment, attendance, and average FSM entitlement rates – Rosemount

3.5. Micro-level drivers of attainment in Rosemount

The Rosemount data identified a total of five micro-level drivers of attainment: family support and high expectations; intergenerational closeness and close-knit area; feelings of connection to a broader community; family connection to schools; and individual resilience and self-motivation

Family support and high expectations of parents

In general, principals of schools serving the Ward reported that the parents of their pupils were *'academic orientated'* and *'engaged'*. One principal explained that parents work in tandem with the school to make sure their children are on target in terms of achievement. Similarly, in a pupil focus group, one young person gave an example of the impact that his father's engagement with his school had on his work.

I think we would find parents more demanding than what we would have done before. They would have their aspirations for their children. We do three parents meetings a year, and they are very well attended and parents are very interested. We give wee targets to work on at home and we would find that they do take that on board. [Principal]

The school send out a letter, they text, on my dad's phone ... saying, "They've exams" ... so then they're always saying, "Have you revised?" So, there's no getting away from it, you have to revise for it. [Pupil focus group]

Other pupils gave examples of how family members have a positive impact on their aspirations and educational choices by: conveying their high expectations; talking to the young person about their plans and encouraging them; or talking about their own careers.

R: [My family] kind of wanted me to go here because it's a really smart school and they make you do well and get a job.

R: My mum is generally the same. She says just keep, whatever you're doing, whether it's music or technology, just make sure you keep your interests, whatever you have now, don't just throw it all away just because of whatever job you are doing.

R: It would be good to do what you're good at or what you like because you'll normally like what you're good at.

R: Since I was younger I just wanted to be a surgeon. And my mummy says, well if you want to be it you can do it yourself sure. [Pupil focus group]

Having family members who worked in a range of jobs provided exposure to networks, advice and experience, all of which could be seen to have heightened the aspirations of some of the young people:

My aunties and uncles would be young enough, and one of them is working in London now in engineering and that's like the sort of stuff I would like to get into.

My brother … done IT ... now he has a job in software development in Manchester ... So, something along the lines of that I'd probably want to do. [Pupil focus group]

Several of these pupils also reported being encouraged by family members who did not have a straightforward path to achievement, or who had little or no qualifications themselves. It would appear from the data that this particular type of motivation is most effective in terms of breaking the cyclical nature of the inter-generational transmission of underachievement.

R: Like 20 odd years ago it would have been thought of as a deprived area ... some parents would still think of it that way ... they want you to get out of it almost, like move, like make a good future for yourselves.

R: I think with my parents, they wanted to make sure I didn't make any of the mistakes that they did when they were younger. My mum left when she was 16. My dad ... done his degree but he said he should have stayed out for another year because he was offered a job. He came back to get another job, but the factory closed after two years.

R: My mummy and daddy never went to University, but my granny, she couldn't go because she had them, but then she went and done her GCSEs and A Levels and all, and she done good in them, she got like an A in art. [Pupil focus group]

Intergenerational closeness and close-knit area
The qualitative data indicated that the Rosemount area is a close-knit community; there was evidence of families having lived in the area for generations and a high level of community connectedness. Equally high levels of community activism were also evident; pupils who lived in Rosemount gave several examples (in a focus group) of how the community had come together at different times to lobby for particular initiatives to improve the local area. These pupils were also knowledgeable about community services and activities available for different groups, as well as intergenerational work going on in the Ward; there was also a general sense of positivity amongst the following group of young people about their area.

R: There was a park beside my street and they closed it down ... there have been two petitions that went around our street to get a park or something in.

R: In the Resource centre, there are wee classes going on, like for old people in the community and stuff, like trying to get them involved ... like flower arranging and that.

R: They invite younger people up for dinner and all ... I went up one year and helped to give out the dinners, it's really good because it involves you and stuff.

R: They also set up a club for young wee boys, to get them all out of the area and to meet up, and then they can go in there every night.

R: Giving them something to do instead of hanging around the place ... getting into bother

R: Alcohol awareness talks ... drug talks and all going on for the young people.

R: Everyone knows what everyone is doing. [Pupil focus group]

Young people in this focus group also spoke about the community youth clubs as having high levels of activity, including initiatives which positively impacted upon their education, such as homework support. They also reported that their wider extended families all live in the area and their friends were close by; claimed this was 'really handy'; and highlighted the social benefit of many local young people having gone to the same local school.

I: Do you feel like you belong in the area where you live? Like you are a part of it?

R: Mmm, well all my friends are there too.

R: My whole family live in [name of street], so, we're all together.

R: When we were at [named primary school] a lot of people were from the area ... we are now all at [named secondary school] and we're still all friends. [Pupil focus group]

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Many young people made reference to '*the people'* being their favourite thing about Rosemount and the sense of friendliness they routinely encountered. Several claimed that people '*just stick up for each other';* others liked the fact that *'everybody knows everybody';* and that *'when you're walking down the street, people will say hello'.* One principal stated that '*the sense of community ... is the biggest positive aspect of Rosemount'.* However, one of the downsides to this closeness, he further claimed, was its '*insular'* nature. This particular principal: argued that anyone who came to live in Rosemount from another area would always be seen as a '*blow in';* and claimed that while the Resource Centre would organise different activities for different groups, it had its own '*niche'* in terms of participants, and more work was needed to widen access to the activities going on within it.

Feelings of connection to a broader community
The data revealed that some pupils from Rosemount did not see their education as only for them but that it also created benefits for others in their community.

R: [Named school] do try to do things, like not really in the Rosemount or Diamond areas, but in the centre of town you would see them do charity things, like plays and stuff.

R: Yeah, they do carol singing in Foyleside and sometimes as well I think they do exercise for older people. [Pupil focus group]

Similarly, some of the principals did not see their roles as leaders of a community of learners as being limited to their own school. For example, one principal explained the broad reach of the contribution they believe they can make.

I'm the principal of this school, but I believe I do have a contribution to education in the city, and I have gone on various fora throughout this city because I believe we have a contribution to make. [Principal]

A psycho-social connection to a broader community through education was also evident in other forms. For example, one principal also highlighted the unifying influence of the Catholic Church's role in his school; another of the geographical and cultural connections that involvement in Gaelic sports offered and community representatives of the importance of local youth work.

We have morning prayer every morning in a different year group assembly, we would have scripture read, that's engaging in our relationship with Jesus Christ through the scripture, we have a beautiful oratory in school, we would have different RE teachers taking children there ... prayer would be very important. We would mark all the liturgical times of the year, carol services, Christmas services, Easter and Lent. [Principal]

There's always some Gaelic or football matches on at the weekends so I always have to go early in the morning or something and don't get back till late because they're always down in the country somewhere, so I always have to travel down. [Principal]

Attendance at Saturday clubs and the whole range of activities that the local youth are served by is huge and, of course, brings parents in too. [Community worker]

It is clear from these indicative comments that pupils who are participating in these socio-cultural activities have the opportunity to feel part of a community identity, which may in turn offer them an additional mode of support as they go along their educational journeys. More broadly, all the young people from Rosemount who took part in the focus groups felt that: their neighbourhood or community extended beyond 'Rosemount'; that they were a part of the city (L/Derry) and had a connection to a broader area (the North-East of Ireland). This

broadened their social circles, and as a consequence, has the potential to broaden their educational aspirations too.

R: There is Rosemount, and ... there's Creggan ... right beside it, so where one ends and one starts, there's no clear line ... it's all just like a big place just outside of the town

R: For being a city, it feels a lot like a town. Like the city is compact and you know a lot of people – like, I know a lot of people from [four named schools] ... you know everyone.

R: "Where are you from?" I don't go, "Rosemount", I would say, "Derry", because Derry's my place but Rosemount, that's where I was born, that's where I live. [Pupil focus group]

Family connection to schools
Primary schools can be seen as being part of the educational tradition within families from Rosemount. Generations of the same families have attended the same school, thus, creating a sense of belonging, family identity with and attachment to the school itself. Principals generally reported high levels of parental engagement within their schools and that a child's education path was like a *'family affair'*.

We found at the transfer test, the familiarisation [day] ... you had mummy and daddy and granny and younger siblings and it became a family affair. They would come to things like the exhibitions and prize-giving as well. [Principal]

In addition, several young people claimed that being exposed to the diverse educational experiences of their siblings has made them more knowledgeable how their life choices: can impact their educational pathways and achievement; and give them a sense of which choices are most suitable. They also argued that having a family link to a school (particularly a grammar school) made the transition from primary school easier, especially if only a few or no other young people from the local area attended grammar school.

R: I think I am the only person from ... my immediate area, who goes to this school apart from like my family ... my two big sisters went here.

R: My uncle works in here and it was reassurance that I would always have somebody, I'd know somebody in here ... he'd just tell me what all the subjects would be like.

R: Both my brothers went here, it's probably the one I've heard the most about and that I've had the most familiarity with, so that's probably why. [Pupil focus group]

Individual resilience/motivation
Many participants in the research made reference to the importance of an individual's own drive, motivation, and/or resilience against disadvantaging circumstances in order to achieve highly. For example, some pupils stated that working hard was something they simply had to do if they were going to achieve.

R: I think you just did it [transfer test] because you wanted to go to a good school, because you had to do it to get into a good school if you wanted to go to.

R: [Successful students] themselves kind of want to do it [schoolwork] as well.

The more motivated young people described how the non-achievers can label them as '*stews*'; they stated: *'normally, people who sit in studying ... they would be seen as a bit, I don't know, boring, because they're doing the work'*. This suggests two things: that there is often a pressure on those who choose to work from their peers, and also that some have the necessary resilience to withstand such negative peer influences.

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The accounts of many young people educated in Catholic maintained secondary schools revealed: a sense of determination and willingness to achieve in education; and that they had high expectations for themselves and demonstrated a sense of ownership of their achievement and success. This vision of success is grounded in a clear idea of their educational pathway towards continuing education, GCSEs, A-Level and on to third level education. Their use of language was positive in that their words included were action orientated, such as *'try'* and *'want'*. This demonstrates a positive envisioning in their thinking towards educational goals and a confidence that this is an achievable route for them.

R: I'm doing them all now (GCSEs) but if I get the results, I'll go back ... I'm going to try and keep on Geography and IT.

R: I'm the same, I want to go into Sixth Form as well, to do Engineering, IT and Technology, and then I'm going off to uni to do Engineering.

These young people conveyed that they found school a rewarding and pleasurable experience and have high expectations of what it can offer them in the future: *'It's not as if it's a burden ... It's setting you up for your life'.* One pupil indicated that he has a strong attachment to school and that, at times, he misses *'being off'* at holidays. The accounts of these young people also revealed several motivating factors towards achievement which included: future employment prospects; education for purpose of leaving the city because *'there's nothing in Derry for you to stay to keep you here';* financial reasons because *'you want to get a job that's going to get you money';* and wanting to feel useful and be an active contributor to society because *'you want to be productive, you don't want to be sitting doing nothing'.* They also appeared to be motivated by their experiencing of witnessing others in their community who they understand as having not gained an education because they do not want *'the lifestyle they have'* which these respondents described as *'dependant'*. In such ways, having an awareness and understanding of how 'inhibitors' have impacted the lives of others is being utilised as an educational 'driver' by these young people.

R: You don't want to get stuck on the dole.

R: You want to be able to fend for yourself and buy what you want. [Pupil focus group]

3.6. Macro-level inhibitors of attainment in Rosemount

The Rosemount data also identified a total of four macro-level inhibitors of attainment in the Ward: academic selection; community resources lacking for older teenagers, changes in demographics; and the lack of jobs in Derry.

Academic selection
The data suggest that academic selection is leading to barriers to achievement for young people from Rosemount. These barriers include negative stereotypes and self-labelling of being a non-achiever. The principal of a local secondary school argued that: the current situation fails to provide upward mobility for young people from areas of deprivation; the pressure on some secondary schools, because of the needs of their intake, is immense; and that those needs *'cannot be fully addressed'* under the current system.

We have gone as far as we can go in raising achievement while selection still is in place ... the department targets, they're absolutely unobtainable while the current system is the way it is ... there is a point where you meet a critical mass of children who have an impact on whether a school can continue to move forward or whether it will fall back. I'm talking about schools that have 60% going on to 70% free school meals, that have well above their quota of special educational needs ... because of that [they are] moved down the pecking order in

terms of parental choice. They're just on a spiralling cycle that's impossible to break. Every pupil does not cost the same to educate, and there are many pupils in the secondary system that need much better resourced than those in the non-secondary system. [Principal]

Other principals argued that: selection processes inhibit social mixing; although grammar schools are good at what they do, more of a social balance is needed; it is simply not necessary to select in terms of ability because, by working together, schools can provide *'at all levels'.*

I'm not being disrespectful to my colleagues in the grammar sector, they do a fantastic job for our children ... But it's not necessary any more ... If they all be taught together [at primary school], then, why can't they be taught together at secondary? [Principal]

Several respondents also argued that there was resistance to change because those in positions of influence are a product of the system that worked well for them.

During several of the focus groups with young people, they talked about the culture of their grammar school. They used phrases such as '*we're under pressure*', and *'it's so hard this year'*. Pupils within a grammar school were also aware of how their own school was perceived by others, claiming that it was off-putting for some pupils and their families who didn't include themselves in the bracket of '*the smart people'*. This again implies that a certain level of resilience is needed on the part of pupils who want to attend a grammar when many of their community peers do not.

R: People kind of see [named grammar school] as the one where all the smart people go, and then they would kind of just class [named secondary schools] as just normal schools.

R: We're just are normal, it's the stereotype so it is.

R: But [our school] doesn't help that impression either ... they big themselves up.

R: [Named school] had a concert and all the music students were invited ... but we weren't allowed to go ... we wouldn't be missing school.

R: My family didn't want me to come to this school because of the stereotype of everybody being so smart and hearing about the amount of work they get and the amount of homework they have to do and not being able to cope with the work and all, so they wanted me to go to [named secondary school] but ... I wanted to come here. [Pupil focus group]

Pupils from Rosemount who attended another grammar school claimed that definite boundaries were created between those who did the test and those who didn't. Furthermore, the data suggest that there is an implied hierarchy and a view that grammars are only for those who did the test, and, thus, they are at the 'top' of the status hierarchy.

R: [Named secondary schools] would be at the bottom ... because people think if you didn't want to do the [transfer] test you always went to those schools. [Grammar school pupil]

However, one pupil from a grammar school questioned the perception of the gulf between grammar and secondary schools' cultures, pointing out that they follow the same statutory curriculum. Nevertheless, there was evidence of the social cleavages that academic selection had helped to create. For example, several non-grammar pupils talked about friendships which had ended after primary school or the fact that they are one of a small minority from their area who attend the same school.

R: I think the amount of work is over-dramatised, other schools think we get hours of work every night and we really don't; we just get the same as them; we do the same GCSEs and A-levels, there's not that much difference.

R: It was easier when we were in primary school because ... whenever we went up to secondary school everybody just went off in their own different friends then, so we never see each other now. If I do, like I was good friends with a girl, and whenever I see her ... I just wave to her and walk on ... we go around different places.

R: I don't really know any from [named grammar school] ... I don't really hang around with people in my area but rather in other areas, like ... up the town. [Pupil focus group]

It was clear that these social separations began the year before the transfer test was taken. Some pupils reported how their primary school class was separated into different groups – those going to be taking the test (who were sometimes further differentiated by ability), and those who were not.

R: In P 6, they took everyone who was doing the test ... and took everyone who wasn't doing it out and put them in a separate class ... there was a clear divide … where they put all the ones who struggled with one teacher who was very nice, and then all the ones who would work with other teachers who would make them work.

One grammar school principal acknowledged however that the test could be '*unfair'* to some pupils who didn't do their best on the day of the test.

There's people who will try, but just maybe didn't do well under exam conditions. And they couldn't [get a grammar place] and that is unfair. [Principal]

However, there was a sense from some high-achieving young people in the grammar sector that the boundaries are fixed, that ability is fixed, and that having one school system would '*hold you back'*, or just wouldn't '*work out'*. For example, despite one pupil's concern that his brother, who is at a secondary school, '*wants to do Physics as much as a lot of our class might'*, this is not a sufficient reason for getting rid of these boundaries:

I: Do you think if something radical was to happen, like ... there was just one school system, would that improve things?

All: No.

R: It would be terrible ... everyone in one area just go to one school, and do away with grammar schools and stuff, but I like being a grammar school.

R: Because you know, I'm not being big-headed or anything, but the level of work that you can do ... whereas I feel like other people would kind of hold you back that's maybe not as capable in that kind of way.

R: I think ... by the time it gets to A-level ... everybody in the same classes ... it's a mix which just doesn't work out. [Grammar pupils focus group]

Community resources lacking for older teenagers
Older teenagers who took part in the research reported that there was a lack of activities for them to do within the local area. Because of this, most reported spending a lot of time in the city centre with friends, which could be interpreted as contributing to a lowering of young people's connection with their local community. In a focus group of pupils, several young

people also expressed frustration at being stereotyped negatively when they were around shops or for standing out on the streets because there was nothing else for them to do.

R: You can't hang around [shops] as much because security would just tell you to get out.

R: If you're in uniform, "get out"

R: Foyleside closes in the evenings at the weekends, so you wouldn't go in there.

R: Yeah, after 7, there's just nowhere. We just go on the streets, don't we?

Some looked forward to the possibility of new resources in Brooke Park, but others were concerned because this was where underage drinking was said to take place there.

R: Some people our age would hang around Brooke Park as well.

R: I'm only 15, people would be shocked when I say, "I don't drink" ... I'm 15!

R: If you don't drink there's nowhere to go to be honest for our age. [Pupil focus group]

According to these young people, the lack of things to do was related to the physical geography of Rosemount. They stated that the steepness and narrowness of the roads made playing football on the streets or even walking back from the city centre more difficult and argued that *'there's nowhere for them to play'.* Roadworks were also described as *'constant'* and that often *'there's no one able to drive up or down the street'.* One young person expressed his frustration due to the negative impact this had had on his father's business by claiming that: *'if anyone wanted to come to the shop, they'd have to walk to it'.*

Changes in demographics
Several participants in the research explained how demographic change within the Ward over the past 10-15 years has impacted negatively on young people's engagement with school and their subsequent achievement. Firstly, a number of principals claimed that: school closures due to falling numbers had impacted adversely on non-selective schools because of the additional needs schools were catering for in their intake; and that *'a disproportionate amount of time then is spent trying to manage those needs'.*

The closure of [named school] means that the last of their pupils are transferring to us. That leaves us as the only Boys School catering for this area ... So, we are taking in the deprivation from across the Bogside, the Brandywell, the Creggan, Rosemount, and Ballymagroarty. Not many will have that catchment area going forward. [Principal]

Several principals also explained that continuing falling enrolments has led to a reduction in the number of positive peer role models within secondary schools.

With the demographic downturn of pupils, the grammar schools are still filling their quota with non-grammar pupils, and that's impacting as well. So, you have less of the more able, role model pupil in this environment, therefore you have an imbalance in the number of pupils that you're dealing with multiple difficulties versus the number of pupils who are managing well and are totally focused and engaged in their education. And when that tips that balance, the school is lost. [Principal]

A further related issue was the barrier to entitlement framework delivery to secondary school pupils if grammar school classes were full:

When a class is full of its own pupils from its own school ... trying to get that guarantee of a place is difficult. [Principal]

The data suggest that many respondents perceive a lost sense of community in Rosemount over the past fifteen years because of the increasingly transient nature of the residency. For example, Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) claimed that the housing shortage was one of the main negative features of the area because the housing lists are *'just unbelievable';* and highlighted problems associated with private rented tenures in a previously '*settled area'.*

A lot of landlords came in, bought houses and all the rest of it and now you've got high instances of students and DHSS ... it has become a transient type of population and the same would apply to ... all the streets in Rosemount ... which was very residential up until about 15 years ago, it is now landlord city. [EWO]

It has actually caused a lot of problems ... young people hanging around at night involved in anti-social behaviour in that area of Rosemount that includes all those wee streets. [EWO]

The lack of jobs in Derry

In a focus group of grammar school pupils, young people talked about wanting to do well in school. However, they did not see themselves staying in Derry/Londonderry.

R: I want to leave to get a job, I won't stay here to get a job because there are no jobs in physiotherapy; I'm going to just study here and then just leave.

R: I think I'm looking at maybe going to Dublin after this, at least go to University there. I know a good lot of people would like to stay here but it's pretty much just because of University and jobs that [people] are drawn to go down South.

In addition, one community worked believed that the value of standard qualifications such as GCSEs is lower than in the past; and that a much higher level of academic qualifications is needed in order to gain good employment.

Previous generations only had to get the minimum of five GCSEs, then ... A-Levels, now you more or less need a degree to apply for a part-time job. [Community worker]

Three further macro-level inhibitors were identified: the first of which was the use of the SEN statistic and schools being unfairly compared to each other:

What you really need is a breakdown of the special educational needs register of the school instead of the overall percentage, the percentage on 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 ... That would give you a better view of where real needs are. [Principal]

The second macro-level inhibitor was the stated belief that the current education system favours the working style of females:

I have always found that girls want to do it right, want to please, or want to be seen to be producing good work. For some boys, just getting them to sit down with a pen and a book is a major achievement. [Principal]

The third macro-level inhibitor was changes in exam board standards, which had had a significant negative impact on this principal's pupils and their subsequent results statistics:

There was a change in standards that happened at the end of the year that didn't impact on the controlled assessments that were done earlier ... but we had decided last year not to do that, we did the controlled assessment at the end of the year. So, some schools were only

impacted by the final exam, it didn't have the same impact. So, it had a major impact in terms of the stats for year. [Principal]

Furthermore, the same source claimed the way that some exam boards report results makes teachers and pupils unsure as to whether resits are needed:

We would some of our brighter children into the English Lit exam early, and they did it in the January sitting, but they give them a result and not a grade ... they said they will give them a grade at the end of the year, which is incredible, we've never had that before. So, they are sitting it thinking they have their C grade, but they might not, so they don't know whether to do it again or not do it again, it's incredible. [Principal]

3.7. Meso-level inhibitors of attainment in Rosemount

The following four meso-level inhibitors were identified: curriculum (statutory and local) and school structure; balancing 'labelling' and support in school; poor relationships with teacher; and the education system failing to pick up underlying issues early enough.

Curriculum (statutory and local) and school structure
The young peoples' accounts revealed that they perceive the role of education to be functional and employment-oriented; and that their approach to subjects is underpinned by how they understand that it will enhance their future employment goals. Typical statements included: '*why do I need this for a job?'*, and that *'there's too much being taught'.* Among this group, there was little reference made to education as a holistic concept. Similarly, questions around Religious Education engendered responses such as:

R: It's not going to help us with our future really, it's nothing relevant.

R: It's just an extra workload that you have to, you're struggling with.

R: I just didn't like RE; I don't see why it's going to help you.

These respondents could see the relevance of basic Maths and how it could apply to aspects of their future, however, more complex Maths they felt would only be relevant if the career choice they made would require it:

R: All you really need is adding and multiplying, and subtracting.

R: It's all stuff you don't need it, you might need it if you go to certain things to do with, like accountancy or something.

Additionally, there appear to be issues with the range of qualifications and courses that schools are able to provide. For example, a community worker suggested that introducing more vocational type courses may be a way forward to engaging some young people.

Even in educational terms, I think young people are seeing it too formalised ... We have young people in here looking for OCNs and a whole range of subjects. [Community worker]

Some principals made reference to the problems that literacy requirements of the statutory curriculum and associated examinations could cause; and argued that this could even be a problem for non-traditional A level subjects.

Sometimes ... the questions would be written in a way that the children weren't sure about what they were being asked. [Principal]

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Some of our [pupils] were really engaged with the sports studies and wanted to go in that direction and maybe would follow on from us into a higher national programme in the further education college or whatever. They were struggling with parts of the written element of the A-Level PE, the theory element. [Principal]

In terms of the school routine, some of the young people felt that the school day started too early, and they suggested that *'It'd be better if it started at 11 or something'.* From community worker perspectives, the structure and routine of the school day and formal structured school setting can be counterproductive for some young people. They felt that alternative teaching methods and approaches to engage with young people could be used more effectively, especially for those with additional learning needs. For example, several community workers claimed that some young people struggle with *'sitting down and looking straight ahead;* and that young men, *'especially those with learning difficulties, can't focus'.* This community worker referred directly to a successful *'gardening project'* programme that they facilitated in a local primary school.

Taking them (pupils) out of a classroom setting, we found that there wasn't a problem with them ... because they followed rules, they listened to what you were saying, they get on well with one another. None of them were fighting. [Community worker]

Balancing 'labelling' and support in school
One young person stated that there is an *'underachievement class'* in his school, identifying that here are a number of young people who are labelled, in this case, as *'underachievers'*. This group are taught separately from other pupils in the school for subjects that they are having difficulties with. It is made up of *'a mixture of First to Fifth Years'.* In this class, these young people are provided with extra support.

There'd be more personal assistance given in that class ... Some of their subjects, they would actually go and attend a class with their other classmates, but in classes where they're having ... difficulty ... they would take them out and put into this class, and ... be given that one-on-one. [Pupil focus group]

This example illustrates well the difficult balance that needs to be struck within schools, of supporting struggling students sensitively without them being labelled or the placing of low expectations on them.

Poor relationships with teacher
One of the young people described how having a poor relationship with a teacher can negatively impact their willingness to achieve. It is interesting to note that they did not have a specific reason for disliking them personally. However, they felt that some of this poor relationship might be affected by the fact that they do not like or struggle with the subject area that the teacher takes. From this account, an insight is given into how one inhibitor of achievement can contribute to creating another.

There are other teachers that you just don't take a liking to, but maybe that's your subjects too, because the teachers that I liked were my History and Politics teacher, and I ended up doing really well in them. [Pupil focus group]

Education system failing to pick up underlying issues early
According to community workers in Rosemount, there is an issue with some young people transferring from a primary school setting to secondary level having never been properly assessed or having had their individual learning needs addressed. These respondents stressed that this can have a direct impact on that young person and ultimately impacts their 'chance' at school. They also highlighted a lack of funding as a key issue here.

A lot of the young people we're working with there's underlying health issues ... there hasn't been the proper screening or testing and there's some learning difficulties that maybe hasn't been picked up. [Community worker]

I think there needs to be an ethos of young people getting the proper help in first year and the proper assessments done in primary school so that when they do go onto the secondary setting these issues are identified. [Community worker]

I think that's going to get worse because they're cutting back on classroom assistants ... in schools. [Community worker]

3.8. Micro-level inhibitors of attainment in Rosemount

The Rosemount data identified a total of four micro-level inhibitors of attainment: anti-social behaviour and negative peer pressure; low self-esteem, low expectations, and sense of hopelessness; adverse family circumstances; and low parental expectations or engagement with schoolwork.

Anti-social behaviour and negative peer pressure
In describing some of the negative aspects of living in Rosemount, many participants made reference to anti-social behaviour. One principal believed it was people from outside the community responsible for this, and it was a result of young males in particular not having '*somewhere to go'.*

At the weekends, people would be going out to their cars with the windows smashed in ... But the actual people are not from Rosemount … During the summer when the long nights came in, it was young boys ... they just didn't have somewhere to go, and they would have been hanging around a lot. [Principal]

This view was supported by pupils in a focus group who made reference to there being a *'bad atmosphere'.*

R: Like there's people, who ... just hang around down streets.

R: They sort of give Derry a bad influence. [Pupil focus group]

Local community workers also conveyed that school-aged young people, from twelve upwards, are engaging in alcohol and drugs and this is a pattern which is embedded in the youth culture of the area but which is also seen to be becoming more widespread and common place. Additionally, they described how this in turn appears to encourage some of the young people to engage in crime and anti-social behaviour.

I think alcohol is one of the biggest issues within this area, it's been known, certainly since I was young, as being a hot spot of anti-community behaviour. [Community worker]

For some young people, there was a prioritisation of drug and alcohol use over academic achievement; some are more interested in *'getting high'; 'their mind's set on drugs than work'.* This culture of young people engaging in drug and alcohol was reported as being more prevalent in boys, *'like you see in especially a boys' school, like drugs and drink'.* Some young people believed that trying to engage non-achieving peers in conversation about education and future would be fruitless; they also made comments about their peers.

If they were all geared up with stuff, then they're not going to be talking sense anyway.

They'll probably [say] "Right, I'm going to do well", and then after a week ... [they say] "No, I couldn't be bothered". [Pupil focus group]

A community worker pointed out that he has observed a pattern between young people's behaviour and their attitude to school which is related to their developmental life stage: their focus is on enjoyment, which they appear to understand takes place at the weekend. The school week is understood as the days leading up to the weekend.

On the streets at the weekend, there's maybe 50, 60 kids down there ... the majority of them kids are from our community ... focus on their future is limited, because they live for the moment. They just live for that weekend ... on a Monday [school] might be great, you're sharing all your stories and the next thing ... it's waiting for Friday night to come around. Very often, they spend Monday, Tuesday recovering from the weekend, and Thursday, Friday looking forward to the next, so there's maybe one day out of the five where they are even remotely interested in what's going on around them at school. [Community worker]

These community workers stressed that '*anti-community'* behaviour in turn, can lead to them being excluded, labelled, and in some cases, *'punished'* by their own community.

[Young people are] ending up becoming disengaged from their community because ... other members of the community are seeing them ones as bringing the crowds into the area, so it has that knock-on effect. [Community worker]

Low self-esteem, low expectations, and sense of hopelessness
In referring to male peers at school, one young person described how some of them act out a *'hard man'* role in school. This might be understood on many levels: insecurity, transitional stage, issues with authority or performing a social role which is they feel is expected from them or with which they identify with, if achievement in education has not been a concept they have experienced in their community or family or peers.

The influence of peers is further understood by the young people's accounts of other young people who are not motivated generally. This includes a sense of disengagement from school and community initiatives. The main reason forwarded was that they *'don't want to come in and work ... they just don't care about anything'*. This attitude is also prevalent in school, where *'the work's getting hard ... they don't like doing it ... so they start'*. This is not simply seen as a young male attitude or behaviour, it is also pointed out that young females are also engaging in destructive, defiant behaviours in school, displaying a sense of achievement and pride in getting into trouble at school such as being suspended.

She got suspended or something and she was all happy with herself and all, but she goes about it like she doesn't care about it, but she's just wasting her life away ... she just goes out every weekend and stuff. [Pupil focus group]

The transcripts from these pupil focus groups suggest that young people who struggle in school may fear failure and appear to find it difficult to persevere at tasks, one young person states, *'they'll give up then because they just know it's not going to work'*. Others may struggle with independence and have little concept of a future which might involve moving away from their parents and their financial support. Similarly, one of the community workers described noticing a generalised sense of pointlessness in attending school and that young people are becoming more increasingly disengaged.

They think their mummy and daddy's going to provide for them their whole life like, but it's not going to happen. [Pupil focus group]

I've seen a decline in the number of young people that's actually taking a liking out of school ... they don't like to attend it, it's not in their nature now, it's forced habit of having to attend school. [Community worker]

However, the accounts from community workers and EWOs suggest that there appears to be a generalised sense of disillusionment among sections of the community towards education. They feel excluded from higher education and high salaried jobs. This is underpinned by a generalised sense of low self-esteem and confidence within local communities and compounded by how the wider society seeks to support them. For example: the reduction on funding for schools leading to classroom support for young people with particular learning needs being reduced; the financial cost of third level education; and the low number of available places in the local University.

Young people have become disillusioned with the whole educational process, they see no benefit in it ... "Well, sure, how am I going to get to University?" They've no self-confidence, there's a real lack of self-esteem where they think they're not good enough because they're coming from a working-class area to attend University. [Community worker]

These accounts appear to suggest that there are young people getting the grades to apply to the local University but that there are not enough places for them and that this leads to them attending elsewhere. In support of this claim, a local EWO described the problem for those young people who live close to Magee but for whom education appears unattainable.

It's not that they're not applying; it's that the places aren't there; the government hasn't given the money for people to come to Magee. [Community worker]

It must be difficult to have a University on door step/directly in your area and watch others from outside walk through. [EWO]

There is also a sense that this exclusion is further perpetuated by a generalised sense of being excluded from the wider Derry City council.

Our young people are displaced from the City of Culture, they haven't been consulted about any of the events ... they're not representative of our youth culture. [Community worker]

Lastly, according to community workers, *s*chools don't prepare young people for higher education; and attaining 5 GCSE's is understood to be the main goal of their educational pathway suggesting a limited focus on higher education as a goal for these young people.

School hasn't really prepared them, a lot of the young people we are working with are unsuited to University, a lot of young people we are working with ... their high end would be preparing for the 5 GCSEs. [Community worker]

Most of the kids that I work with don't see University as an option ... the highest end of their achievement would be Tech, maybe an apprenticeship and a job ... a lot of them, most of them don't see that, it wouldn't be in their dreams basically. [Community worker]

Adverse family circumstances

Rosemount was described by some interviewees as a trauma-experienced community. The issues were described by a community worker in terms of a *'pressure',* referring to the external stress factors which are prevalent within the daily lives of those who live there. These stress factors included 'The Troubles', exposure to violence, and related legacy issues including drug and alcohol dependency, social deprivation, and poverty. These views were supported by a principal who had noticed a *'big increase'* in referrals to social services since the recession around *'domestic abuse'* and *'parents not getting on'.*

There's a lot of challenges that face young people ... they've been exposed to violence, they've been exposed to the tail-end of the Troubles, their family have been living through a war situation ... living in that situation you have complications, you have a lot of parents maybe with a dependency on alcohol, drugs, prescription medication. [Community worker]

Community workers also: pointed out how acute the issues of social deprivation are for these communities. Unemployment rates are high and the wider Foyle area is regarded as being '*the second highest or third highest in the UK for youth unemployment';* and described families that are struggling financially due to a lack of full-time employment opportunities. Relatedly, a principal talked about warning pupils against working too many part-time hours in jobs during term-time, but stated that she knew of many who felt somewhat obligated because these modest additional incomes were '*contributing to the family budget'.*

Low parental expectations or engagement with schoolwork
The principal of one secondary school stated that it can be difficult to engage some parents in their child's education. Another principal believed that, within his school, the problem of low expectations from parents of what their child's education could do for them arose from the '*legacy'* of their own negative experiences, that education '*did nothing'* for them. A third principal identified intergenerational unemployment as a major barrier to wanting to achieve for the purposes of gaining work.

[Parents] wait for you to take the initiative ... this year ... people have actually been interested in things. [Previously] things were very, very badly attended. [Principal]

That has been passed down to the children ... when you've children coming in, and I'm not being disrespectful in this, but their ambition is to be a taxi driver, because their daddy runs a taxi and does it very well; don't get me wrong, there's nothing wrong with a taxi driver, but if that's the only ambition you have starting off, then ... there's not a lot of need for school and education involvement now. [Principal]

They don't think about the need for employment ... it is social benefits and they're quite content to live that lifestyle. [Principal]

Several community workers also identified an intergenerational element to underachievement; and argued that for some young people in the community, there is no family tradition of higher education. However, at the opposite end of the spectrum, one community worker claimed that some '*parents are maybe working 2 or 3 jobs',* and as such, there is little time for them to be involved in their child's education.

It's an inherited thing that nobody really in their family has been to University. [Community worker]

The kids going home in the afternoon ... and maybe the dinner's left for him ... I don't think it's bad parenting ... but it's not proper parenting for that kid, the parent is maybe out trying to earn a living ... and sometimes there's no balance. [Community worker]

Several pupils also referred to the fact that because their siblings and/or parents had gone to the local secondary schools, there was no expectation that they would go to a grammar school.

R: My family, they knew about the school but it was never an option because ... like I was grand just to go to [the secondary school] ... they all just went.

R: [My mum] didn't even do her GCSEs because back then, they just went into the factories and worked, so I wasn't really expected or anything from it, they were just happy to see me get into secondary school.

3.9. Summary of the findings from the Rosemount Ward

The data has identified a range of macro, meso and micro-level issues which impact on the educational attainment of young people from Rosemount. Across these three levels, a number of issues were seen to enable academic achievement in the Ward and others were seen to inhibit school progression. In terms of structural (macro-level) factors, it is clear that enduring legacies of the Education Act (1947) include appreciation of education's value and a patent belief in the Catholic education system amongst large sections of the Ward's population. Indeed, similar to other Catholic Wards in the ILiAD study, Rosemount performs significantly better in terms of education than its deprivation rank (44th) would suggest. For example, on the specific domain of education and skills the Ward is ranked 236th most deprived; and the latest statistics (2012-2013) show that 91% of the Ward's school leavers attained 5 GCSEs which was the highest proportion across the seven ILiAD Wards.

Educational attainment in the Ward is also enabled by the propinquity of high-performing schools. Of the seven schools which serve Rosemount, five are within 1.6 miles of the Ward's geographical mid-point; and the three main secondary schools are all within 0.5 miles. Other macro-level drivers were identified around: effective youth service and education initiatives in the community; extensive inward investment in the Ward, such as, new and improved school buildings; substantial provision of Early Years and other pre-school programmes; the social mix which is said to exist in the Ward's schools; the benefits of co-education for boys, particularly around addressing aggressive behaviour; and the argument that the recession and lack of jobs has, paradoxically, provided '*incentives*'.

However, a range of macro-level inhibitors were also identified in the Rosemount data. The most significant of these related to the issue of academic selection which, it was claimed: creates an implied hierarchy and social cleavages among grammar and secondary school pupils; engenders negative self-labelling as '*non-achievers*'; and, as a consequence of falling rolls and 'creaming' processes, deprives local secondary schools of likely high-achievers. Other structural barriers in Rosemount concern: changes to Ward's demographic profile which, it was claimed, has made the community more '*transient*'; the scarcity of employment opportunities in Ward; and a lack of community resources for older teenagers. Moreover, a series of additional, albeit less significant, inhibitors were identified around: the poor physical environment in the Ward; changes in Exam Board standards; and the skewing effect of official statistics e.g. the suggestion that schools are '*unfairly*' compared with each other in attainment statistics.

In terms of school-level (meso) factors in Rosemount, the data show that staff-pupil relationships are, in general, productive, friendly and respectful; the individual needs of pupils are considered; pupils feel '*listened to*'; the ethos of local schools combines pastoral care and academic success; and, in furtherance of this ethos, schools have in place flexible curricular, broad conceptualisations of achievement, and effective processes to support transitions. Similarly, the Rosemount data evidence: close and long-standing school-parent and school-community relationships in the Ward; and that the Extended Schools programmes has been a critical factor in terms of improving pupil performance, parental engagement and schools' understanding of local needs. For example, many young people have benefited from revision, homework, and breakfast clubs; many parents have participated in programmes around essential skills, parenting, and supporting their child's education; and effective partnerships have been fostered and improved around school-community linkages and inter-agency support.

The data also highlight: that schools and community workers consistently promote the voice of young people; the valuable contribution made by peer role models in schools; and that within many of the Ward's primary schools there is an expectation of and support for pupils sitting the transfer test. These enablers, in addition to the above outlined macro-level drivers, e.g. the propinquity of high-performing local schools, are seen as important factors in the Ward's low absenteeism rate of 10.2%, again, the best in the ILiAD study.

However, the data highlight that, in some instances, educational attainment in Rosemount is inhibited by: an often overly rigid adherence to the curriculum and school structure; the complex balance between providing additional education support and the labelling of young people as deficient; the poor relationships that are said to exist between some teachers and their pupils; and the frequent claim that, too often, the education system fails to pick up underlying issues early enough.

In terms of the micro-level influences, which impact on the academic progression of young people from Rosemount, a series of factors were identified relating to the level and consistency of parental support. The data make clear that many parents in the Ward are *'academically orientated'*, routinely involved in their child's education, and are demonstrably engaged with the schools their children attend. These parents, some of whom did not themselves achieve at school, also hold high expectations for their child's education and are keen to ensure that: (a) their child apply themselves; (b) the school pushes their child towards realising their academic potential; and (c) that they, as parents, do everything they can to fulfil *'their obligations'* in terms of providing support and creating a home-regime which is conducive to their children's learning.

Three other inter-related micro-level drivers to emerge from the Rosemount data concerned: the close-knit, intergenerational bonds which were seen as a feature of the Ward; the feelings of connection to a broader community (geographical and psycho-social); and the long-standing family connections to schools which were equally typical. The final micro-level driver of educational attainment in Rosemount was the individual resilience and self-motivation of certain young people, many of whom have little parental support and live in adverse home environments. This resilience is seen to encourage them to resist any negative influences; to avail of the learning and support opportunities that initiatives such as Extended Schools offer; and, subsequently, succeed against the odds.

However, a number of micro-level inhibitors were also identified. Anti-social behaviour in the Ward and (associated) negative peer pressure were seen as the most significant of these barriers. According to the data, the key sources of this anti-social behaviour were: the influence of *'outsiders'* from neighbouring Wards; an acute lack of youth resources and venues; and that many young people from the Ward, some as young as 12, frequently consume alcohol and drugs. It was also commonly reported that some young people in the Ward: engage in destructive and defiant behaviour; and often perceive getting into trouble and being suspended from school as a form of *'achievement'*.

It is also clear from the Rosemount data that some young people in the Ward harbour low self-esteem, low expectations, and sense of hopelessness. These pessimistic outlooks, it was claimed, are primarily informed by family histories of academic failure, negative peer influence, and the fact that because many of these young peoples' focus is on the weekend, they are, often, *'not remotely interested'* in school.

The last two, albeit less frequently cited, micro-level inhibitors relate to: the adverse family circumstances many young people from Rosemount endure; and, notwithstanding, the high levels of parental engagement as outlined above, a number of parents in the Ward have low expectations for their child's education and equally low engagement with schools.

3.10 Social capital in Rosemount

In terms of bonding social capital, conceptualised here as empowerment, infrastructure and connectedness, the Rosemount data evidence that: positive familial and community norms around education; supportive and engaged parents; close-knit community networks; and a widely held sense of community belonging are common features of the Ward. Rosemount is also characterised by high levels of community activism and a confident identification with the broader Derry/Londonderry area. Moreover, it is clear that these immediate, neighbourhood bonds are, in many ways, cemented by the interplay of psycho-social connections between families, schools and the Catholic Church. For example, principals and teachers in the Ward spoke about the positive impact of the 'Service of Light' where year 8 pupils, their parents and their form teacher participate in a simple religious service and light a candle to (a) symbolise the beginning of these tri-partite relationships; and (b) commit to themselves and each other to sustain these relationships. In such ways, many young people in Rosemount come to see: their community as a supportive learning hub; their school as the focal point of this hub; and their family as active agents in their learning.

However, a section of the Ward's young people, particularly those from the most disadvantaged households have a completely different perception of their families, schools and community. Among this group: adverse home circumstances, the inter-generational transmission of educational failure, and the spectre of inherited welfare dependency conspire to limit their ambition. For some: school attendance is seen as *'pointless'* because attainment is *'impossible'*; the prospect of well-paid employment is equally bleak; and conceptualisations of community are framed around notions of poverty and decline.

Bridging social capital refers to schools' levels of engagement, accessibility and innovation. The data make clear that: schools which serve Rosemount have successfully fostered and sustained high levels of engagement with pupils, their families and the wider community; many teachers were born and raised in the local communities and, thus, have a deep emotional connection and commitment to the young people in their care. Several teachers and principals spoke about: their professional practice as a *'vocation'*; school values being informed by a Catholic ethos; and that pastoral care, particularly for the most marginalised pupils, being a key priority. Stocks of bridging social capital in Rosemount are further increased by innovative practices on the part of local schools. For example, homework and revision clubs are fully integrated into 'Extended Schools' programmes; parents are routinely texted by schools to e.g. remind them of upcoming exams; and during the Easter holidays, a three-day course was provided to help pupils prepare for the forthcoming exam season. This initiative was seen as particularly successful because: (a) the learning setting was informal and relaxed (e.g. no-uniform); and (b) the pupils were engaged and wanted to be there. Importantly, these programmes were also said to create a socio-economic *'equalising effect'* for young people whose parents, unlike their more affluent counterparts, are unable to hire private tutors.

However, the value of these bridging capital stocks in Rosemount is undermined by issues such as: the (unintended) labelling of struggling students; the inflexibility of some school structures; the prohibitive cost of third-level education; the insufficient number of places in Higher Education; and that demoralising impact on young people who miss out on such a place having to watch other people access a University which is, literally, on their doorstep. Linking social capital relates to structural factors such as the Ward's history, demographics, and physical assets. Although the recent conflict has impacted the Rosemount community, few respondents highlighted its legacies as specific barriers to attainment. Similarly, demographic change does not appear to have affected the Ward in the same way as others in the ILiAD study. However, the increased proportion of houses in the private rented sector has, according to some, created transitory residential tenures and a *'landlord culture'*. In terms of Rosemount's physical assets, the Catholic schools which serve the Ward are high-

performing, well-led, and populated by teachers who are empathetic and committed. Moreover, these schools are also: highly visible; an integral part of the Rosemount community; and, thus, serve to reinforce notions of education as a community priority and schools as an important identity referent for local young people.

However, the negative impacts of academic selection were seen as a significant inhibitor of educational achievement in the Ward. While the data make clear the many benefits of a grammar school education, they equally highlight pronounced disadvantages for those who either fail or do not sit the transfer test. Resultant social cleavages, negative self-labelling, and perceived hierarchies were frequently evidenced. For example, several secondary school pupils spoke about feeling *'second class'* and some grammar pupils argued against mixed ability classes claiming that they simply *'wouldn't work'* because *'less capable'* pupils would hold them back. Therefore, looking at bonding, bridging and linking capital together, it is clear that Rosemount has substantial stocks of each; and that, in general, they combine effectively to ensure that the education of many young people in the Ward is effectively supported. However, the distribution of these 'capitals' is, on many levels, framed by issues such as social class and family norms around education. Thus, somewhat predictably, the impact of these 'capitals' on local young peoples' academic prospects are, often profoundly, uneven.

In terms of negative social capital, the data reveal two examples relating to orthodox interpretations of the concept which assume universal benefits. While Rosemount has formations of social capital at familial, school, and structural level, it is clear that many of the Ward's most socio-economically disadvantaged school-aged residents have: less parental support; weaker connections to schools; and, notwithstanding the propinquity of a University campus, little prospect of accessing third level education. In such ways, their utilisation of the social capital created within their community is constrained by the socio-economic context of their lives. According to Rubio (1997),[18]a community's social capital should not be regarded simply as the presence of opportunities but rather their accessibility in the social structure. In other words, a community can only sustain (positive) social capital stocks if the benefits created are shared and available to all. More recently, Field (2010: 91-93)[19] has shown that associations such as price cartels may indeed encompass cooperation and accrue benefits for members, but the social capital thus produced does not benefit wider society. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between 'socially productive' networks which generate 'favourable outcomes' to members and the wider community, and 'unproductive networks' which provide benefits for members but produce negative outcomes for the wider community (ibid). According to the Rosemount data: processes associated with academic selection have created networks in the Ward are more related to this second category: and, it was further claimed, the political will to identify and develop a fairer education structure is absent because many of those in positions of influence are product of the system that was seen to work well for them.

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[18] Rubio, M. (1997) 'Perverse social capital – some evidence from Colombia', Journal of Economic Issues, 31 (3), 805–816.
[19] Field, J. (2010) *Social Capital,* (2nd edn) London: Routledge.

4.1. Local Context

Deprivation Levels

Dunclug is ranked 83rd for multiple deprivation out of 582 Wards in Northern Ireland (NI), meaning that it is one of the less highly deprived Wards in the ILiAD sample. However, NI Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS) Ward-level data reveal that Dunclug has an exceptionally high level of crime. On the NINIS crime and disorder deprivation domain, Dunclug has the 25th worst score in NI. The rate of anti-social behaviour (as of 2009/10) is 985 incidents per 10,000 of the population, far within the highest quantile for anti-social behaviour rates across all Wards in NI. Other crime rates that fall within the highest quintile are: violent crimes against the person (419 incidents per 10,000 of the population, 2008/09); criminal damage (570 incidents per 10,000 of the population, 2008/09); other theft offences (164 incidents per 10,000 of the population, 2008/09); and burglaries (160 incidents per 10,000 of the population, 2008/09). Dunclug scores poorly on the living environment deprivation domain; it is ranked 48th (with 1 being the most deprived) out of 582 Wards. This is a measure of the quality of housing, access to suitable housing, and the outdoor physical environment. The level of health deprivation and disability in the Ward is also poor, with a ranking of 122 out of 582. Levels of employment are, however, quite good; Dunclug is ranked 277th, approximately halfway between the least and most deprived Wards. At the commencement of this research, three major manufacturing companies (Michelin Tyres, Gallagher's Tobacco, Wrightbus and Moy Park), alongside the offices of a range of statutory bodies, offered a range of professional, skilled and unskilled jobs to people in the Ballymena area. Indeed, the location of statutory bodies in the town would help to explain the very good level of proximity to services in the Ward (proximity to services deprivation score is 399th out of 582). Although the Ward as a whole is one of the least deprived in the ILiAD sample, it has had one of the lowest GCSE pass rates (any five GCSEs at A*-C), varying between 40% and 50% between 2002 and 2012. However, in the 2012/13 school year, the rate increased substantially to 61%.

Figure 4.1 below shows a map of the Output areas within the Dunclug Ward, colour-coded by intensity of deprivation, based on their multiple deprivation score (ranging from 1.5 to 81.73, with 81.73 being the most deprived) as calculated by NISRA (all statistics are based on the 2010 measures unless otherwise indicated).
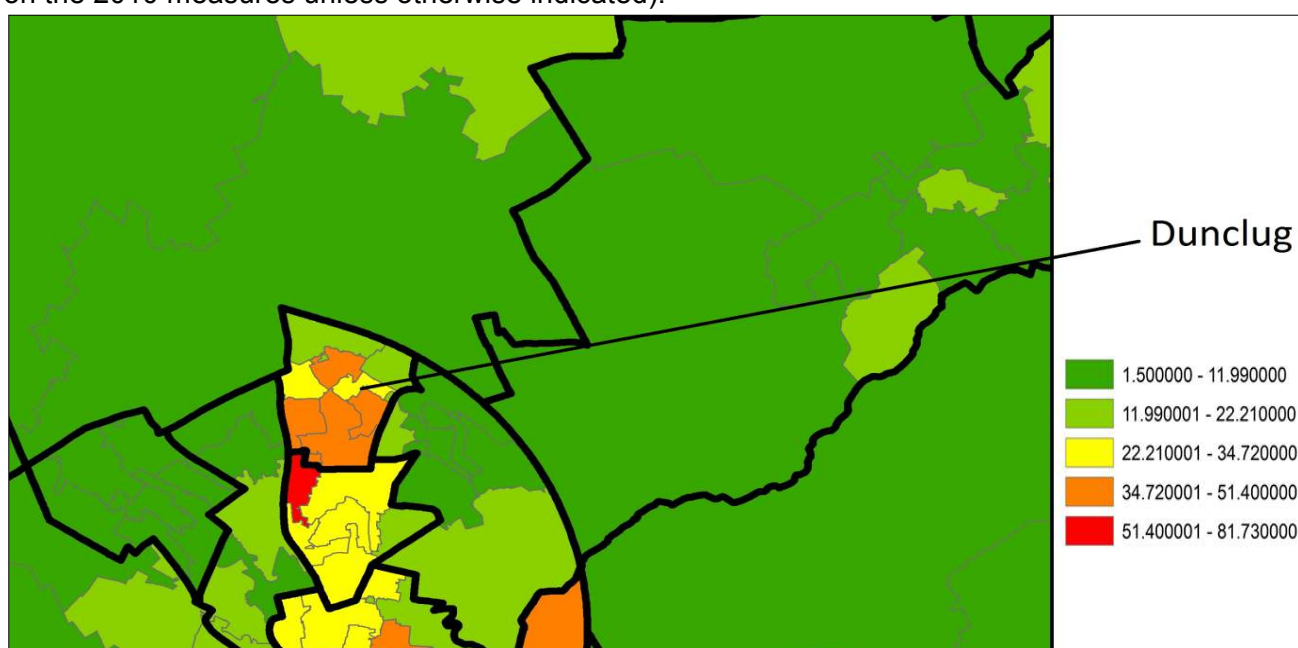
Figure 4.1: Multiple Deprivation in Output Areas: Dunclug Ward

The map for Dunclug reveals that within the Ward itself, there is quite wide variation in levels of deprivation – the southern Output areas of the Ward (in orange) are more deprived than the northern Output areas (in light green), indicating a north-south divide within the Ward itself, irrespective of the encompassing north-south/Catholic-Protestant divide in Ballymena town. As Dunclug is a mixed Catholic-Protestant Ward, it is unknown whether the deprivation divide within Dunclug corresponds with any religious divide.

Demographics and Local Facilities

Dunclug is a mixed-religion Ward, with 56.5% of residents from a Catholic background and 35.0% from a Protestant background (Census 2011). However, the residential areas within the main Dunclug housing estate are not necessarily mixed. Although sufficiently detailed ward-level statistics were unavailable, local fieldwork established the following religious and social divide within the estate: Dunclug Gardens is considered to include a majority local traveller population; Dunclug Park is described as including a mix of Protestants and Catholics, all of whom are relatively socially deprived; Dunvale is considered similarly religiously mixed but relatively more affluent, and; Millfield is associated with a predominantly Protestant and (relatively speaking) most socially affluent population.

The Ward has a higher than average percentage of residents born outside of the UK or the Republic of Ireland (13.7%, compared to the NI average of 7.1%) or born in EU ascension countries[20] (11.8%, compared to the NI average of 2.1%). There is also evidence of significant change in housing tenure within Dunclug. Between 2001 and 2011 (according to Census statistics), the percentage of owner/occupier housing decreased slightly (from 47.0% in 2001 to 42.9% in 2011), but the percentage of privately rented housing more than quadrupled (from 5.1% to 23.2%). The percentage of social rent housing substantially decreased, from 46.8% to 31.2%.

The population density within the Dunclug Ward is 37 persons per hectare, one of the lowest population densities of all the Wards in the ILiAD sample. It also has the second smallest population, at 2363 persons (NISRA, 2011). The percentage of young people under the age of 15 is 25.9%, above the NI average of 19.6% (NISRA, 2011). There is, however, a very low number of non-mandatory services that could promote educational engagement and attainment. The Dunclug Partnership Group and Dunclug Youth Forum are the main service providers. They operate a range of activities and support groups including, for example, a mother and toddler group, youth clubs for different age groups, intergenerational/youth community events, cross-community youth contact, other youth recreational activities and afterschools support. Ballyloughan Presbyterian Church provides a similar range of support. There are also local-level avenues opportunities for further education and training, inkling All Saints Youth Club, Northern Regional College and Alternative Education Provision (Broughshane Youth Centre).

Designated areas within Ballymena are Neighbourhood Renewal Areas under the Department for Social Development. In 2008, DSD invested £4.75 million in the 'Dunclug Action Plan' for the area. This money was used to tackle a range of issues:

(1) to improve the physical condition of the estate and discourage vandalism and political graffiti via refurbishment of some housing, realignment of some streets and footpaths; relocation of a play park, upgrading of street lighting and new entrance features and murals;

(2) to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour via the addition of a full-time police officer on patrol in the Dunclug estate; the piloting of Police Community Support Officers; the

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[20] Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia

introduction of CCTV; the continuation of the Youth Justice Agency early intervention project and parent support service; and the establishment of the Dunclug Drugs Outreach Service; (3) to enhance community cohesion and address youth issues via funding for a school-based initiative to develop a greater collaborative working between Dunclug College and St Patrick's College; funding for a youth support initiative to support marginalised young people; the continuation of the Parents and Kids Together (PAKT) project run by the YMCA; an extension of the activities offered by Ballymena Borough Council's Community Sports Programme in Ballymena North; funding for a peripatetic support teacher to work with children from the Traveller community; a Minority Ethnic Audit/Needs Analysis to provide suitable interventions; community development and capacity building work with the Dunclug Partnership, the Dunclug Residents Association and the Ballymena North Partnership; the establishment of a Housing Support and Regeneration Office in Dunclug; extension of Surestart activities into Ballymena North; refurbishment of Dunclug Community Centre; and a dedicated fund for community based projects in Dunclug).

It should be noted that many of the initiatives outlined above were completed on a 'one-off' basis (for example the refurbishment of housing stock and other environmental improvements were completed by mid-April 2010). Other initiatives were time-limited, typically funded for a period of 2 years; for example, both the Dunclug Drugs Outreach Service and the Dunclug Youth Project operated between 2007-2009; both were funded through the DSD 'Areas at Risk' Programme and came to an end when this funding stream closed. Furthermore, some planned initiatives never came into being; for example, the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) pilot programme did not happen, again because of funding issues. Bearing all this in mind, although the significant DSD funding brought about a range of positive improvements in the local area, the lack of a sustained, on-going programme of work needs to be acknowledged.

School Provision, Intake Characteristics, Achievement, Destinations and Absenteeism
Dunclug has one of the smallest numbers of pupils within post-primary school provision amongst all the Wards in the ILiAD study (171 pupils in 2011), with nine schools serving these young people in 2011 (see Table 4.1 below). That year, 19.3% of young people from the Ward attended grammar schools or schools with a grammar stream (the median of the seven ILiAD Wards) and 80.7% attended secondary schools. The research team decided to choose a geographical mid-point within each Ward area, and to map the distance from this point to the schools that serve each Ward area. The results are listed in Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1: Schools serving young people in Dunclug

Miles to school	% GCSE pass	Enrolment (2011)	
0.8	52	40	Dunclug College
1.3	60	78	St. Patrick's
2	100	18	St. Louis
2.9	99	7	Ballymena Academy
2.9	81	23	Slemish Integrated College
3.3	86	5	Cambridge House
Total Grammar enrolment		30	17.5%
Total Secondary enrolment		141	82.5%

From the data presented in Table 4.1, a 'bubble' chart was created in Excel to graphically represent the distance (in miles) of schools serving young people from Dunclug from the Ward centre (see Figure 4.2 below). This distance was placed against the GCSE pass rate of the schools and the numbers of young people enrolled in each school, both grammar (in blue) and secondary (in orange). Dunclug has the fewest number of schools that serve young people from the Ward – six in total, and the chart shows that all of these are relatively

close to the Ward centre – the most popular schools are 0.8 and 1.3 miles away. Three schools are grammar and three are secondary, but the vast majority of young people from the Ward attend secondary schools, particularly St Patrick's (82.5%, one of the highest proportions out of the ILiAD sample). Included in the 'secondary school' figure is Slemish Integrated College, whose grammar stream makes up approximately one-third of its intake.
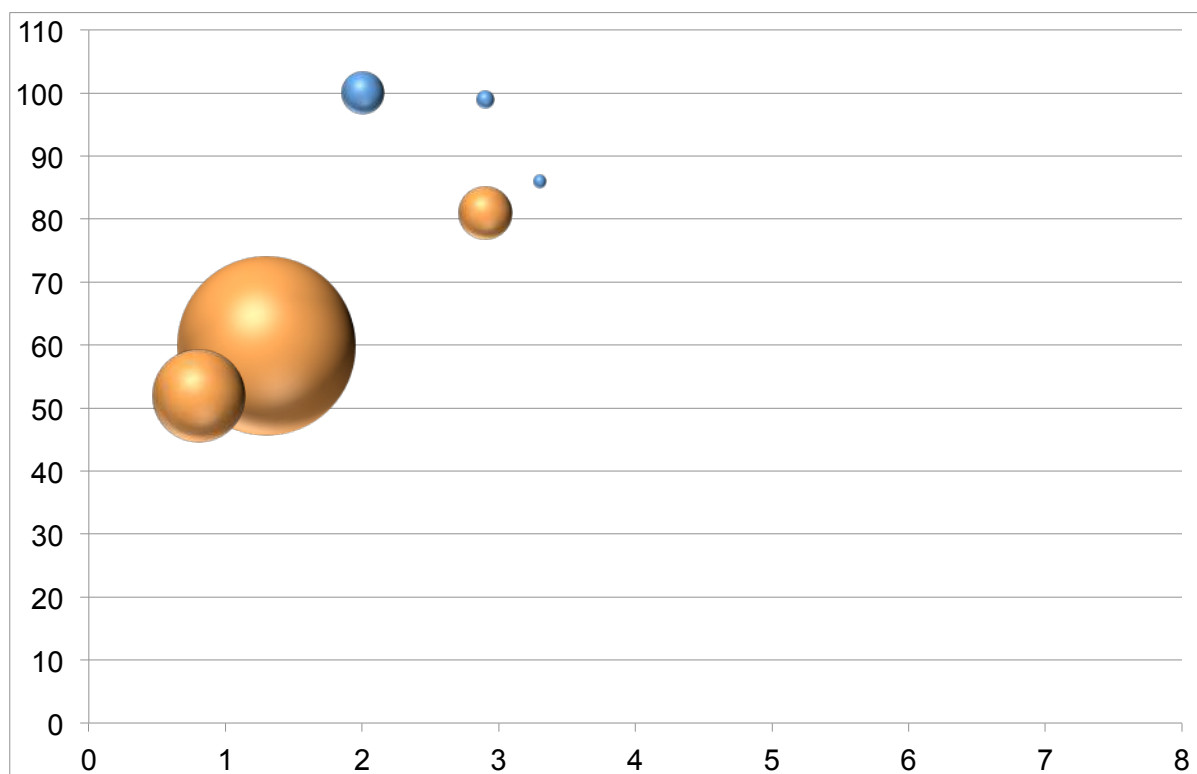

Figure 4.2: Schools in Dunclug GCSE Pass (A*-C) rates 2011 by miles from Ward centre and enrolment numbers. Blue – Grammar schools Orange - Other schools

Looking at average GCSE achievement rates in Dunclug for the three years prior to the ILiAD research commencing (2008-2010), 46.2% of school leavers achieved ≥5 GCSEs or GCSE equivalents (at Grade C or above). When considering 'pure' GCSEs only, this figure dropped very slightly, to 42.3% (the second smallest variation of any of the Wards, indicating that there is not a high provision and/or uptake of GCSE equivalents within the Ward). The GCSE pass rate across the three-year period dropped to 32.1% if English and Maths are included. After the Diamond Ward, the next smallest variation between females' and males' GCSE performance occurred in Dunclug. Looking specifically at female school leavers across these three years, 51.1% achieved any five GCSEs at A*-C (the third lowest amongst the ILiAD Wards), and 35.6% achieved five GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths. For males, the pass rate for any five GCSEs was 39.4% (the median rate in the ILiAD sample, higher than the rates amongst the predominantly Protestant Wards but lower than the rates amongst the predominantly Catholic Wards), dropping to 27.3% with the inclusion of English and Maths.

Dunclug has one of the lowest percentage of school leavers entitled to free school meals (FSM) across the years 2008-2012 of all ILiAD sample Wards, at 32.5%. Furthermore, in terms of the achievement rates within the Ward of school leavers who are entitled/not entitled to Free School Meals (FSM), Dunclug shows the smallest variation of all ILiAD sample Wards. For school leavers during the period 2008 – 2012, 42.9% of those not entitled to FSM achieved five or more GCSEs at A*-C, compared to 40.5% of school leavers who were entitled to FSM (in other words, a 2.4% variation). Looking at FSM/non-FSM performance differences by gender, non-FSM males did marginally better than FSM males

(40.6% to 33.3%), although this is more even than the comparative rates in all other Wards (aside from Woodstock). Dunclug is also exceptional amongst the ILiAD Wards because FSM-entitled females did marginally better than non-FSM female school leavers across the years 2008-2012 (47.4% compared to 44.4%).

The three main schools serving young people from Dunclug have lower than average rates of FSM and SEN compared with the NI average rate across the years from 2008-2012 (see Figure 4.3 below). Furthermore, with the exception of Slemish Integrated College, they attain less than the NI average for five GCSEs including Maths and English. However, analysis of DENI statistics of school characteristics identified a much higher-than-average rate of newcomer pupils amongst the student populace, particularly at St Patrick's College – for example, in 2012, newcomer pupils (who may have English as an additional language) comprised 20% of the total enrolment of St Patrick's. Also, higher than average is the ethnic diversity of St Patrick's - 5% of the pupils were non-White (this category includes Irish Travellers).
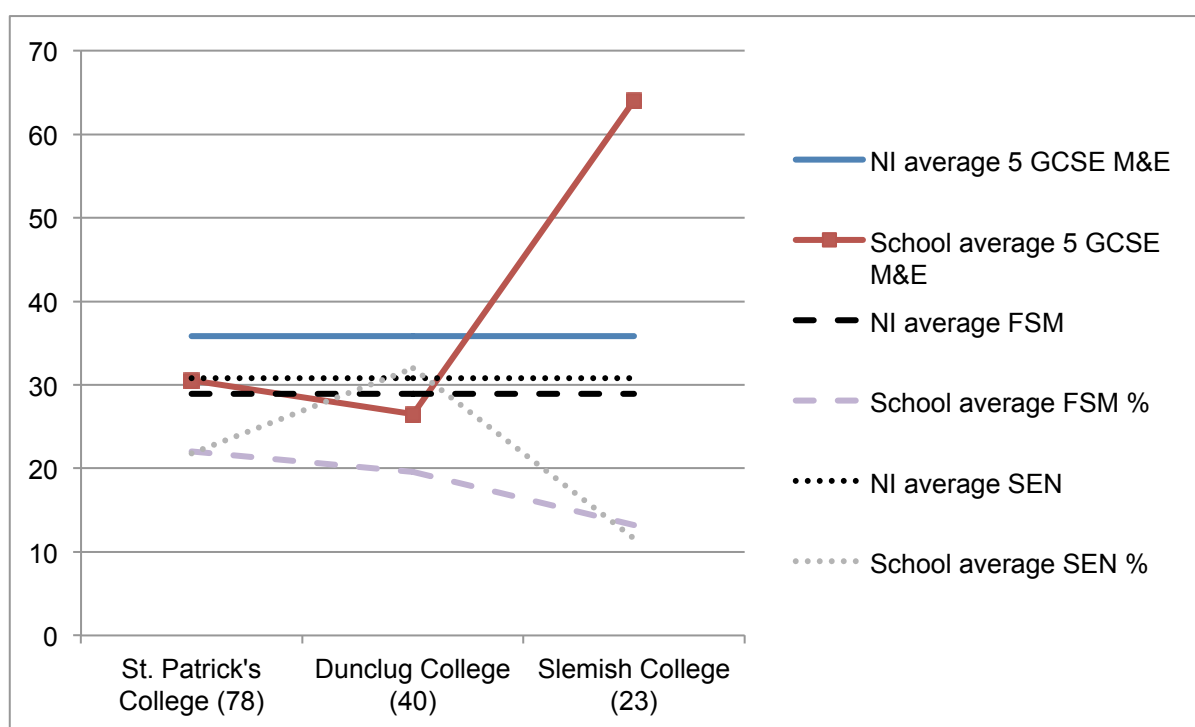
Figure 4.3: 2008-2012 average percentages of 5 GCSE (including Maths & English) attainment, Free School Meals eligibility, and pupils with any Special Educational Needs – Dunclug non-selective Schools against NI secondary school averages

Figure 4.4 below shows the destinations of school leavers from the three main Dunclug schools. Approximately four-fifths of leavers from both St Patrick's and Dunclug College enter either higher education, further education, or employment/job training on leaving school. A greater proportion from St Patrick's enter HE or FE, and a greater proportion from Dunclug College enter employment/job training. The Ward as a whole has the second lowest proportion of school leavers entering higher education (13.8%) or employment/job training (17.2%) out of all the ILiAD Wards, but it has the highest proportion of school leavers entering further education (48.8%). 12.4% of leavers enter unemployment or are in an unknown destination, the median proportion out of the ILiAD sample Wards.
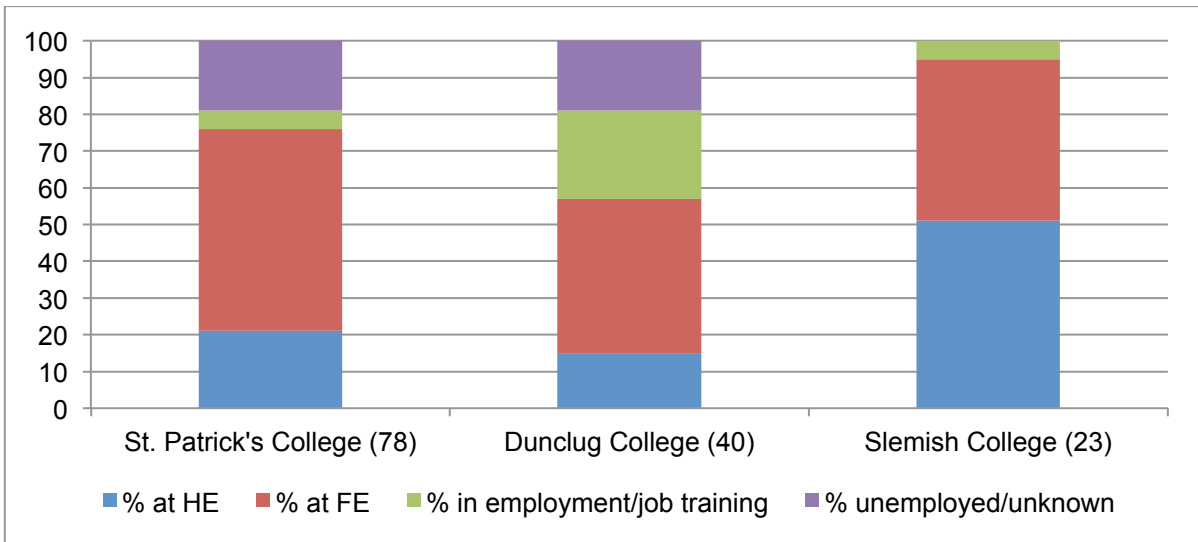
Figure 4.4: Destinations of School Leavers 2012 from non-selective schools serving Dunclug Ward

Rates of absenteeism within Dunclug are the lowest in the ILiAD sample, with an average high-absenteeism rate (defined as attendance below 85% during a school year) of 8.2% during 2012/13, ranging from 1.2% in Ballymena Academy to 20.0% in St Patrick's College – see Figure 4.5 below.
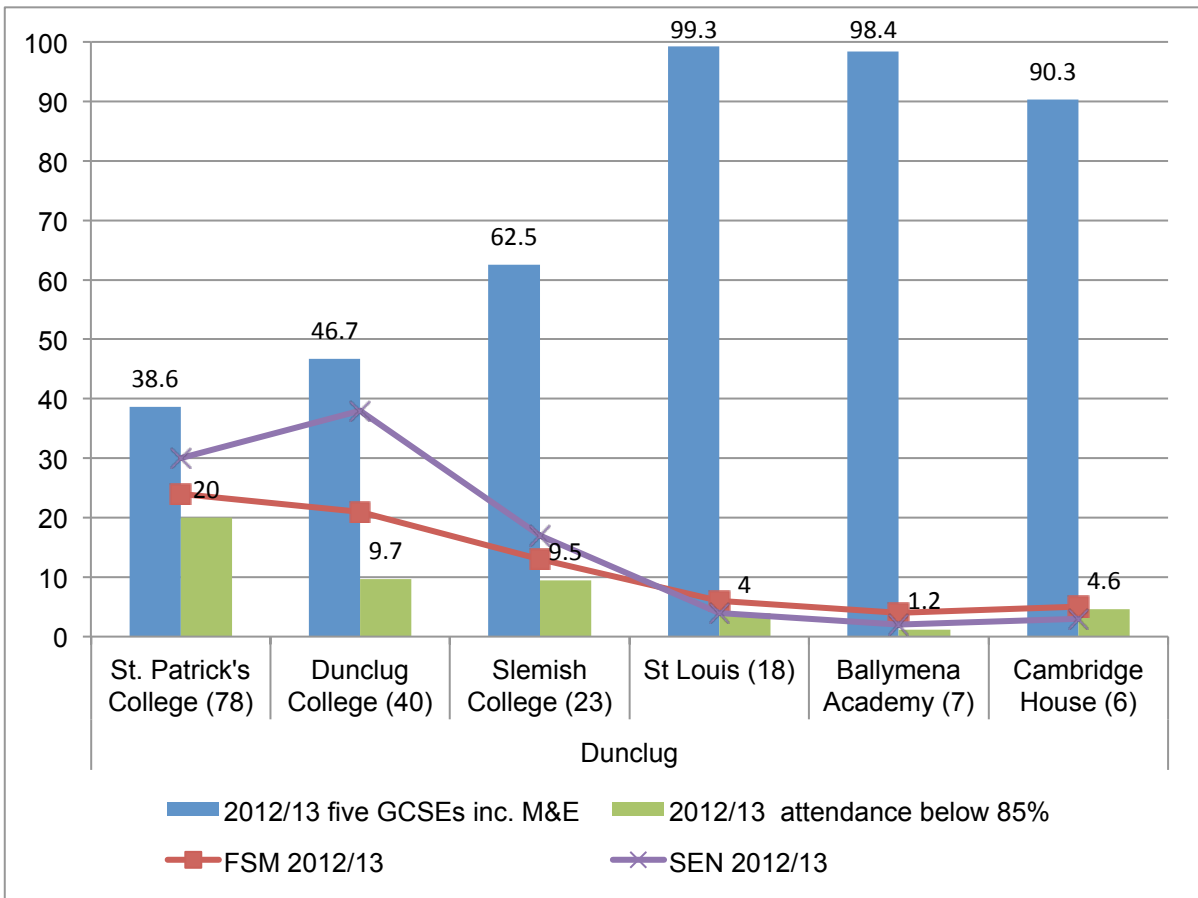
Figure 4.5: GCSE attainment, attendance, and average FSM entitlement rates – Dunclug

Within the Ward, the relationship between high absenteeism and FSM entitlement is positive – as one increases, so does the other (see Figure 4.5). Furthermore, as both absenteeism and FSM entitlement increase, achievement of five GCSEs including Maths and English decreases. There is one slight anomaly - St Patrick's has double the rate of high absenteeism as Dunclug College, but it only has a slightly higher percentage of FSM entitled pupils as Dunclug College. St Patrick's College is also only eight percentage points behind Dunclug College in terms of achievement. However, given the negative relationship between absenteeism and achievement that previous research has established[21] and the fact that the absenteeism rate is low compared to all other Wards in the ILiAD sample, it follows that there are factors other than absenteeism which are negatively influencing the GCSE achievement rate within Dunclug.

The following sections of this chapter will outline the key drivers and inhibitors of achievement in the Dunclug ward, as identified from document review, secondary data analysis of official statistics, and qualitative interviews. Table 4.2 summarises the individuals who took part in the qualitative interviews (either one-to-one or focus group interviews).

Table 4.2: Profile of participants in Dunclug

| School level	Community level
3 x interviews with Principals of primary / nursery schools	1 x interview with church based community worker
3 x interviews with Principals of secondary level schools	1 x interview with local community worker
2 x interviews with school teachers	1 x focus group with local community 'leaders'
4 x focus groups with pupils attending secondary level school (organised by Key Stage / age)	1 x focus group with local youth workers
1 x Educational Welfare Officer Focus Group	3 x focus groups with young people attending local youth groups
	1 x interview with local 'High Achiever'

The drivers and inhibitors will be presented as: macro-level (structural) factors to examine linking social capital; meso-level (school-level) factors in terms of bridging social capital; and micro-level (immediate/familial) factors, conceptualised here as bonding social capital.

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[21] See RSM McClure Watters (2012). *Research into Improving Attendance in Schools Serving Deprived Areas.* Belfast: Department of Education Northern Ireland.

4.2. Force-field Analysis of drivers and inhibitors of achievement in Dunclug Ward

Drivers

Present situation – 61% five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13); 83rd Multiple Deprivation 2010

Macro-level

a) Youth groups actively supporting young people towards self-development and educational achievement
b) A local school embedded in a local community (Extended Schools)

Meso-level

a) Providing and validating academic and vocational choice
b) A culture that prioritises the pursuit of excellence
c) The pursuit and provision of teaching excellence
d) Demonstrably engaged, committed and supportive teachers
e) Securing the circumstances in which learning can take place - the need to attend to the social and emotional welfare of pupils
f) Establishing a stimulating, creative and responsive learning environment
g) Ongoing pupil assessment, streaming and target setting
h) An examination system incorporating modular teaching, coursework and final exams
i) Effective transition: supporting pupils in their movement through education to career

Micro-level

a) A home environment in which education is explicitly valued and promoted

Inhibitors

Macro-level

a) Impact of academic selection
b) Population flux and fracture
c) Lack of social cohesion and effectiveness
d) Social deprivation and disadvantage
e) Limitations in inter-agency communication and cooperation

Meso-level

a) Institutional and personal deficits in teaching: a missing impetus for pupil attainment
b) A 'writing off' of pupils based on negative stereotyping
c) Manifold pressures on schools

Micro-level

a) (Felt) stigma and marginalisation
b) Adverse circumstances in the home environment
c) Alienation from the value or 'point' of education

4.3. Macro-level drivers of attainment in Dunclug

As the force-field analysis on the previous page shows, two macro-level drivers of attainment in The Dunclug Ward were identified relating to: youth groups actively supporting young people; and the local school being embedded in a community, e.g. via Extended Schools.

Youth groups actively supporting young people towards self-development and educational achievement
An important macro level driver of educational achievement concerns the opportunities provided by local youth clubs to enhance learning. This includes both direct as well as more indirect support. For example, young people talked about the youth club as helping to develop personal confidence as they were given specific roles and responsibilities.

I like here [youth club] ... we come here every night, we are young leaders too ... we help the younger children. [Young person aged approximately 12/13]

They also talked about the clubs as providing them with a safe and welcoming environment for interaction, simultaneously helping to steer them away from the temptation to engage in, for example, anti-social behaviour.

It keeps us out of trouble [several nodding in agreement] ... if this wasn't on and we couldn't get help I'd say that half of my friends would be locked up. [Young person aged approximately 14/15]

I like coming here because it keeps you off the streets. It's a place where we can all run round and stuff ... Because if you didn't have here there's nowhere else to go and so we would just hang around and get the police to chase us and stuff like that. [Young person aged approximately 13/14]

In addition, young people talked about the youth club as providing them with opportunities for learning which they found interesting and stimulating.

Every Wednesday we do stuff ... like today we're learning about child slavery ... there's posters out there and we're going to watch a DVD ... it learns us about what the world is really like. [Young person aged approximately 12/13]

When you're up here it is more interesting because you know you're with your friends ... and they don't make you write this and write that. [Young person aged approximately 12/13]

In ways similar to their descriptions of teachers whom they 'liked' and consequently positively engaged with, young people made very positive statements concerning the inter-personal qualities of youth leaders.

[Named youth worker] has known us all since we were children so she knows the way we work and all, she'll know if we are in a good mood, she'll know if we are in a bad mood ... she knows how to treat us. [Young person aged approximately 15/16]

Like ... we can go to [name of youth worker] ... If I didn't want to talk to anybody in my family about something it would be [name of youth worker] that I would go to. [Young person aged approximately 17/18]

Finally, and very importantly, young people's accounts underscored the value of youth groups in supporting formal education and training. Thus, not only were young people helped to enrol for a range of courses but were also supported with ongoing school and college learning.

If we don't do well in English, this here club can help you to get your grades and all in English ... this is the year we pick our GCSEs and if we need help with them then she'll [youth worker] be able to help us. [Young person aged approximately 15/16]

I got two GCSEs. If it wasn't for [name of youth worker]'s group I wouldn't have any real qualifications at all. [Young person aged approximately 17/18]

We do actual programmes with [name of youth worker] and [she] takes the time out to talk to us and to help us outside of the programme. [Young person aged approximately 17/18]

Other young people talked about the value of the help and advice they had received from youth leaders concerning both their options for higher education as well as practical support in drafting applications. Moreover, their accounts indicated how much they valued the manifest interest in and commitment to them of the youth leaders.

Participant observation of one of the training events targeted at some of the older young people confirmed that it was enjoyed by participants who were appeared to be wholly engaged. Furthermore, it was clear that the manner of delivery (essentially interactive and expressly supportive) was instrumental in securing this engagement. Youth workers themselves were clearly committed to helping young people achieve in a variety of ways, including 'making good' earlier lack of engagement with education. Their underlying message was that they could 'catch' some young people who would otherwise fall through the cracks left by an education system that could not cater for their needs.

I think there's a lot more that we can do ... kids who are from Dunclug who are on a really short timetable and regretting it … because they have aspirations now to do something so it's trying to tell them that it's not too late and encouraging them. [Youth Worker]

Taken collectively, this evidence suggests several important features associated with youth groups likely to enhance the educational achievement of young people: firstly, providing young people with a safe space; second, providing alternative opportunities for learning; third, supporting young people in the context of formal education and training; and finally, demonstrating an active interest in the welfare of young people more generally and, in so doing, encouraging them to believe in themselves and their abilities.

A local school embedded in a local community (e.g. via Extended Schools)
Threaded through participants' accounts was the particular value of schools which are closely associated with a local population/community. This idea was manifested in different ways by different participants but a core message prevailed, namely, that a school that is locally 'rooted' is *additionally* beneficial to the local population.

One such benefit was identified by young people as they talked about the social benefits to be derived from school attendance. Put basically, they got to 'hang out' with their friends. Of particular importance was the fact that these friends were typically those with whom they also interacted outside of school. Of significance, therefore, was the fact that the young people lived and were educated side by side. The social benefits to be gained from going to school were clearly very important to young people; for some it was the only reason they attended school at all.

I don't miss a day of school ... only for the laugh with my friends ... that's what makes me go to school. [Young person aged approximately 13/14]

Just that you've got friends at school, I'm used to hanging out with [name of friend who lives close by]. [Young person aged approximately 12/13]

Young people's incentive to attend school for its social value was confirmed by a number of adult participants. Thus, local youth workers talked about attendance as sometimes being almost exclusively premised on opportunities for peer interaction.

Truthfully, most of the kids I would say that come in here [the youth club] hate it [school]. They like it for a social setting but as for school they don't enjoy it. [Youth Worker]

... their friends are there, they know it; it's a safe place. [Youth Worker]

Collectively, these accounts suggest the educational benefits to be gained from building on the perceived importance and felt benefits of (school-based) friendship. Young people's descriptions of the social value of going to school explicitly referenced the idea that this encouraged and helped sustain attendance. In important ways, their descriptions mirror the recommendations of young people concerning how the learning environment they accessed in youth groups was more enjoyable because of its explicitly social context, with young people being able to interact with each other as part of the learning process. Finally, young people's descriptions of teachers whom they found appealing and who, as a result, were considered to encourage learning, typically prioritised socially relevant behaviours, for example, making jokes and/or taking their personal feelings and needs into account.

A second benefit was associated with having locally based opportunities and resources to support community oriented interaction. For example, two secondary principals talked about hosting events that show-cased the school to which local people were invited; they also talked about making school facilities available to local people to come together in their chosen activity etc. One of these principals also talked about running joint activities for pupils and other local young people (for example, sports activities held on an after-school basis). Such descriptions were couched in an awareness of the school as contributing to the local-level service infrastructure.

We offer our facilities to community groups and we would have local sports groups ... the GAA, netball teams, we have local organisations that use our facilities particularly in the winter time ... we do try to encourage anyone who wants to use the facilities to make use of them and then we try to link with the community if we are holding anything. [Principal]

We have good community links ... sale of work, sports day. People said when I started "Oh don't do it, the riff raff will come in and steal stuff". [Principal]

All activities and resources identified produced the same core outcome, namely, the creation of tangible links between the school and the local population, as the school 'reached out' beyond its traditional 9am-4pm educational remit. Close community links were considered to be further facilitated by the fact that the secondary schools had established 'feeder' primary schools in the immediate vicinity, with attendant activities and programmes of interaction. Consequently, parents were thought to be already familiar with the secondary schools long before their child attended.

I suppose we are helped, [named feeder primary school] is just up here and most of our young people come from it so parents are driving up and down past for seven years, they sort of feel they know the school. It's their school, so that's a bit of an advantage. [Principal]

A relatively stable local population meant that successive generations of the same family could attend the same school, thereby enabling the latter to 'grow' a robust knowledge of the background of pupils (and their parents). Such knowledge was considered to enable a school to better cater for the holistic circumstances and needs of its pupils, thereby helping to promote their potential for learning.

We've just over 500 children in the school and a lot of them are coming from parents who attended the school so we have a good handle on where they are coming from. [Principal]

The two local primary schools receive funding through the Extended Schools programme. The principals of both schools discussed the additional benefits gained by their pupils and local adult residents alike. One principal outlined several examples, including the regular cultural evenings held for and by local Polish parents as well as the adult literacy classes provided to ethnic minority parents. Such activities and resources were recognised by other participants as having significantly improved the educational achievement of ethnic minority pupils, as well as the social integration of their parents within the wider local community. The other primary school principal talked about a breakfast club held every weekday morning catering for between 80-90 pupils; she considered that at least 50% of these children would otherwise not receive an adequate breakfast. Pupil literacy and numeracy clubs operated on a weekly basis; these were of particular value as staff could tailor their content to the needs of the particular children attending. Finally, the school had made concerted efforts to secure the sustained involvement of parents by implementing the Save the Children FAST [Families and Schools Together] project.

The idea being in principle that after two years if things are going well it can become self-sustainable ... we're halfway there. We got a great report back from [the evaluation team] ... They were more than happy with what we have achieved. [Principal]

The value of a local orientation was suggested in an entirely different context by another school principal who talked about a strong commitment to the school and to the pupils who attended it. This commitment was made all the stronger because they had been born and raised in the local area, one of relative social and economic deprivation.

My personal history is I'm local to [name of area in which school is located], this is my area ... and one of the things that myself and my predecessor ... he came from a working-class background as well ... We see education as being the thing that's going to give people opportunities and advantage ... so we will hound the parents [laughs] and all that stuff. [Principal]

4.4. Meso level drivers of attainment in Dunclug

The Dunclug data identified a total of nine meso-level drivers of attainment: providing and validating academic and vocational choice; a culture that prioritises the pursuit of excellence; the pursuit and provision of teaching excellence; demonstrably engaged, committed and supportive teachers; securing the circumstances in which learning can take place; establishing a stimulating, creative and responsive learning environment; ongoing pupil assessment, streaming and target setting; an examination system incorporating modular teaching, coursework and final exams; and effective transition i.e. supporting pupils in their movement through education to career.

Providing and validating academic and vocational choice
In different ways, participants highlighted the importance of an inclusive system that afforded young people access to a broad-based education. For local principals, the issue was one of establishing a culture that endorsed the value of different forms of knowledge and skills, not just those associated with *academic* achievement. Several discussed how their school had, over the recent past, introduced a wider range of vocational as well as academic A level subjects in an effort to promote the continuing engagement of pupils in education as well as promote the possibilities for success.

The range of vocational subjects has been great for less academic young people ... We have three strands that go through GCSE here. We have the traditional strand ... for our grammar stream, we then have a middle stream that has more vocational subjects in it, but those young people can still leave here with 9 GCSEs, and then our ... less academic group do a different range of vocational courses … they have the potential of coming out with up to 8 GCSEs or their equivalents. [Principal]

In the past, more of our A levels would have been what are known as applied ... the more vocational ones but about two or three years ago we ... introduced more academic A levels ... because we had a group that were very strong academically who wanted to stay on at school and we thought ... they're going to choose subjects that ... potentially aren't the ones that they will need for their career choices. [Principal]

The benefits of more vocationally oriented educational programmes to encouraging young people to remain in education were confirmed by other adult participants. Thus, local youth workers talked about how many local young people did not want an exclusively, even primarily, academic education.

You know for a lot of them it's not the academic stuff that they want, they get more pleasure out of going to the Tech and getting the career stuff, they enjoy that. [Youth Worker]

There's always going to be young people that get lost in the system and I think that's where a lot of the young people that we ... engage with ... [are] looking at different joinery or hairdressing and I know the schools push that. [Youth Worker]

In terms of enhancing choice and concomitant educational achievement, participants' accounts underscored the positive impact of the 'Learning Together' programme that has seen local secondary level schools team up in both a formal and voluntary capacity to enable their pupils to be taught together. This shared approach was universally considered to represent a positive development not only because of the choices it enabled, but also because it brought together pupils of different religious / sectarian affiliations as well as social backgrounds in sustained interaction.

We have great relationships with the Ballymena Learning Together group. And [name of secondary school] – we have a good relationship. It's curricular and we also have lots of community events. [Principal]

We link with some of the other Ballymena schools, so some of our young people access levels at [name of grammar school], some access them at [name of secondary school] ... and vice versa. We would have [name of grammar school] pupils coming here to do BTec Sport or whatever. So, there's good collaboration. [Principal]

The need to enable pupils to access subject areas in which they were interested and/or excelled was confirmed in the accounts of young people themselves. Accordingly, one young male talked about only going to school so that he could study technology. He had difficulties with reading, writing and maths and so not only found 'practical' subjects, such as technology, more interesting, but also it was in such subjects that he achieved his best results.

Technology, that's about it ... if it wasn't for technology I wouldn't go to school at all. [Young person aged approximately 15/16]

In another focus group, several young people voiced resentment at the fact they had been prevented from taking their first preference subjects at either school or a local college of further education. They had therefore had to sign up for subjects in which they were less

interested. Their accounts betrayed a sense of inequity and injustice. More fundamentally, they showed how an inability to pursue their education of first choice could impact negatively on longer-term aspirations and (perceived) ability to fulfil them.

I had my heart set on Health and Social ... the only reason I went into Business is because they didn't have a place for me ... Like I'm going down the complete opposite route ... my dream job has always been like a support worker for addicts and like my plan B would be for a classroom assistant. [Young person aged approximately 18/19]

A culture that prioritises the pursuit of excellence
School principals talked about the importance of a manifest commitment to the pursuit of high standards and achievement across all aspects of the school environment, activity and performance. The pursuit of 'excellence' was therefore discussed as an underlying ethos informing the entirety of school life. Predictably, one of the most frequently discussed aspects was that of academic achievement. As one principal stated:

Once you start saying you are happy with 80% of the year achieving, you are defeated. Children suffer because of that. [Principal]

It included a commitment, and active expression of this commitment, to encourage and enable all pupils to maximise their potential, academic / vocational and otherwise. School principals talked about the need to make clear to pupils that they were expected to work and to achieve their best. Moreover, similar high expectations (and a wish to succeed) had to be fostered in the pupils themselves.

I suppose I try to make them believe that I have a really personal interest in each one of them. If I read an email ... that 'Joe Blogs' has done this ... I'll meet him out in the yard at lunchtime and I'll say I see you're not doing too well ... so it's that kind of personal interaction ... I am very much in amongst the young people, letting them know that their success is wanted as much by me as it is by their parents and their subject teachers. [Principal]

We have very high expectations ... And a number of the young people who come from Dunclug and other socially disadvantaged areas, we are trying to work with them to make sure that they have high expectations. [Principal]

A commitment to maximising educational achievement was, at times, reflected in innovative arrangements put in place by particular schools. Thus, one local secondary school had reduced the number of daily teaching periods from 9 to 6, with the aim of minimising disruption and promoting pupil focus and concentration. As the following quote confirms, the underlying rationale was one of explicitly promoting educational achievement and practically supporting pupils to do so.

You have from the start of every day, to transfer that ethos. Everything from the structure of the day, less changeovers, less potential for time wasting, two periods in the morning, late morning and afternoon. Meant that sub teachers or cover teachers have to deliver a lesson, not just ... a babysitting session for half an hour. [Principal]

Expectations concerning academic / vocational achievement co-existed with an acknowledgement of the validity of other forms of achievement and the need to support and reward pupils accordingly. Thus, some principals talked about ensuring that pupils could 'shine' according to their respective strengths and talents. There was also an awareness of a responsibility on the part of schools to ensure that pupils could see that these strengths and talents were valued and valuable.

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There are other types of achievement, of becoming a whole person, having confidence, facing your demons ... Our survey asked the children, what are you good at? And a large proportion said, "I'm not really good at anything" ... I said to the staff, what are we doing? We need to help them to see that if you have gifts, you need to give them a chance ... It's about understanding ... things that are fundamental to becoming the best 'you'. [Principal]

I started the photography club four years ago ... specifically for the P7s purely as a way of helping them find qualities and skills they maybe didn't know they had ... It's been great to see how a lot of them think "That's something I can do really well" ... There are a lot of ways that a pupil can achieve, and a lot of ways of praising a pupil for achieving. [Principal]

School principals further talked about the need, and concomitant efforts taken, to encourage adherence to high standards more generally. An explicit requirement to uphold such standards concerning, for example, behaviour in and outside of school, the 'treatment' of school premises, the wearing of uniform, and the way in which pupils and staff interacted with each other, was consistently articulated.

If I see them ... and they're in uniform and they're not just behaving as I want, I'll bring that up in an assembly or actually stop them in the street ... So, it's that, coming to [name of school] is about more than just putting on a uniform, you are stepping into an organisation that has certain expectations ... an organisation that values each individual and shows respect towards everyone. [Principal]

We've a huge emphasis here on discipline, appearance, behaviour and work. [Principal]

These accounts were informed by an awareness that pupil adherence to high standards was impacted by the environment in which they were taught and the behaviour of others inhabiting this environment, including teaching staff. Put simply, pupils needed to be provided with appropriate models of behaviour, as well as a material environment that was conducive to learning.

Embedding that culture of respect ... No shouting ... You are modelling how you speak, and how they learn. Show them what an 'A' looks like ... I said when I started I wanted the graffiti off the walls. The caretaker said, "You're just giving them clean walls to write on", but I told the children there will be no graffiti on the walls from now on ... I had to sack the caretaker in the end. [Principal]

I have very good cleaning and caretaking staff, the grounds are kept very well, the interior of the building is kept very well ... [the environment] is very important because if you want children to take a pride in their school, they have to feel that it is worth taking an interest and pride in. [Principal]

The pursuit and provision of teaching excellence
A pursuit of excellence encompassed teaching. Principals talked about the need to proactively pursue teaching excellence. Relevant effort was required on a range of fronts including, for example, recruiting high calibre permanent, as well as substitute, staff.

You don't recruit teachers who are weak pedagogically, subs who are weak ... The way you recruit is key, no-one is recruited unless I see them teach ... Then I ask them to evaluate their lesson. I tell them that's what I'm going to ask. [Principal]

It also meant putting in place a comprehensive programme of staff training and development in order to enhance teaching quality and help staff remain 'fresh', enthusiastic and motivated in their work.

And we have a very extensive programme of staff development every year. We have taken the PRSD process and we have expanded it, we do observations three times a year and everybody has a target to do with their teaching and learning environment every year, and that's really important. [Principal]

Finally, securing feedback from pupils was identified by one principal as a basis on which to develop teaching and learning.

We made a survey and put it out to the children - what helps you with learning? They said things like "when the teacher listens to me", "when people don't laugh", "when you can ask a question". Some named their teachers – "I find it helpful when Mrs does such and such". There was potential for union involvement and some said it was like 'Rate My Teachers', but we were only interested in what the children found hard or easy, and the correlation with results. [Principal]

Demonstrably engaged, committed and supportive teachers
On the basis of the accounts provided by young people, a crucially important factor in promoting their engagement in learning is the demeanour and attitude of teachers. Their accounts clearly demonstrated their ability to differentiate between teachers who were manifestly interested in and supportive of them and those who were not. It is clear that commitment on the part of an individual teacher was a necessary but not sufficient criterion of securing a pupil's engagement. The latter also required him or her to actively demonstrate this commitment through, for example, taking the time to talk to them, kindness, patience and a willingness to help.

The science teacher because she knows what I'm like and she doesn't push me to the limit ... like she knows that I'll kick off very easily ... I'm in the second lowest class because I'm not good at reading but she'll help me out with reading and that. [Young person aged approximately 15/16]

A good teacher will take the time to go the extra mile to give you that push, because some people really need it. [Young person approximately 18]

My PE teacher ... he's dead on and you can talk to him not like the other teachers who are just there to just teach you. [Young person aged approximately 14/15]

Moreover, young people appeared to be attracted to teachers whose personal demeanour was generally *'upbeat'*. Their accounts repeatedly identified the positive impact of teachers who are manifestly good humoured.

I only like one of my teachers, my music teacher. He plays music and he's funny. [Young person aged approximately 12/13]]

A good teacher is someone you can get on with. They're fun, someone who actually has a bit of personality. [Young person aged approximately 16/17]

The quotes given above articulate a theme running throughout many of the young people's accounts, namely, that teachers are required to do more than *'just teach'* if they are to successfully engage with young people and, through this relationship, promote their learning.

School principals also acknowledged the importance of teaching staff who demonstrated an active interest in and commitment to pupils. Although they differed in their precise interpretation of what made a 'good' teacher, again, all acknowledged the need for the latter to do more than simply teach – they also needed to possess and manifest a genuine concern for the welfare and development of pupils.

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You ask about results and whose fault it is? It's the teacher's. You say you are the expert in the room - what did you do to help him or her? There are ways of addressing underlying issues and you as a teacher have to have the rapport with children to help them. How do you enable them to talk to you? [Principal]

First and foremost are staff who are interested in the pupils ... We are fortunate in that I inherited the Investor in People system ... the assessment ... showed that the staff were very keen on doing things that benefit the pupils ... We had a pupil ... who had particular behavioural problems ... this classroom assistant ... set up two sessions a week ... [for] ... behaviour management. Now that was above and beyond her normal hours, she was doing that voluntarily. [Principal]

Securing the circumstances in which learning can take place - the need to attend to the social and emotional welfare of pupils

School principals consistently identified a need to attend to the social and emotional welfare of pupils as an essential basis of learning. In this context, they described what they considered to be a comprehensive system of pastoral care, which operated on both a formal and informal level.

We have a school counsellor here, we get sessions through Contact Youth, the service provided there, and a lot of our staff, we're very pastoral here ... and our staff are really, really good at that, and they put the time in to young people. [Principal]

But also, we have a very strong pastoral system ... we got 'Outstanding' in our inspection about two years ago ... But it's not about a system as such, it's about people, the teachers, noticing things, picking up on things, getting to know the young people, if something is different ... so it's really about everyone being part of the pastoral team ... everyone contributes to that caring environment. [Principal]

In addition to the provision of a relevant network of communication (e.g. between teachers) and provision of support services (e.g. counselling) within the school, effective pastoral care was also seen to involve a similar network and services *outside* the school. In this context, one principal talked about their working relationship with organisations such as the PSNI, social services and/or community (self) support groups. Such partnership working was understood to enable an appropriate 'wholesale' understanding of pupil circumstances and requirements.

And then in terms of links with the community, we have strong links with various organisations ... the PSNI ... [we] would meet roughly once a term to discuss Dunclug issues because [name of community police officer] obviously does the beat up there and ... would keep me informed if any of my darlings were coming to [their] attention ... we have a youth worker comes in ... once a week and we would identify groups or individuals who would have problems ... and obviously social services and educational welfare. [Principal]

Although school principals discussed the pastoral care of their pupils as a priority, including in terms of communication with relevant statutory agencies, the need for greater inter-agency working was identified by other participants and are examine below in the section on meso level inhibitors of educational achievement.

The views of young people who talked about the pastoral care available in their different schools were, taken overall, positive. Some described the sensitive way in which a suicide by a friend and fellow pupil in their school had been approached, with all being provided with one-to-one counselling and other support. Others from another school were less positive about the care they had received in similar circumstances but counter-balanced this with an acknowledgement that the attitude of all of their teachers was one of manifest concern for

their welfare. Interestingly, in this context, a number of the young people talked specifically about the benefits of attending a local school.

I think in our school ... they'd be ... more like sensitive ... like they would help you out more with issues like that [pastoral issues]. Yeah, I think because [named school] is a more local school ... so like that time [when a friend died by suicide] it was one of our friends and like we were all friends. [Young people aged 17-19 talking together]

Establishing a stimulating, creative and responsive learning environment
In different ways, school principals acknowledged the need to provide a learning environment that actively engaged pupils through, for example, creativity in its delivery, such that it succeeded in catering for the range of learning preferences and requirements that existed in their school population.

The teacher just needed to lighten it up a bit, to set hearts on fire, not to labour what a linguistic device is! I say to teachers ... worry about how to bring your subject alive. [Principal]

Making sure that the learning is active and our young people are engaged with it ... everybody should be structuring their lessons in a way that for young people there's an enjoyment about what they're doing, there's challenge there, they're real participants in the learning. [Principal]

Beyond classroom teaching, principals identified a range of activities and opportunities which they understood to stimulate interest in and engagement with education. For example, one principal spoke at length about an annual visit by pupils to an African country, organised through a national charity. The trip was considered to be a huge success, not only stimulating learning for the pupils directly involved, but also the entire school population through fund-raising initiatives.

Secondary school principals understood their School Council as of value in encouraging pupils to take an interest in school affairs and to learn that their input could make a tangible difference.

We try very much to [meet pupil requests] because otherwise they would lose heart ... [Thinking] "it's just a talking shop" ... We listen to the council. I'll say at the school assembly 9 times out of 10 I can't give you what you want – certain regulations. But others, like seats in the playground; that we can do. They loved the six-period day and activities at lunchtime. [Principal]

We have a school council here which is very successful. And whenever we make changes ... I put it to the student's council and to the prefects ... We are also doing a lot of consultation this year on the area-based changes [to local education] and the young people put in a huge response to that. [Principal]

In addition, two principals talked about the organisation of the school into 'houses', describing this system as an effective means of encouraging student involvement in school-based activity and consequent appreciation of their own agency.

Amongst young people, when asked what they believed would improve their learning experience, they provided remarkably consistent ideas. Similar to the descriptions offered in relation to 'good' teachers, they prioritised (relative) informality, fun, and 'hands-on' activity as inherent qualities of a positive learning environment.

It's fun. They make it fun in the way they teach. [Young person aged approximately 12/13]

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I like science because it's kind of like hands-on work ... practical. [Young person aged approximately 13/14]

Ongoing pupil assessment, streaming and target setting

School principals placed an explicit emphasis on regular pupil assessment and target setting. This was seen as an extremely effective means of promoting academic success as it provided ongoing insight into a pupil's learning and the specific measures necessary for improvement. All secondary level schools serving the Dunclug area have well developed assessment procedures, which take place on a regular basis throughout the academic year. All of the principals stressed how these assessments contributed to pupils' performance.

We actually [use the traffic light system] in Key Stage 3 ... we set a target for them ... say they have got 50% in their English test but we know they are capable of 60% or 70%, then they would be within the red ... for GCSE its grade based and they do six assessments in Year 11 and six in Year 12 ... and we will see who is under-achieving ... I will then meet with them and say "Look folks, do you really want to be under-achieving in 6 GCSEs? What are you going to do with 2 GCSEs?" And really sort of put it to them quite bluntly. [Principal]

We monitor on a monthly basis how people are doing against the targets that have been set for them. We have a thing called Tracking Tuesday [laughs] and it's dead simple, it's a traffic light system ... [to see] whether you're working at target, above target, or below target ... So, it's very targeted, so the more academic students are being pushed on whereas the kids that need support are getting that. [Principal]

We report on levels, and give them a grade on a curve to show where they are in relation to peers – can be disappointing to parents. You can still get a Level 5 in Key Stage 3 but a 'D' overall in comparison to peers. [Principal]

As well as promoting educational achievement, the effectiveness of individual pupil profiling and target setting was discussed in terms of its impact on the attitudes and aspirations of the pupils themselves.

Sixty children were interviewed by ETI. They asked the children "Do you know how to improve?" And every child could say, "Oh yeah, first of all you know what you are good at, and then you set your target for where you want to be". [Principal]

One principal discussed the school's system of differentiated streaming of pupils. The introduction of a very targeted-process of streaming, using 4 different combinations of subjects, has meant that pupils are streamed in multiple ways, and are taught according to their *different* strengths and weaknesses. From the Principal's perspective, not only does this mean that the education offered is very pupil-specific, but also the streaming process provides every pupil with the greatest possible opportunity to excel, consequently building a crucial self-confidence and esteem.

So, we streamed them separately for English and Maths ... some children in the lowest group in English could be in the top group for Maths ... the child's confidence built, it was a revelation to them and they excelled. So, we asked ourselves could there be other subjects they could be streamed in ... literacy based subjects ... science and technology ... then the creative stream ... So, it is a 4-way streaming by the end of Year 10. That contributed hugely to lifting achievement. [Principal]

This same principal made an explicit link between individual pupil assessment and targeting and the promotion of high quality teaching generally; and argued that ongoing analysis of pupil performance not only provided information about pupil progress but also about the quality or effectiveness of the teaching pupils were receiving.

I want interim analysis too, so that you know what to change at Christmas in order to get better results in June. [Principal]

An examination system incorporating modular teaching, coursework and final exams
Related to the above theme, there was a general consensus amongst secondary school principals that enabling pupils to learn and be examined on a modular basis (with ongoing coursework assessment) was likely to enhance success. They favoured a modular system because of the way it allowed pupils to be assessed at staggered intervals. Moreover, it relieved stress levels as progress was made on a step-by-step basis. Finally, it meant that schools were regularly updated on individual pupil progress (or its lack) such that they were able to target their efforts accordingly.

We would very much rely on selecting an exam board where we could teach the young people in chunks as it were, teach-test, teach-test, yes with a terminal paper at the end but having the course broken down ... We put a lot of emphasis on the controlled assessments because that's obviously something that we can teach and prepare them for. I mean exams are exams, we are a school and we work with whatever we have to. [Principal]

I think having a coursework component has been good, and it allows people not to get stressed about terminal exams. [Principal]

Effective transition: supporting pupils in their movement through education to career
Secondary school principals discussed a need to ensure that pupils were supported at strategic points in their journey through education. Firstly, at the transition from primary to secondary school, relevant activity included 'pre-emptive' information gathering about incoming primary school pupils' backgrounds and learning preferences / abilities. For this reason, a close working relationship with feeder primary schools was considered important.

We do a lot of work when young people come here. If they've got a transfer grade, we look at that but we also go out to the primary school and get information on each individual child before they come here. We get the Key Stage 2 results where they're available and we have an induction day for the P7s. [Principal]

My Year 8 tutor goes out to all the primary schools in May/June time and gets as much information as we can about the new intake ... all the background that we can socially, their community, their family, if there are specific issues – she would feed that back to staff. So really it is very much trying to keep abreast of all the information that we can collect about the young people as they come into the school. [Principal]

Second, ongoing careers advice, starting from relatively early on in their school career, was understood as crucial to enabling pupils to make necessarily informed and reflective decisions. Careful exploration and matching of a pupil's interests and talents was considered a backbone of subsequent academic and employment success.

All the children in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 have a timetabled career class so they are thinking about subjects, careers as they go through Key Stage 3 ... it's more structured when it comes to Year 10 because obviously they are making their choices. In Key Stage 4 [we] have the support of the Careers Advisory Service, and someone from that would come in and interview all the Year 12s for example ... Plus we have visits ... interview skills days for them. [Principal]

There's a preparation stage between 3rd and 4th year because we do a lot of work in trying to make sure that the young people and their parents know ... what GCSEs are on offer ... what might be good for them and what might be good career progression for them ... .we want to make sure that people don't just pick subjects for the sake of [it] ... giving them opportunities

to learn about the different routes ... it's sort of trying to guide young people into things that are going to give them an opportunity for success. [Principal]

Careers advice – our KEG programmes are important and have link through BLT. Purple Patch is doing staff training to enable them to roll out careers provision throughout the school, not just through the careers service. [Principal]

Although all principals stressed the priority given to careers advice, young people were aware of deficits. These were associated with differences between the advices given to A' level students and those undertaking Tech level courses.

That's where I thought we were isolated as well because ... we're doing a Tech course ... and we don't even have careers classes ... we don't have any careers classes on our timetable, I know for a fact that they'll say it's because there is no time but I know it's because it's a Tech course ... Like we really are isolated. [Young people aged approximately 17-19 talking together]

4.5. Micro level drivers of attainment in Dunclug

A home environment in which education is explicitly valued and promoted
The data identified one key micro-level driver of educational achievement in Dunclug relating to a supportive home environment, typically expressed in terms of parents/carers proactively encouraging and enabling their children to do well at school. The importance of the role played by parents was particularly keenly articulated by those involved in the provision of education. They suggested that, irrespective of the commitment of any school, a child could only fulfil his or her educational potential if supported to do so by their parents/carers.

Accordingly, all of the school principals interviewed placed a heavy emphasis on the benefits to be derived from 'partnership' working with parents. In this context, they talked about their sustained efforts to engage parents in promoting their child's education.

We try to give people an expectation and a value on education that if their young people succeed and get qualifications, they're going to get opportunities and they're going to have ways out. And that's what we do and we try and do consistently. [Principal]

Obviously, we engage very closely with parents and seek their support from day one ... Now if they don't engage we don't allow that to stop us trying ... But we are realistic, some parents just don't have very good parenting skills ... so in some cases you're maybe supporting the parent as much as you are supporting the child ... we would be quite persistent ... we would try to engage with them and offer them as much support as we can. [Principal]

The tangible benefits to be gained by effective parental involvement was provided by one principal as they described an initiative in which parents had been trained by one of the school teachers to teach phonics to their children.

The P1 and P2 teacher said that within a few weeks she could see an improvement in those particular pupils' ability in grasping sounds and then being able to put them together. So, there was ... hope there. But if we know that if we had more parents' support, the pupils would be better in school. [Principal]

The impact of the home environment was also acknowledged by young people. This was especially the case amongst 'older' young participants, those either in sixth form at school or in a college of further education. Irrespective of differences in their personal attitude to and

achievements in education, they recognised the role played by their parents/carers in either actively encouraging their studies or, alternatively, adopting a much less proactive approach. In respect of the former, young people talked about their parents trying to 'make good' their own lack of educational achievement.

Because my mum and dad haven't done well, they want me to get on. Yes, it's because they have done well they want us to do well. That's the same as my family. I don't think I'd still be here if they hadn't encouraged me. No, I think I would have left ... Like this is my third year doing my A levels because I had to repeat ... Like my mum really wanted me to come back. [Young people aged approximately 17-19 talking together]

In respect of the latter, when reflecting back on their earlier school careers and achievement, a substantial number of older young people concluded that they wished their parents had been more proactive in encouraging their learning.

Yeah, I wish my mum and dad had pushed me a bit more ... Yeah, I think that my ma should have ... pushed me a bit more ... My mum pushed me this year because I was doing my Level 3 and I couldn't be bothered doing the work ... thank God, she pushed me because I couldn't even be bothered doing it. I think I would have done better if my mum had of pushed me a bit more. But I always lied so it was really my fault. [Young people aged approximately 17-19 talking together]

The interview conducted with a local 'high achiever' confirmed the importance of parental engagement in their children's learning as s/he explicitly associated personal educational achievement (currently completing a PhD) with both the values espoused in the home environment as well as the practical and moral support provided. She was clear that in the absence of these values and support, it was unlikely she would have achieved the same degree of academic success.

4.6. Macro level inhibitors of attainment in Dunclug

The data identified a total of five macro-level inhibitors of attainment in Dunclug: academic selection; population flux and fracture; lack of social cohesion and effectiveness; social deprivation and disadvantage; and limitations in inter-agency communication and cooperation.

Academic selection

The issue of the Transfer Test around academic selection was discussed in essentially negative terms, both generally as well as in relation to specific aspects. Respondents claimed that it is *'divisive system'* which worked to separate children into the more and less educationally privileged, whose life chances differed accordingly. The system was thus considered to reflect and perpetuate social division over time.

You're excluded before you even begin. [Community Worker]

The fact that more affluent parents could afford to have their child coached in relevant exam techniques was understood to compound inequality and disadvantage, something that was further exacerbated by the recent introduction of charges to sit one of the two Transfer Tests.

His mum had to choose between doing it or not because she didn't have the money ... so she just put him through the [named school] test because its free and not put him through the Board one ... because she couldn't afford it. [Youth Worker]

Young people's accounts demonstrated an awareness that the result of the selection process at 11 years old set a pupil on a certain trajectory in terms of educational achievement. Essentially, passing the Transfer Test encouraged greater achievement because of a number of factors at play. Firstly, the quality of the teaching received as well as associated encouragement and support to achieve.

They have to hit targets and keep the grammar title like more teachers ... they're putting in the work and pushing you. It's obviously not for all teachers but more teachers would care and give you time and ask about you ... and like coming up to exams, the teachers will bring you in ... and do these classes with you and like you had to go ... and it helped you. [Young people aged approximately 17-19, talking about attending a grammar school]

We got given help but we weren't forced to go it ... looking back I wish I gone to it. Yeah, I do ... I'm saying that now, but I know at the time I wouldn't have. I'm saying it now because I know how much you need GCSEs ... Like there were extra classes and all and I remember them telling me, but I was never interested ... Yeah, we're told about them [the extra classes] but it depends if you go or not. Like there's no push to make you go. [Young people aged approximately 17-19, talking about attending a secondary school]

Secondly, and more fundamentally, young people were aware of an association between the school attended and personal commitment and effort. Put simply, grammar school education was associated with greater engagement compared to secondary school education.

I think that after doing the 11+ and getting into [named grammar school] you kind of had to live up to the expectation and work a bit harder. Like one of my best friends was at [name of secondary school] and like the amount of work I had to take home compared to hers was like ... we had far more. [Young person aged approximately 17/18]

Because I didn't do my 11+ and I wasn't bothered about studying and all, that's why I was so relaxed in high school, like ... I got two GCSEs. [Young person aged approximately 17/18]

Furthermore, the system was seen as rendering those children who 'failed' as lacking in self-confidence and self-esteem. This understanding was articulated by secondary school principals. They were clear that young people were consequently aware of themselves as somehow 'less than', relative to others who had passed and were now at grammar school.

Most of the young people come to us feeling a bit deflated having come through a transfer system that has labelled them as under-achievers and certainly not on a par with some of their peers. So, we do an awful lot when they first come to us to try to restore their confidence. [Principal]

So really, it's about confidence building and restoring confidence. Trying our very best to make them believe in themselves. [Principal]

In addition, the Transfer Test exerted unnecessary and ultimately detrimental pressures on pupils who were too young to possess the necessary coping skills. One young person talked about the entire experience as overwhelming and profoundly negative.

I was forced into it ... by my mum ... I hated it, I don't think I learnt anything from it ... Bloody nightmare, I actually hated it ... I was glad I failed it just to show my ma why did she put me through that. [Young person aged approximately 17/18]

Others talked about the pressure they experienced throughout an extended period of time, as they undertook one practice paper after another and were otherwise 'prepared' for the tests.

It was two years of pressure ... even in your spare time you were having to do the practice papers; that was just all it was, and we didn't even really understand why. [Young person aged approximately 17/18]

I couldn't open mine [letter of result], I was shaking, I had to get my mum to do it. [Young person aged approximately 17/18]

Finally, accounts offered by both adult and young participants alike suggested a more fundamental social-cultural dynamic to be pushing young people from Dunclug towards a secondary school education. This stems from a locally shared norm that young people from the area go to secondary school, with attendance at grammar school being the *'exception that proves the rule'.* The fact that a majority of young people opt for secondary school has already been suggested when discussing the social aspect of schooling, namely, that young people will tend to opt for the same school as the majority of their peers.

But a lot of the kids do want to go to [named secondary school] because their friends are there because they don't want to break that cycle so because then their friends are going there they don't want to do the Transfer Test or whatever. [Youth Worker]

In terms of specific aspects, two were discussed. Firstly, the system was condemned as promoting inequality in access to a grammar school education because of the way it required young people to identify their preferred secondary/grammar schools. As the two local, secondary schools and the integrated college are exceptionally popular (two are routinely over-subscribed) they need to be listed as a first preference if a young person from Dunclug is to stand a reasonable hope of securing a place. Thus, young people hoping to go to a grammar school but unsure as to whether they would attain the necessary grades faced a dilemma – whether to *'play safe'* and list a secondary school as first preference or whether to *'take a chance'* and list a grammar school as first preference. Participants' experiences of working with young people caught in this situation were that they invariably opted to list one of the local secondary schools as their first preference. Not only was this the safer option but it meant they were more likely to be educated with their friends, something of considerable importance to them.

They know if they put down [name of secondary school] as their first option that means they will get in and ... their friends are there. [Youth Worker]

You wouldn't honestly get in unless it's your first choice so they [parents] probably think "what's the point of even putting the kid through that stress and stuff". [Youth Worker]

Secondly, although the participants who talked about the following issue did so in essentially positive terms, the fact that the local primary schools do not provide additional tuition in preparation for the Transfer Test also inevitably disadvantages young people from Dunclug in relation to their peers attending primary schools that do provide such tuition.

But the culture here is, you come to your local primary school, and you move into ([named secondary school]. And that's just 'school' for the kids ... we don't put pressure on the kids and tell them that academic success is the be all and end all. They are pushed as far as we can push them ... but they are not coming into that culture whereby by P5 they are worrying about this big test. [Principal]

Population flux and fracture
As a preface to this sub-section, it is perhaps useful to quote from a recent DSD document:
The community in Dunclug is divided in a number of ways. The estate has seen a rapid change in its population make up in the past five years, with a significant outward movement

of Protestants. This has contributed to clashes between Protestants and Catholics in the estate and generally poor community relations. In addition, the estate is home to comparatively large proportions of Travellers, single-parent households and migrant workers, mostly from Eastern Europe. The impact of this complex mix of issues can be bluntly described as a breakdown in the social fabric of the community. [DSD 2010, p.8]

In differing ways, all those interviewed referenced changes in the religious and ethnic make-up of the local population, resulting from an in-movement of Eastern European and settled Traveller residents and out-movement of Protestant residents.

And also, there's a huge travelling community, settled travellers ... Settled families but also bringing that travelling culture with them ... a lot of the travelling families ... moved into the other Dunclug housing area that would have been for those sort of on the Protestant side of the estate ... established families moved out of it then. [EWO]

I have children from different communities, I have children from different cultures, I have children of different nationalities ... I have traveller children. [Principal]

At times, the negative impact of this trend was made explicit. Participants discussed the 'cocktail' of communities as militating against a stable and cohesive community environment.

What adds to the problems in Dunclug ... You have the Irish travellers, you have the Polish community and you have Protestants, Catholics and others and that all presents problems ... the different communities. [Dunclug community worker]

I'm thinking there was rioting two years ago up in the estate. I can't remember what sparked that, I think it was to do with parades and stuff. [EWO]

Although sectarian division, sometimes open conflict, was acknowledged, greatest focus was placed on division between the majority grouping of 'local 'Irish'/'British' and the more recent incomer population of Eastern Europeans. Some participants talked about the latter experiencing hostility, sometimes open abuse, from their fellow residents. Moreover, some of the young people themselves talked resentfully about 'the Polish' taking up employment and educational opportunities.

The things that they [Polish residents] said were happening to them and their children ... They were telling us things like the vulgar, abusive language being used at them, their houses were attacked; their properties when they were out at work being broken into and goods stolen, children being spat upon. [Dunclug community worker]

Settled Traveller families were discussed as having particular family structures and to be frequently distrustful of outsiders, so that it was important to make time and effort to communicate and build effective partnerships (in relation to their children's education). They were also considered to have relatively low self-esteem, tending not to push themselves or their children into the limelight, instead relying on fellow Travellers for help and support. School attendance of Traveller children, although improved over the recent past, was considered comparatively poor. Where relevant additional resources had enabled targeted interventions, meaningful improvements in pupil learning and achievement had occurred. Finally, problems associated with teaching children from different ethnic backgrounds and cultures, including those with limited English language, were highlighted.

Some parents have language difficulties and their experience of school in their country, we really want people to be involved in the communication and I think it takes them a wee while to realise what we're doing. But we have used the interpreting services; that's available through the Inclusion and Diversity Network. [Principal]

Young people described classroom tensions between the majority Northern Irish pupil population and those from ethnic minorities. In part, these tensions were based on differences in the language spoken. Some young English speaking participants expressed resentment around the fact that, for example, their Polish peers continued to use Polish to communicate.

Like it sounds really cheeky but when they're [Polish pupils] talking in class, it's ... really distracting. And you think they're talking about you ... Sometimes the teacher will shout "Talk in English" but they don't listen. [Young person aged approximately 17]

In turn, young people whose first language was not English talked about how they were often the butt of name-calling and insults from other English-speaking pupils. Moreover, classroom tensions extended to those between settled and Travelling young people, with the same type of insults being levelled.

The ones in his ... class call him names ... they pick on him, there is another guy, they pick on him as well ... they just call us "gypsies" and that but none of them have called me that yet. [Young person aged approximately 15/16]

Taken collectively, the evidence indicates that the recent changes in the macro demographic make-up of the Dunclug area have the potential to impact negatively on the educational achievement of young people, both those who are longer-term 'local' as well as those from ethnic minority populations. For example, teachers have to cope with increasing numbers of children whose first language is not English. Moreover, the divisions and tensions that are manifest in the community are reflected in the social dynamics of pupil interaction in school, militating against positive class interaction and learning.

Lack of social cohesion and effectiveness
Population division outlined above was part of a (perceived) wider lack of social cohesion. Dunclug was typically understood as lacking any meaningful community 'spirit'. For example, the estate was described as divided into a hierarchy of residential areas, with some being more desirable to live in than others and each associated with particular communities. Essentially, the Millfield estate was regarded as predominantly Protestant and relatively most affluent, the Dunvale estate as predominantly Catholic and relatively next affluent, and the two Dunclug estates as mixed Catholic/Protestant, with an increasing ethnic minority and settled Traveller population (and consequently as becoming predominantly Catholic), and least affluent. As such, social segregation is compounded by physical division. The fact that movement between the different areas is, at times, made difficult by a lack of connecting pathways and/or roads adds to this (perceived) division.

Furthermore, participants regularly talked about an inability to come together as an effective social collective. A specific manifestation of this concerned the conflict that had recently characterised community discussion and decision-making concerning expenditure of Department of Social Development funding. As one school principal put it:

There was a lot of stress in the community about how the money was used. [Name of community worker] helped to prepare the action plans and got the community groups together, but a lot couldn't agree. [Principal]

Recent deterioration in the social collectivism was confirmed when accounts given by participants over the period 2012-2014 are compared. Thus, during an interview in 2012 a community worker described an active Resident's Group, which was involved in ongoing, successful efforts to improve the physical environment of Dunclug. However, when an interview with the same community worker was undertaken in 2014, s/he described how in-fighting had rendered the Residents Group dysfunctional, leading to its demise. Again, in

2012 another community worker had discussed the recent establishment of a community centre, offering sports and other facilities to residents, including a much-needed weekly youth club. She also talked about the establishment of a drop-in centre, primarily targeted at older teenagers, with the aim of providing them with a safe space in which they could come together. To that end, it was furnished with comfortable sofas etc., included kitchen facilities, and was fitted with TVs, computers and other resources. However, by the time interviews with young people and other key workers were undertaken in 2014, descriptions of the same facilities were entirely different. The community centre was discussed as almost permanently closed, with only limited 'community' activities being held on the premises. In similar vein, the drop-in centre for teenagers was described as having been repeatedly vandalised, with (computer) equipment broken, seats set on fire, and windows smashed.

They've ruined the Drop-In centre, they're ruined everything like ... there was a drop-in centre at the park and they smashed all the computers ... wrecked it ... I think they're getting it done back up again. [Young person aged approximately 14/15]

As the above analysis makes clear, the many respondents feel that there is a distinct lack of social cohesion in the local area. However, young people's accounts provided a limited counter-balance to this understanding; the vast majority talked about the people in the area being *'friendly'*, as follows:

It's good that everyone knows each other. But sometimes that's a bad thing ... People are friendly. Aye, I think most people are friendly. There's the cheeky ones but a lot of people like they'll talk to you ... everyone says "Hello". [Young people aged approximately 17-18, talking together]

Social deprivation and disadvantage
The above analysis confirms a current poor provision of local facilities. Participants, including but not restricted to young people, talked about there being *'nothing to do'* for young people. The community centre offers little for them; the weekly youth club that is held there caters for much younger children. The drop-in centre (for teenagers) was typically characterised as unappealing, both in terms of its poor physical condition as well as the facilities / resources provided. Having been repeatedly vandalised by local young people, it was currently closed for renovations. It was suggested by a few young people that the drop-in centre was partisan, being operated by a particular local family who could make arbitrary decisions about membership etc. These young people argued for the provision of facilities that were local but operated by appropriately trained non-local individuals in order to bring professionalism and equity to provision. Although there were youth groups available in the wider locality, and were utilised and highly valued by young people from Dunclug, it was stressed that they were not provided in the Dunclug locality itself, making them all the more difficult to access. This lack of an expressly local facility was contrasted to the availability of facilities in other housing estate areas.

When asked what they did at the weekends and evenings, some young people talked about simply walking around the local area, hanging around the local shop, and/or walking further afield to visit friends. By their own admission, left to their own devices, young people were vulnerable to engaging in anti-social activity. Thus, one group talked about 'jumping' building sites in order to get chased by the police, obviously as a means of achieving an adrenalin rush.

The only thing to do in it is the Drop In. It's crap and boring, nothing to do ... Apart from get chases and fly down hills and go to the Drop In and that's it ... [Young person aged approximately 13/14]

They're [the government] not interested in us. We get nothing ... There's a youth club, but that's in the Waveney ... the youth club in Dunclug is like for 10-year olds ... There's nothing for our age group. Well, there's the drop-in centre but it's never open and it's stinking ... We used to go to it all the time ... Yeah, but that was when it was just opened ... They've lowered the age now so they can get more numbers so they can keep it up and running but then the ages, they're young and they're just coming in and wrecking the place. [Young people aged approximately 17-18 talking together]

In addition to lack of facilities, the local physical environment was routinely described as of very poor condition, with burnt out and boarded up housing, and streets full of litter. Limited green space was available; young people talked about a park for very young children as well as a playing field that was more 'field' than an environment in which to play sports and in which it was not uncommon to find discarded needles. The sense of living in a profoundly unattractive and unappealing place was striking in the accounts offered, as reflected in the following quotes.

Brutal ... It's dirty. [Young person aged approximately 14/15]

What these kids are living in, it's like something from the Middle Ages, there's houses with no roofs, derelict for years upon years and the kids are playing in them and when you go to the Housing Executive they say "Listen, this is a private landlord". [Community worker]

They don't look after it [Dunclug area] ... They always burn houses. Like there's a whole row of houses ... there's one house left at the end!! That person from there, he doesn't live there any more, sure he doesn't? He's in jail, so he is!! [laughter] [Young people aged approximately 17-18 talking together]

Not only was the local area discussed as physically impoverished but also participants' accounts consistently highlighted a concomitant social deprivation. The area was depicted as suffering from entrenched anti-social activity, including crime, vandalism and drug and alcohol abuse. Drug abuse was considered to be particularly problematic.

It's alive with drugs; the same with alcohol. And both of those ... cause major problems, that's why there's so much anti-social behaviour, domestic violence ... all of that. [Dunclug youth worker]

... if you're at a house party there's always ... at least one person taking something ... It's got to the point that if you're not taking drugs, you're the minority. Yeah!! [several people agreeing] ... it's in so deep now, drugs ... And its meth they're taking ... Like it's such a big thing, drugs. [Young people aged 17-19 talking together]

There's a big high crime rate ... there's been a few suicides up there in the past couple of years and we would have noticed that that has had an impact on the young people. [Principal]

Arguments going on, in the street, fights going on and people aren't happy. [Young person aged approximately 11/12]

Crime, well maybe not so much now but there used to be ... Everyone's in jail! Yeah, everyone has gone to jail! [laughter] I'm not even joking. See when the younger ones, when they grow up, that's when more crime will start again and then they'll go to jail and then ... it's like a cycle. There was a period of time like when there were houses getting broke into ... it was happening all the time and it was the same people ... but they're like always out of their heads now so they wouldn't have the ... they probably didn't even know that they had broke into a house!! [laughter] [Young people aged approximately 17-18 talking together]

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In the context of this diminished physical and social environment, young people were considered vulnerable to behaviours likely to impact negatively on educational success. They also recognised this vulnerability themselves. This included becoming involved in the 'wrong company', falling victim to alcohol and/or drug abuse and/or lacking the confidence and/or aspiration to succeed at school.

The area has a very well documented drug and alcohol problem, teenage drinking ... and I do feel for some of our young people, they do fall into that sort of company, or those sorts of behaviours ... and obviously that has a negative impact. [Principal]

Whenever it's constantly around and its socially normal it becomes like a normal thing ... coke [cocaine] and legal highs is the up and coming thing ... Can you walk to the shop in Dunclug without seeing somebody using? No!! [number of people saying the same thing] ... I always say like the estate bubble, the social norms that you'll get away with in the estate, like people that don't really branch out of the estate are like "Yeah, that's OK" [several people "I agree"] [Young people aged 17-19 talking together]

Young people were further aware of the impact on the social and cultural 'environment' of Dunclug on their own learning and educational /career aspirations. Firstly, in a practical context one young person talked about how a move away from the area had improved his ability to complete homework.

Fireworks ... I'd go out and buy fireworks ... I do my school work better now ... because whenever I was up in Dunclug I always went out, like I would then, I didn't do it. Whereas now I don't really bother with anybody down there so I just do it. [Young person aged approximately 13/14]

Other older young people reflected more generally on how living in the Dunclug area could impact on educational values and priorities. The following quote from a focus group discussion amongst 17-19-year-old young people demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the issues involved. Moreover, it shows that irrespective of differences in their understandings, all were able to draw on relevant evidence in support of their views.

I think it depends on what area you live in as well ... like the atmosphere ... I don't, I actually don't because I think it depends on how well you want to do, like I live in Dunclug too [this young person is doing A levels at a grammar school] and my boyfriend lives in [another socially deprived area] and he got 2 As and a B in his A levels and he's going on to do [a professional degree at university]. I think generally it does depend where you are because the difference, like I've always been from about the estate [Dunclug] but the difference in being in a class at [name of grammar school] with ones who were all...like their social norms are different ... people who aren't from the estate ... they have more traditional beliefs, and they are pushed further and in education "You have to go to uni", like that is just a given, it's just what you do, there's no 'will you, or won't you'. [Young people aged approximately 17-19 talking together]

Limitations in inter-agency communication and cooperation
The need for effective inter-agency working was regularly endorsed by participants. Such 'joined up' working was understood to enhance the likelihood that young people would receive the full raft of support they might require as youth justice, education, health and social care providers communicated relevant knowledge to one another.

The social and emotional problems that a lot of the children that you would see would have ... I think the idea that was originally made ... was about ... the One Stop Shop where they were going to probably bring one community area under one roof. I think that would be important in areas of deprivation where a lot of these children would be seen. [EWO]

In turn, holistic support was understood as vitally important in enhancing the educational prospects of young people experiencing difficulties in their lives. This was especially the case as problems in school were considered to almost always stem from difficult or problematic home circumstances.

... like from Dunclug and they come in and you just see it ... their whole body ... it might be this week or next week that you actually find out it's because their mum or dad got beat up or their house got raided or they [the family] ended up getting a death threat, and that's why that child is the way they are, not because they want to kick off. [Youth Worker]

The consequences of current limitations in inter-agency working were discussed by several participants. Their core message was that lack of insight into a pupil's problematic home circumstances encouraged discrimination. Accordingly, opportunities to gain this insight would help reduce discrimination and thus improve a young person's educational experience and achievement.

Whenever I would sit in pastoral care meetings, a few meetings in school ... what I can share with the teachers ... they're not even aware of what's going on at home ... even about not having a uniform or the parents are out partying and they're left and they're not getting their breakfast, their breakfast is massive, their concentration is awful because there's no breakfast. [Youth Worker]

So, it might be that their parents were drunk the night before or they saw somebody being beaten up, they go into school the next day, they have that in their heads, the teacher lights on them for not bringing in their homework without actually seeing the full picture so then the kid reacts and then the next thing is that's them labelled as a troublemaker rather than looking at what's actually going on behind that child's eyes. [Youth Worker]

The accounts of young people confirmed that they could identify (and value) teachers who sought insight into the circumstances that might impact on their schoolwork and who used this insight productively to encourage and support learning.

Someone who listens to you ... someone who is looking at it from your point of view, not just like "OK, you didn't do this, now go away". [Young person aged approximately 18]

Deficits in inter-agency working were also identified in terms of the length of time taken for some pupils to receive the support they required. These delays were associated with pressures on available resources, and consequent waiting lists, as well as a tendency for schools to prioritise the referral of pupils whose behaviour was disruptive to the school environment. This meant that other pupils, whose issues may have been greater but who, at least behaviourally, did not cause any disruption, were left waiting.

Those pupils with behavioural problems can sometimes take priority over the children who have ... specific learning needs that aren't presenting behaviourally ... if you've got the real 'messer' who is causing problems and trying to set fire to somebody's hair you know that child is going to be statemented probably quicker than the child who can't cope with the world but his behaviour is manageable. [EWO]

The School will root for them because for them they want something done about the behaviour that they cannot manage whereas the other child who is sitting who struggles with maths or English goes down the pecking order because for them the priority is the one that's destructive. [EWO]

The issue of delays in young people receiving support they might require was considered to be further exacerbated by existing pressure on education welfare resources so that,

irrespective of how many pupils a school may have in genuine need of help, limited capacity meant that, at best, about 3 pupils from any one school would be seen in any one year. Once again, irrespective of their real need, pupils were thus left on a waiting list for extended periods of time.

Because of the ratio of schools and the amount of referrals that Educational Psychology ... can see, those schools are only really capable of putting in 3 ... referrals ... in any year. [EWO]

You could have 10 children, you could have 12, you could have 15 children ... you can put in as many referrals as you like but the ratio works out at something probably there will only be 3 of them that will be picked up by Educational Psychology. [EWO]

4.7. Meso level inhibitors of attainment in Dunclug

The Dunclug data identified a total of three meso-level inhibitors of attainment: Institutional and personal deficits in teaching; the 'writing off' of pupils based on negative stereotyping; and manifold pressures on schools.

Institutional and personal deficits in teaching: a missing impetus for pupil attainment
A number of 'deficits' in the teaching provided in schools were identified as compromising young people's potential for academic attainment. Thus, young people were extremely consistent in their identification of the qualities that made a 'bad' teacher. One such was the sullen, easily annoyed teacher, who was overly authoritarian and whose classes were consequently unpleasant.

Not even that, they just ... like you stop for not even a minute and they're getting on at you "get your work done now, get your work done now!" [Young person aged 12/13]

Awful ... like my teacher just shouts a lot and she doesn't really explain the work to you. [Young person aged approximately 17]

Moreover, teachers who were, in the eyes of the young people, manifestly disinterested in the work of teaching and, by extension, in them as pupils, were regularly discussed.

Half the teachers in my school they would barely help anybody in my class out ... they just sit there staring at you; that's it. [Young person aged approximately 15/16]

She doesn't even teach really, she just basically says "page" whatever and then she doesn't even explain it right ... if you have a problem she just tells you that it's rude to come up and disturb her when she is doing this and that. [Young person aged approximately 13/14]

R: They're [the teachers] just there to fill their time.

R: There are certain teachers in there that don't care, they're just happy that they've got a job; they don't care about your results.

R: They just want to do the absolute minimum, they don't care what results they get. [Young people aged 17-19 in focus group]

The exchange quoted above highlights a theme running throughout young people's accounts, namely, that such 'bad' teachers were likely to discourage learning. Although these young people quoted directly above were clear that academic achievement is related

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to the quality of teaching received, they were not naïve enough to dismiss the role also played by personal commitment and endeavour.

They tried their best but I just got to the stage where I wasn't bothered ... It was more me than them. The school did their best. The school does help but like it's down to you too. Like the teachers are there for help but it's down to you, if you really want to go on and do it. [Young person aged approximately 18]

Other participants described the extremely negative and damaging consequences of poor teacher interaction with pupils.

I mean some of the things that I've heard the teachers have called the kids out of Dunclug horrifies me ... things like "You're stupid", "Are you thick?", you don't ever say that to a child. It ingrains in their head ... these are children we are talking about. [Youth Worker]

The huge benefits to be gained from actively engaged and committed teachers was highlighted by one participant as she described the efforts made by a teacher working in one of the secondary schools serving Dunclug. This teacher had spent personal time visiting the youth club attended by one pupil (from Dunclug) with significant behavioural and learning problems on a number of different occasions in order to gain insight into the reasons underlying these problems. The knowledge gained was subsequently put to effective use in his/her teaching of the pupil.

Other participants highlighted a different dimension of teaching shortfall, this time associated with pressure of pupil numbers and, ultimately, lack of resources. Identified deficits were not seen as the 'fault' of teachers; rather, the latter were characterised as simply unable to provide effective teaching given the pressures they faced.

That's one thing I find, whenever I've kids in here and they've maybe done Excel very well or an OCM in Trainee Leader or Youth Development, and you see the potential and you ask what the difference is and it's ... because you listen and give time and it's a smaller sort of grouping, whereas you know that these kids are in a class full of 30+ with one teacher who has to deal with the all different ranges of abilities. [Youth Worker]

A 'writing off' of pupils based on negative stereotyping
A number of participants highlighted the educational discrimination young people could experience as a result of being known, and labelled, as someone 'coming from' a socially deprived area. The idea that schools in general, and teachers individually, differentiated between pupils according to their social background was articulated. The perceived outcome of such differentiation was a lack of investment in those pupils associated with socially (and educationally) deprived backgrounds, relative to other pupils living in perceived (socially and educationally) affluent circumstances. Ultimately, as less was expected from these 'poorer' pupils, so schools tended to target greater effort elsewhere.

So, I think there are schools where probably there is lesser expectation and you know maybe a general acceptance could be that they don't really expect these children to do well. I think that's still there in some schools. [EWO]

The presence of such negative labelling was confirmed by adult participants working in the Dunclug area. Youth workers talked at length about the disadvantages experienced by local young people precisely because of labelling, which could persist in the face of personal contact and knowledge. Of particular concern was perceived negative labelling of some young people by teachers, which could encourage their marginalisation from education.

The kids will say to me, because of their name there are assumptions made of them straight away, so sometimes they feel [they're] labelled by the teachers no matter what they do or what they say. [Youth Worker]

They get labelled before they even hit the door, that "Oh no, there's another such and such coming through" and then ... the kids sort of sit in the back of the classroom ... and don't get involved in the whole education thing and switch off. [Youth Worker]

Young people did not articulate any awareness that they or their peers had been discriminated against because of labelling based on where they came from. From their perspective, it was more a case of some teachers providing universally inadequate teaching, as a result of which both they and other pupils suffered.

Manifold pressures on schools

The 'League Table' pressure on schools to achieve targets, and otherwise demonstrate their added value, was understood by some participants to promote a culture in which it became acceptable to 'sacrifice' the wellbeing of individual, typically problematic, pupils.

The schools have nearly got like a threat hanging over them ... where they're going [to particular pupils] "I don't know if I'm going to allow you to do that GCSE on that particular day" ... there are schools that do it because they want their targets met and if they have children who are under achieving and have behavioural issues they will look to get rid of them because they don't want them bringing down their attainment levels, absolutely. [EWO]

An impetus to expel was thought to be compounded by the lack of resources available to schools to support those pupils experiencing problems. In their absence, and faced with the pressures outlined above, the likelihood of these pupils being expelled was understood to increase.

There are certain schools ... that are very quick to expel, in my opinion ... their attitude towards it is, we can't deal with them so let's get rid of them ... that is an impact upon their educational outcome because they will attain less ... some of the children that have been expelled from schools ... could be addressed within the school but they don't seem to have the wherefore or the maybe the staffing to deal with it as they used to. [EWO]

The detrimental impact of underfunding was also highlighted by youth workers who regularly interacted with young people considered to have 'failed' educationally. Although the immediate fault was associated with inadequate school provision, this inadequacy was directly associated with a lack of relevant resources.

That's to do with the education system ... they've got one teacher ... is the government ever going to actually allow an extra teacher or somebody else to go in and assist the ones ... falling out of the system? [Youth Worker]

Amongst participants who discussed what support (if additional resources were made available) would be most effective, the need for early intervention was stressed. They were clear that by the time a young person entered Education Other Than at School (EOTAS), it was frequently too late for them to recoup their educational loss. The perceived limited effectiveness of EOTAS was further associated with deficiencies in the programme itself, which was thought to suffer from inadequate structure and organisation.

I had someone from ... Dunclug ... that went into EOTAS ... she hated it ... she said ... people there ... trying to show their power and lads that were ... [engaging in] inappropriate behaviour ... most of the time teachers ... were trying to deal with disruptive behaviour ... she actually came out of EOTAS with nothing. [Youth Worker]

One principal highlighted the success of a programme of funding, the Signature project, which over the past eighteen months had allowed the school to employ an extra member of staff to work intensively with pupils with elevated emotional and/or educational needs. This principal was strongly in favour of the project, which they considered to have had a significant positive impact on the educational potential of the pupils involved; something that they was certain would be reflected in forthcoming GCSE results. The support pupils had received had been targeted at their specific needs and provided on a consistent basis over time. Such targeting had been possible only because the funding had been provided to schools on an essentially autonomous basis.

This positive perspective was curbed by a realisation that the funding was short term and, at that point in time at least, apparently a 'one-off'. As such, the principal was clear that the positive outcomes achieved could not be sustained over time. In order for that to happen, core funding, provided to schools to use autonomously, in ways they thought most apposite, was required. In the meantime, the school would be forced to rely on a 'patchwork' approach to the provision of support to pupils most in need.

We're very dependent on organisations coming in ... It [the Signature project] does what we know we need ... additional personnel to be able to extract children with particular needs ... and work with those children ... And those children are maybe drifting with counsellors who come in, it's that kind of bitty approach. If we had a more co-ordinated approach ... It's actually giving the schools the flexibility and the finding to employ identified skills in staff or additional staff that they know will help. [Principal]

4.8. Micro level inhibitors of attainment in Dunclug

Finally, the Dunclug data identified the following three micro-level inhibitors of attainment: (felt) stigma and marginalisation; adverse circumstances in the home environment; and alienation from the value or 'point' of education.

(Felt) stigma and marginalisation
A generalised consensus that Dunclug and those who lived in it were understood in fundamentally negative ways emerged from participants' accounts. Young people were aware of the negative consequences of both living in the Dunclug area and of being associated with it. Some talked about 'hating' where they lived. One sixth former described never leaving the house or socialising with other young residents as a way of avoiding 'contact' with the estate:

I hate my estate so much ... I just hate it, there's nothing good about it. I don't think it is [friendly] ... Like I would have went out when I was younger, but I would never go out anymore ... I just wouldn't go out in it ... I'll just say, "I'm from Ballymena". I don't actually tell them where I'm from. [Young person aged approximately 17]

Although not as strident, others were aware of the likelihood of being judged as somehow 'inferior', 'lacking' and/or 'bad' precisely because of where they lived.

In first year this boy thought that because I came from Dunclug that we didn't have cars or phones ... and he thought that if you walked up [into the area] you'd get shot ... remember those ones from [another area], they wouldn't come into Dunclug; they were too scared. Yeah, they were scared ... It's not that bad ... it's a bit ... embarrassing. You see when people say, "Where are you from?" I don't say "Dunclug", I say "Dunvale". Yeah, I say that as well ... It makes a difference because Dunvale is a lot nicer than Dunclug ... [Young people aged approximately 17-18 talking together]

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Adverse circumstances in the home environment

Issues associated with adversity or otherwise challenging circumstances in the home were regularly identified as important inhibitors of educational achievement. A range of such issues were discussed, all of which were associated with a home environment detrimental to learning. Thus, ongoing financial shortages and insecurity, parental ill health, alcohol or drug abuse, physical and/or emotional neglect, cultural preferences that de-valued education, or simply lack of interest on the part of parents/carers were all thought likely to adversely impact on a young person's chances of success.

Some you can see are socially deprived, in their clothes, in the way they are presenting emotionally, but not a high number. [named teacher] said to one mother that she could forgo the fee of £3 per week upkeep but had to pay the NEELB dinner fee. The mother welled up in tears when she told her that. [Teacher]

We're very conscious of the fact that the weekend for a lot of these young people is a very unstructured time. And family life ... a lot of single parent families ... maybe a parent not there working or maybe not working and not making good choices ... so there is an awful lot of that. [Principal]

Such circumstances and the priorities they engendered meant that core educational activity such as completing homework, even regular attendance at school, were inevitably subordinated. Certain young people were identified as particularly vulnerable to this phenomenon. For example, female pupils from the Travelling community were identified as such because of specific cultural preferences and practices, and Eastern European pupils because of potential limitations in their ability to speak English.

And also, a lot of ethnic minority groups ... certainly in the travelling community there would be less expectation there and educational attainment ... part of the culture is the females for example there's a kind of a route already planned out for them which doesn't involve education. And also, the high number of ethnic minorities, the Polish and Lithuanians, the Czech Republic even, children coming in with limited English as well. [EWO]

All such factors were considered to play a huge role in preventing a child to achieve. Participants talked about a range of negative outcomes including, for example, an understandable inability to concentrate on school work or even dropping out of school entirely.

... but then it's everything else that you find ... the other things that are bubbling under the surface that are holding some of these children back. [EWO]

So, it's very hard for a child to focus on their school work if their lives are in chaos or their families' lives are. [EWO]

We would have pupils ... well into the teens ... involved with social services ... concerns with older ... siblings, through to child protection issues ... Suicide ... pupils would have had ... either an attempted suicide by a sibling or parent or the loss of one ... that obviously will have a significant impact on their learning. [Principal]

A lack of necessary parenting skills was, at times, associated with an inability to provide their children with appropriate standards, routines and boundaries. In the absence of such, young people were left to their own devices, able to choose not to pay attention to their school work or promoted not to attend school at all.

I see quite a few parents that come in here that just do not have the wherewithal to parent properly and therefore a lot of the children are allowed to more or less do as they please ...

The amount of children that come through here sometimes that aren't sat down and told "do your homework", they just don't do their homework. [EWO]

Lack of parental control is a big problem too – things I wouldn't have gotten away with as a child, they get away with. [Community worker]

Sometimes parents have ... an attitude; they don't drive their kids forward either. [Youth Worker]

Or their parents haven't got up to get them up or their uniforms aren't ready, that would be a big thing for me to see ... their uniforms aren't even washed or they don't have breakfast or they're not in any way ready ... They don't bother going to school because they get slagged by their peers for being dirty. [Youth Worker]

Furthermore, parents were described as sometimes lacking in educational achievement themselves, such that they were practically unable to support their children with their school work, even if a desire to do so existed.

But a lot of parents then have issues with sometimes reading or writing. [EWO]

Limitations in literacy and numeracy skills were identified in relation to parents from the majority 'Irish/British' local population and from the ethnic minority Eastern European and settled Traveller population.

Most of the [low attainment] problems in Dunclug originate around, say the Irish Travellers – some of their parents can neither read nor write to help them out. [Community worker]

In this context, several participants talked about a recent initiative in which Traveller parents had signed up to attendance at adult literacy classes. However, when a local venue for the classes could not be found and they were relocated to a college of further education (at least 2 miles away), the parents backed out. Consequently, they did not receive any literacy coaching whatsoever.

Home life was frequently described as characterised by disruption and disarray, with a concomitant diminished sense of stability, continuity and felt security. Marriages / partnerships could fail and children could experience a coming and going of their parents/carers' partners over time.

I think that [stability] and the whole parenting capacity are two of the biggest contributors to whether they do well in education or not ... a sense of stability ... security ... All those things around at the very basic level. [EWO]

Even children who would come, maybe been well motivated at the start, when something like that [breakup of relationships] happens, I mean the impact and how they can study or apply themselves, sometimes it makes a terrible difference and downward spiral for them. [EWO]

The lack of stability was associated with an increasing vulnerability amongst young people to problematic mental health. Generalised anxiety could manifest itself in a host of ways including, for example, anxiety about attending school, inability to concentrate and/or propensity to erratic (aggressive) behaviour.

I think also what the whole team would agree with, in the last few years, mental health issues among youngsters ... we see more and more children every single day in here that

are referred to the ... child mental health services ... we've seen in the way of mental health issues that children have risen considerably. [EWO]

Although the difficulties experienced by pupils living in relative deprivation were acknowledged by all those involved in the provision of formal education, these were never 'used' to somehow excuse or account for lack of/limited educational achievement. Indeed, one principal sought to explicitly counter any such notions.

We know they [some pupils] come from backgrounds where there is a lot of deprivation both emotionally and economically and socially, but once they come in here this is our environment and we nurture them in our way ... So, we don't turn a blind eye to the environment a lot of the children are living in but we don't see it as an excuse for anything. It's not an excuse for under-achievement, it's not an excuse for bad behaviour; it's not an excuse for anything. [Principal]

Alienation from the value or 'point' of education

Participants' accounts highlighted how 'felt alienation' could militate against educational achievement. Some young people and their parents were regularly described by others as disengaged from education, and could articulate such disengagement themselves. For example, when asked about how much interest their parents/carers took in homework etc., young people's responses included the following.

I'm not pushed at all. My home life and my school life are completely different. [Young person aged approximately 13/14]

My granny doesn't push me but I choose to do it. [Young person aged approximately 13/14]

Those involved in education (generally) as well as youth work talked about some parents being resigned to a life for their children in which unemployment prevailed, irrespective of educational qualifications. Accordingly, the value of education was not recognised, and some young people were not proactively encouraged and/or supported to do well at school.

There are a lot of families where unemployment is a big issue and to be honest I have interviewed families where educational attainment of their children is very low down the list because ... Some of them have said to me "what's the point in education, what are they going to do, where are they going to go, where are they going to get a job?" [EWO]

Maybe it's just a circle of deprivation that they haven't been encouraged to get involved in education ... I see that quite a bit that where the parents didn't do well in school so the young people think "Well, my mum and dad can survive on benefits ... I can", or they look elsewhere and maybe get involved in drug dealing and everything else ... that's a big factor within the whole area as well. [Youth Worker]

Counter-balancing the views expressed above were those of some young older young people who participated in a number of focus groups. Their accounts confirmed the proactive engagement of their parents and wider family in their education, and the positive impact of such engagement on their educational aspirations and achievements.

4.9. Summary of the findings from the Dunclug Ward

The data demonstrate that a range of structural, school-level and familial factors have a significant impact on the learning and subsequent attainment levels of young people from Dunclug. Across these levels, there are factors which are seen to enable academic achievement in the Ward and others which appear to inhibit such progress. In terms of macro-level influences, i.e. those factors relating to historical, demographical, and policy considerations, two specific macro-level drivers of attainment in Dunclug were identified around: local youth groups actively supporting young people; and the embedded nature of the relationship between local schools and the communities they serve. The Dunclug data suggest that local youth groups enhance the educational achievement of young people by: providing young people with a safe space and alternative opportunities for learning; supporting them in the context of formal education; demonstrating an active interest in their welfare; and encouraging them to believe in themselves. The data also highlight the value of schools being located in the local community. For example, it was frequently cited that: young peoples' school choice and attendance was often premised on opportunities for peer interaction; the embeddedness of schools means they can more easily engage with the communities they serve; and because successive generations have attended the same school, local educators have a robust knowledge of pupils and their family circumstances.

However, several macro-level inhibitors of attainment in Dunclug were also identified, the most significant of which related to the issue of academic selection. Although only 17.5% of young people in the Ward attend grammar school, the Dunclug data concur with the other ILiAD Wards that the selection process is '*divisive*' because it separates children into categories based on privilege (educational and socio-economical); and thus, serves to reflect and perpetuate social hierarchies. Of course, the argument that academic selection reinforces socio-economic privilege and disadvantage is hardly new. Some 17 years ago, in a major study on the effects of the selective system of secondary education in Northern Ireland, Gallagher and Smith (2000)[22] claimed that: (a) the importance attached to passing the transfer test results in parents feeling obliged to pay for out-of-school tutoring; and (b) many families on low income are simply unable to afford this extra expenditure. Educators in Dunclug also argued that academic selection: creates significant pressure and stress around the transfer test (which some pupil-respondents claimed they struggled to cope with); sets young people on fixed trajectories; causes many young people to be labelled as under-achievers; and means that secondary schools often struggle to restore the confidence of pupils who either failed or did not sit the test. Moreover, recent reports indicate that increasing occurrences of exam stress, frequently cited in Dunclug data, are a UK-wide phenomenon. According to the NSPCC, the number of young people in Britain seeking counselling over exam stress has increased by 200% in recent years (Guardian, 2015).[23]

The data also show that, in addition to social deprivation, population flux and fracture are (increasingly) common characteristics of the Ward. Sectarian polarisation continues and recent arrivals, particularly those from Eastern Europe, have presented a range of challenges (perceived or otherwise) for the community. Perhaps relatedly, a lack of social cohesion was evidenced via accounts of: local disputes over DSD funding; the residents group being beset with in-fighting; and community facilities being routinely under-used and/or vandalised. It was also argued that inter-agency cooperation in the Ward is limited and that schools' consequential lack of insight into a pupil's problematic home circumstances encourages the perpetuation of such disadvantage.

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[22] Gallagher, T. and Smith, A. (2000) The Effects of the Selective System of Secondary Education in Northern Ireland, Bangor: Department of Education for Northern Ireland.

[23] "Surge in young people seeking help for exam stress", by Richard Adams, The Guardian Newspaper 14-05-15 [online]. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/may/14/calls-to-childline-over-exam-stress-break-records

In terms of the meso-level factors, the data from Dunclug show that schools which serve the Ward: provide a range of academic and vocational choices, effective transition systems, and responsive assessments; and promote a culture that prioritises the pursuit of excellence. The data suggest that inter-school cooperation is a further feature of the Ward. For example, several respondents highlighted the role of the Ballymena Learning Together Group which involves grammar and secondary schools sharing access to A level subjects. Similarly, many teachers in these schools are demonstrably committed and supportive of the young people in their care; and it is common for teachers and classroom assistants to undertake voluntary work *'above and beyond normal hours'*.

However, three meso-level inhibitors were identified. There were accounts in the data of deficits in teaching which were seen to compromise young people's potential for academic attainment; and several young people spoke about *'bad teachers'* who were sullen, easily annoyed, and overly authoritarian. It was also claimed that many pupils are *'written off'* because of negative stereotyping. Several respondents claimed that: many young people experience *'educational discrimination'* because they are labelled as coming from a socially deprived area; and that such class-based differentiations further deepen their marginalisation from education. The Dunclug data also make clear that local attainment levels are negatively impacted by the manifold pressures on schools around, for example: league tables and composite achievement targets; and class sizes of more than 30 with one teacher having to deal with different ranges of abilities.

In terms of the micro-level influences on a young person's academic attainment, the Dunclug data concur with the other Wards in the ILiAD study and highlight the importance of a supportive home environment. According to both school and community-level respondents, creating such an environment was contingent on parents proactively encouraging and enabling their children to do well at school.

However, three micro-level inhibitors of attainment were also identified. Firstly, several respondents spoke about the *'felt stigma'* and marginalisation experienced by local young people. One effect of this stigmatisation is that some of Dunclug's younger residents reported being *'ashamed'* of where they were from and highlighted: entrenched anti-social activity, including crime, vandalism and drug and alcohol abuse; and a very poor local physical environment with burnt out and boarded up housing and streets full of litter. Secondly, it was claimed that the academic progression of young people from Dunclug is inhibited by adverse circumstances in the home environment. The data here make clear that: many families in the Ward are characterised by unemployment and poverty; the learning of local young people is negatively impacted by resultant financial shortages; and that such problems are commonly compounded by parental ill health, alcohol or drug abuse, physical and/or emotional neglect, and familial norms which place little value on education. Thirdly, it was argued that many local young people feel alienated from education and see little point in applying themselves at school. The two most frequently cited reasons for this lack of belief in young people around the value of education were: the inter-generational transmission of school failure; and the distinct lack of visible employment opportunities – made all the more pronounced by the latest recession.

4.10 Social Capital in Dunclug

In terms of bonding social capital, the Dunclug data make clear that: close-knit networks of support are a feature of the Ward; and that the educational achievement of many young people is enabled through a supportive home environment and encouraging parents. Moreover (and somewhat paradoxically), divisions in the Ward between the satellite communities e.g. the Dunclug, Dunvale and Millfield estates, have, in many cases, served to

strengthen these immediate bonds and associated cultural identifications. However, local stocks of bonding capital are, to an extent, diminished because many young people are impacted by (area-based) stigmatisation, adverse home circumstances, and a sense of alienation from the value of education.

The second category in the ILiAD social capital framework relates to bridging capital and concerns schools' levels of engagement, accessibility and innovation. The Dunclug data show that: the propinquity and embeddedness of the two main schools, in addition to the patent commitment of school staff, have markedly increased accessibility; and that Extended Schools programmes have made a significant contribution in terms of encouraging the engagement of young people and their parents. Moreover, these schools have clearly adopted innovative initiatives to foster positive attitudes among young people and their families around education and its value. For example, several principals and teachers spoke about: broader conceptualisations of achievement; a wider range of vocational A level subjects; lunchtime activities; the learning benefits of a six-period school day; and organising their school into 'houses' to encourage involvement in school activities. More broadly, these schools seek to provide, concomitantly, ambitious academic targets for higher achieving students and tangible pathways to e.g. technical college for the less academically minded. Schools in the Ward also have high expectations in terms of quality of teaching, individual attainment, and standards of discipline. It is also clear from the data that the schools which serve the Ward: have forged meaningful linkages with the local communities; have in place effective engagement systems for young people and their parents; and have clearly embraced the opportunities provided by the Extended Schools programme.

The third element of the ILiAD framework is linking social capital and refers to structural factors such as demography, statutory youth provision, physical assets, and the impact of education policy. Although Dunclug is a mixed-religion Ward, residential segregation is still evident. Moreover, it would appear that new social divisions have been created with the arrival of migrant workers. There were accounts of hostility and abuse being directed towards these new arrivals and acknowledgements from residents (young and old) of the resentment they harbour around, for example, these new arrivals '*taking up*' employment and educational opportunities. It is also clear that schools, teachers, and indeed some pupils, have been challenged by the increasing numbers of children whose first language is not English. There is also a large Travelling community in the Ward and several principals and teachers outlined: the additional support required for pupils and parents with (often severe) literacy limitations; and the need for such interventions to be sensitive to this community's cultural norms around e.g. gender, education and community participation.

In terms of statutory youth provision, the data attest that: youth groups in the Ward provide a safe and welcoming environment and stimulating opportunities for learning; and youth workers are expressively supportive, help young people chose subjects GCSE, and signpost Further and Higher Education opportunities. Moreover, this provision is underpinned by a philosophy that the most effective learning environments are ones which are enjoyable, sociable and interactive. In addition to the patent benefits of this youth provision, academic attainment in Dunclug is further enabled by the propinquity and embeddedness of the local schools. This spatial attachment between communities and schools: increases parental involvement; widens access to school facilities; and, more broadly, contributes to the local-level service infrastructure. Moreover, and importantly, many young people in the Ward thus come to see their school as an integral part of their lives and an important referent in their social world. Consider together, these factors, at least in part, explain why rates of high absenteeism within Dunclug are the lowest in the ILiAD sample.

It is also clear that Dunclug has the required linking social capital to secure significant funding, for example, through the DSD 'Areas at Risk' Programme. However, these extra resources seem to have had little effect in terms of addressing the lack of community

cohesion, the insufficient provision of youth facilities, and existing (ethno-religious and class-based) social cleavages. According to the data, academic selection is a source of social division in Dunclug. Although initiatives such as the Ballymena Learning Together Group have successfully brought grammar and secondary pupils together, negative self-labelling and a form of educational hierarchy are evident in the Ward. It was also frequently cited that children whose parents could afford private tutoring in subject specialisms and exam techniques were at a distinct advantage in terms of accessing a grammar school education.

Looking at the three levels together, it is clear that the close-knit networks in Dunclug are based on familial and geographical factors rather that, as was found in several other ILiAD Wards, a shared sense of adversity. However, although many parents actively support their child's education, many young people in the Ward live in adverse home conditions, routinely experience stigmatisation and feel disengaged from education. Similarly, bridging social capital is generated via the local schools' capacity to engage and be accessible and innovative in their teaching practice. However, the value of this capital is undermined by, for example: divisions between the Ward's satellite communities; and classist attitudes which unfairly label young people because they come from deprived communities. Linking social capital is evident in the Ward's physical assets – the popular schools which are seen as both in and of the community. Moreover, the interplay between the bonding, bridging and linking forms is clear, for example: the immediate (micro-level) bonds i.e. familial connections to schools and neighbourhood friendships have, in all probability, improved and sustained (meso) school attendance levels; and the propinquity of local schools (macro) enables higher levels of parental engagement (meso) which, in turn, increases levels of aspiration and self-belief in young people (micro).

The Dunclug data highlight a number of examples of negative bonding, bridging, and linking social capital which is seen to impact the educational attainment of young people, particularly those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. Firstly, immediate bonds in the Ward are limited by peripheral spatiality, and ethno-religious segregation. The social capital literature attests that, particularly for the most disadvantaged families, the interplay of these factors with weak familial norms around education and employment have a constraining effect on young peoples' educational ambition (Dika and Singh, 2002).[24]

Secondly, the data make clear that bridging ties in the Ward are weakened by ethno-religious residential segregation. According to Putnam (2000: 22),[25] networks within spatial concentrations of deprivation 'provide crucial social and psychological support'. However, he also cautions that when this bonding is framed by competing homogeneities, the social capital created tends to be 'inward-looking and exclusive'.

Thirdly, the Dunclug data evidence a widely held view that the actual benefits of the educational social capital created by academic selection are disproportionately accrued by the most privileged i.e. those families with positive educational norms, a family tradition of academic success and sufficient income (e.g. to pay for private tutors). This uneven distribution of the concept's benefits highlights a central criticism of orthodox interpretations of social capital which are, essentially, premised on the belief that social networks engender economic opportunities. Li et al. (2008: 406)[26] argue that this proposition ensures that advantage and disadvantage are 'simply reproduced' because those who are 'already privileged' are 'best positioned to take advantage' of such networks.

The debates around the strengths and weaknesses of academic selection, in many ways, are seen to mirror the dichotomy between orthodox interpretations of social capital and more

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[24] Dika, S. L. and Singh, K. (2002) "Applications of social capital in educational literature: a critical synthesis", *Review of Educational Research.* Spring 2002, 72(1), 31-60.
[25] Putnam, R. (2000) Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community, New York: Simon & Schuster.
[26] Li, Y. Savage, M. and Warde, A. (2008) 'Social mobility and social capital in contemporary Britain', The British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 59 (3) pp 392–411.

radical interpretations which argue that socio-spatial and socio-economic networks have entirely different impacts in working class communities than in more affluent ones. Here again, Pierre Bourdieu's heuristics of 'field' (social arena), 'habitus' (individual dispositions) and 'capitals' (assets and resources) are particularly useful. The Dunclug data evidence that academic selection creates a 'field' wherein: the most valuable 'capitals' are income and positive familial norms around education; and class differentials are seen to be a significant informer of 'habitus' for pupils and their parents. In such processes: young people from middle class families invariably succeed (in the selection/transfer process) and get the opportunity to attend a high performing school with other likely achievers; and the most disadvantaged pupils invariably either fail or do not sit the transfer test and are, thus, denied the same opportunity. According to Portes (2010: 75),[27] neglecting the 'underlying class structure' in analyses of social processes (in this case, academic selection) creates a 'classless fallacy' which 'wrongly assumes that such processes occur evenly across the population'.

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[27] Portes, A. (2010) Economic Sociology: a systemic inquiry, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Case study 5: Duncairn

5.1. Local Context

Deprivation Levels

Duncairn is one of the most socially deprived Wards in Northern Ireland (ranked 14th out of 582 on the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure, NIMDM 2010) but the GCSE pass rate (5 at A*-C level) has increased substantially since 2009, jumping from 25% in 2008/09 to 56% in 2009/10. As of 2012/13, the pass rate was 50%, meaning that Duncairn performs at approximately the same levels as Woodstock (a slightly less deprived, but also predominantly Protestant Ward) and Dunclug (a less deprived, mixed-religion Ward), and better than Tullycarnet (a less deprived, but also predominantly Protestant Ward). However, achievement within Duncairn remains slightly lower than the predominantly Catholic Wards of the ILiAD sample, even compared to Whiterock, the most deprived Ward.

Figure 5.1 shows a map of the Output areas within the Duncairn Ward, colour-coded by intensity of deprivation. The colours of the Output areas refer to the severity of deprivation, based on their multiple deprivation score (ranging from 1.5 to 81.73, with 81.73 being the most deprived) as calculated by NISRA (all statistics are based on the 2010 measures unless otherwise indicated).

■	1.500000 - 11.990000
■	11.990001 - 22.210000
■	22.210001 - 34.720000
■	34.720001 - 51.400000
■	51.400001 - 81.730000
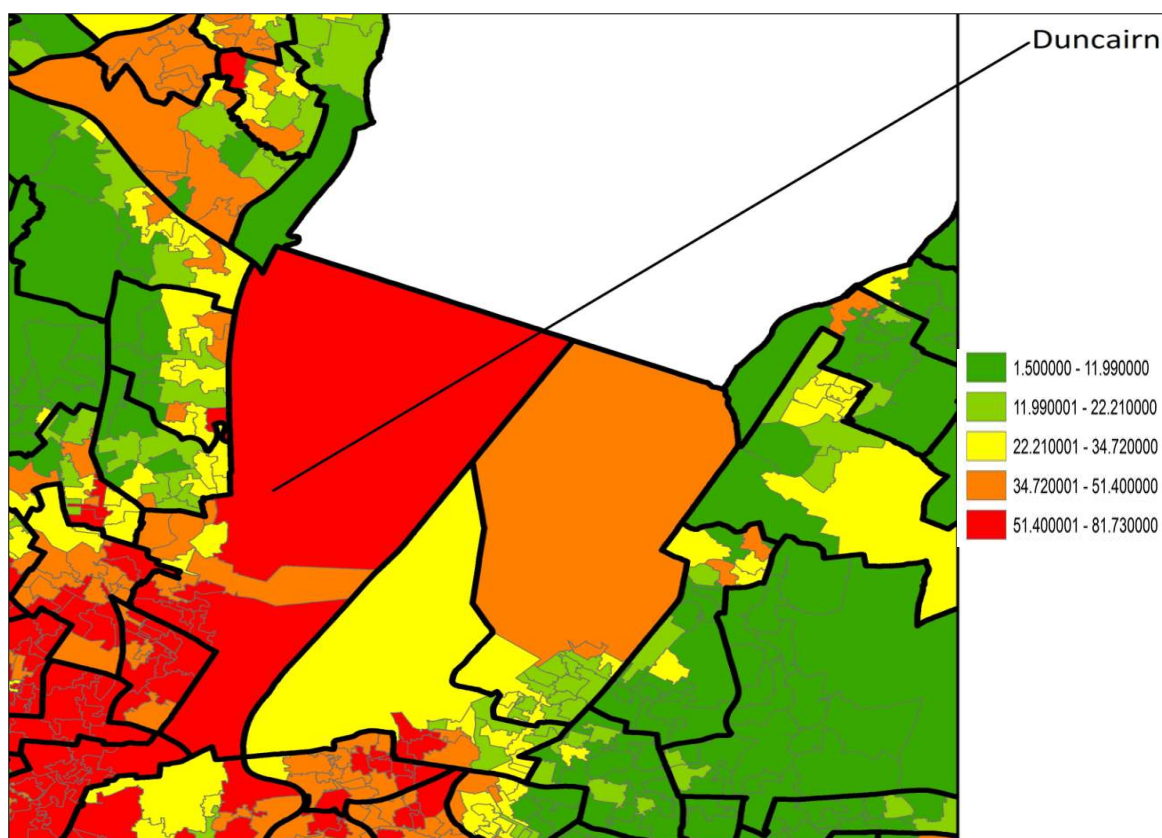
Figure 5.1: Multiple Deprivation in Output Areas: Duncairn Ward

All of the Output areas within the Duncairn Ward show average-severe levels of multiple deprivation (yellow-red). The surrounding Output areas are mostly within this range of deprivation as well, with the exception of the Fortwilliam and Castleview areas to the north-west of the Ward. The Ward is urban and stretches far along the coast, but also includes a large amount of commercial space into the dockland area of Belfast. It is extremely close to the Belfast City Centre area to the south of the Ward, which accounts for the Ward's excellent score on the proximity to services deprivation indicator (547th out of 582, almost the

least deprived in this respect). However, this extremely high score is an outlier amongst the deprivation measures for Duncairn – the Ward is ranked 25th or under for crime and disorder, living environment, education and skills, health deprivation and disability, employment, and income. The Ward is mainly Protestant, but it also includes the interface areas and security fences of Tiger's Bay and Duncairn Gardens. This Ward therefore is severely affected by many of the most pressing social issues.

Demographics and Local Facilities
Duncairn is one of the predominantly Protestant Wards in the ILiAD research sample (90.2% according to the Census 2001) although the Census 2011 revealed that the percentage of Protestants in the Ward has decreased to 63.9% (the percentage of Catholic residents has increased substantially since 2001 (from 5.5% to 23.6% in 2011). The Ward has a higher than average percentage of residents who were born outside of the UK or the Republic of Ireland (10.3%, compared to the NI average of 7.1%) or born in EU ascension countries (5.0%, compared to the NI average of 2.1%). The population density within the Ward is the lowest of the ILiAD sample, at 4.3 persons per hectare, but this statistic is skewed by the inclusion of the docks area to the east of the Ward. There is also evidence of significant change in housing tenure within the Duncairn Ward between 2001 and 2011 (according to Census statistics). Although the percentage of owner/occupier housing remained relatively stable (26.9% in 2001 and 25.7% in 2011), the percentage of privately rented housing more than doubled, from 9.3% to 21.2%, and the percentage of social rent housing decreased from 62.9% to 49.3%. Duncairn has one of the larger population sizes in the sample of seven Wards, at 4901 persons (NISRA, 2011). The percentage of young people under the age of 15 is 17.5% according to the Census 2011, just under the Northern Ireland average of 19.6%. Parts of the Ward are also encompassed within the Inner North Belfast Neighbourhood Renewal Area. In the 2012/13 financial year, the Inner North Neighbourhood Partnership (which coordinates the Neighbourhood Renewal activities) overall spend was £868,909 (combining funding from the NI Department for Social Development, the Department for Employment and Learning, and the European Social Fund), over half of which was directed toWards community/social renewal (£437,784); £402,923 directed toWards economic renewal; and £28,302 directed toWards physical renewal.

The Duncairn Community Centre is a key resource that houses activities for young people and families that may help toWards their engagement with education, from a mother and toddler group, to men's and women's groups, recreational activities, and an afterschools club. Other organisations and groups that span a range of services include the 174 Trust; the Loughview Community Action Partnership; Tiger's Bay Concerned Residents Association; New Lodge Duncairn Community Health Partnership; New Life Counselling; and Alexandra Presbyterian Church. Overall, the bulk of non-mandatory services appear to be concentrated on several types of services: Mother and toddler groups/early years support; intergenerational and youth community activities; recreational activities; work training and skills support; and afterschools clubs. Extern Pathways Project is an Alternative Education Provider in the Ward. There is also Further Education support at three centres: Belfast Boys' Model School; Play Resource Warehouse; and Riddell Education Centre.

School Provision, Intake Characteristics, Achievement and Destinations
In terms of education provision, Duncairn has one of the largest numbers of pupils within post-primary schools out of all the Wards in the ILiAD study (223 pupils in 2011), with eleven schools serving these young people in 2011 (see Table 5.1 below). That year, 11.7% of young people from the Ward attended grammar schools (the lowest proportion of the seven ILiAD Wards) and 88.3% attended secondary schools. The research team decided to choose a geographical mid-point within each Ward area, and to map the distance from this point to the schools that serve each Ward area.

Miles to school	% GCSE pass	Enrolment (2011)	
1.2	95	15	Belfast Royal Academy
1.4	97	3	Dominican College
1.6	35	12	St. Patrick's College
2.1	72	47	Belfast Model School for Girls
2.4	51	38	Belfast Boys Model
2.4	54	41	Hazelwood Integrated
3.4	28	21	Newtownabbey High
4	82	3	Campbell College
5.3	47	24	Glengormley High School
5.6	32	14	Monkstown Community School
6.7	98	5	Belfast High School
Total Grammar enrolment		26	11.7%
Total Secondary enrolment		197	88.3%

Table 5.1: Schools serving young people in Duncairn. Blue – Grammar schools Orange - Other schools

Looking at average GCSE achievement rates in Duncairn for the three years prior to the ILiAD research commencing (2008/2009/2010), 45.6% of school leavers achieved ≥5 GCSEs or GCSE equivalents (at Grade C or above). When considering 'pure' GCSEs only, this figure dropped to 32.9%, and the figure dropped to just 26.8% if English and Maths are included (this is the second highest variation of any of the ILiAD sample Wards). Looking specifically at female school leavers across these three years, 54.9% achieved any five GCSEs at A*-C, and 38.0% achieved five GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths. For males, the figure for any five GCSEs was 37.2%, dropping by more than half (16.7%) with the inclusion of English and Maths.

In terms of the achievement rates within the Ward of school leavers who are entitled/not entitled to Free School Meals (FSM), Duncairn shows one of the largest variations of all ILiAD sample Wards. For school leavers from 2008 – 2012, 56.8% of those not entitled to FSM achieved five or more GCSEs at A*-C, compared to 25.3% of school leavers who were entitled to FSM (in other words, a 31.5% variation). This variation of approximately nine percentage points stands whether considering FSM/non-FSM males or females. There was also an interaction between FSM-entitlement and gender in terms of achievement within Duncairn – while there was very little difference in achievement rates between males and females who were not entitled to FSM (61.8% for females and 60.8%), the difference between males and females who were entitled to FSM was much greater (38.2% for girls and 17.0% for males, a differential of 21.2%).

There are, however, some obvious differentials in regard to the needs and circumstances of the pupils who attend the different secondary schools within and around Duncairn and the corresponding numbers of pupils who achieve five GCSEs including Maths and English, as illustrated in Figure 5.2 below. Schools such as Belfast Model School for Girls, Hazelwood, Belfast Boys' Model School, St Patrick's College, and Newtownabbey Community High in particular, all have pupil enrolments which are approximately 10 percentage points above the average rate (2008-2012) of free school meals entitlement in Northern Ireland for secondary schools (see the dashed lines in Figure 5.2). The Boys' Model School and Newtownabbey Community High also have pupil enrolments with much higher rates of special educational needs than the average for Northern Irish secondary schools 2008-2012 (see the dotted lines in Figure 5.2). All of the secondary schools perform below the Northern Ireland average for attainment of five GCSEs including Maths and English (see the red solid

line versus the blue solid line); but the three schools with the largest enrolments of pupils from Duncairn (see the figure in brackets beside the school names) had approximately one-fifth of their total school leavers entering higher education in 2012 (see Figure 5.3). It should also be stated that these three main schools also saw their overall rate of GCSE achievement jump significantly in the school year 2011-12: the percentage of pupils achieving any five GCSEs from the Model School for Girls, Hazelwood, and Boys' Model in that year was 89%, 74% and 78% respectively, representing increases of around 20% from the previous year's GCSE achievement rates.
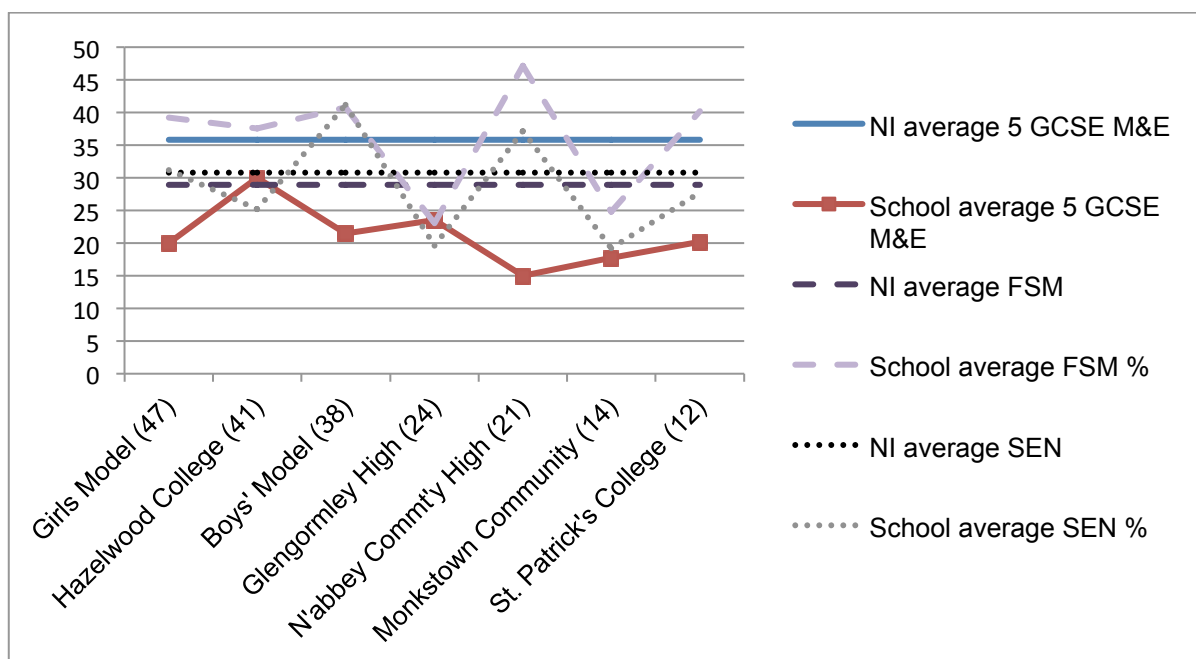

Figure 5.2: Percentages of 5 GCSE (including Maths & English) attainment, Free School Meals eligibility, and pupils with any Special Educational Needs – Duncairn Secondary Schools against NI secondary school averages
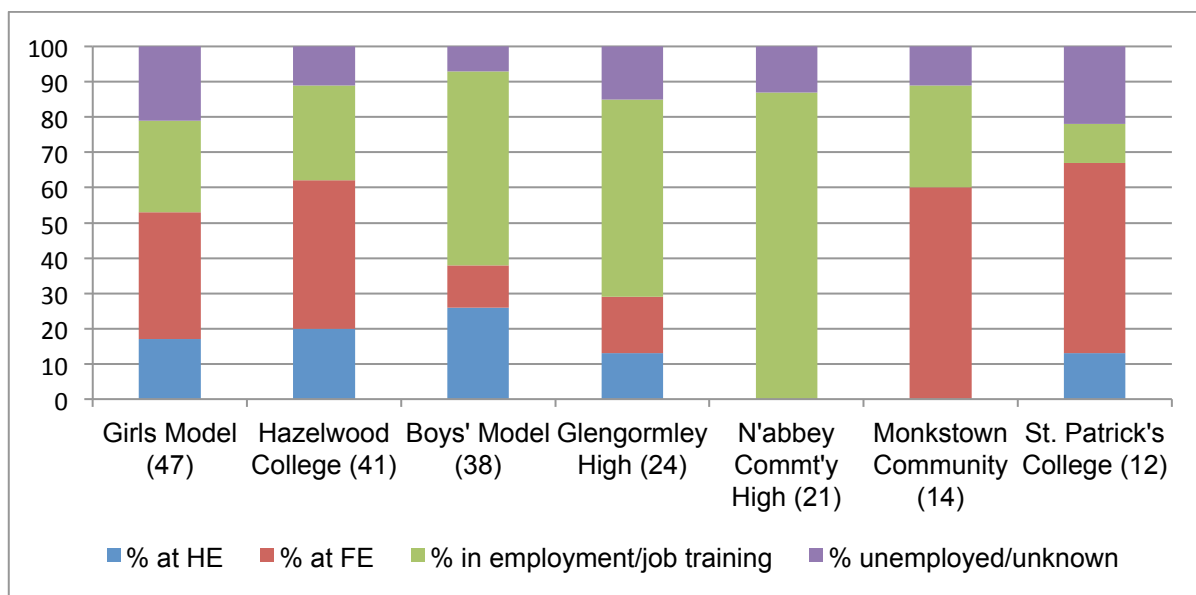

Figure 5.3: Destinations of School Leavers 2012 from secondary schools serving Duncairn
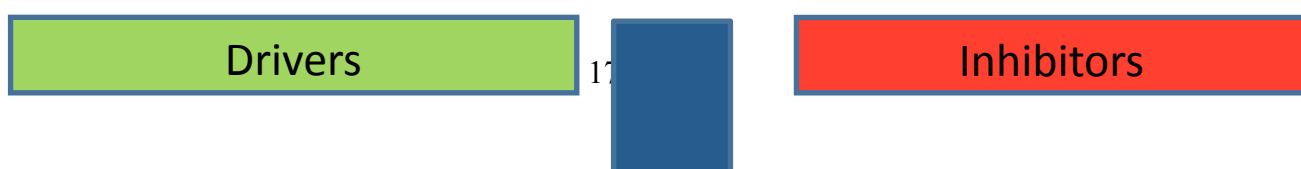
Looking at the destinations of all school leavers in the Ward across the years 2008 – 2012, Duncairn Ward has the highest average rate of school leavers who were unemployed or in an unknown destination, at 16%. However, in 2007 the rate in Duncairn was only 7%; it has been since 2008 (coinciding with the onset of the current recession) that youth unemployment there has more than doubled, up to a rate of 22% in 2011. In terms of employment, Duncairn has had a similar average rate to the other Protestant Wards within the ILiAD sample (33%, compared to 32% in Tullycarnet and 34% in Woodstock). Lastly, 33.6% of school leavers from Duncairn have entered further education and 18.6% have entered higher education on average in the period 2008-2012.

The following sections of this chapter will outline the key drivers and inhibitors of achievement in the Duncairn Ward as identified from document review, secondary data analysis of official statistics, and qualitative interviews with community and youth workers, Education Welfare Officers (EWOs), parents, residents and recent school leavers from the Ward, principals and teachers from the schools serving young people from the Ward, and young people themselves (see Table 5.2). The drivers and inhibitors will be presented as: macro-level (structural) factors to examine linking social capital; meso-level (school-level) factors in terms of bridging social capital; and micro-level (immediate/familial) factors, conceptualised here as bonding social capital.

Table 5.2: Profile of participants in Duncairn

School level	Community level
Nursery/primary school principal interview x 1	Education welfare officer focus group x 1
	Community representative interview x 1
Post-primary principal interview x 4	Youth/community worker interview x 2
Post-primary vice-principal interview x 1	Young people's focus group x 1
Post-primary senior teacher interview x 2	Parents focus group x 1
Alternative education pupil focus group x 2	Residents association focus group x 1

5.2. Force-field Analysis of drivers and inhibitors of achievement in Duncairn Ward

Drivers		Inhibitors

Macro-level

a) Collaborative involvement of external agencies

b) The provision of new and improved school buildings and learning facilities

c) Current economic climate

d) Additional resources

Meso-level

a) Effective school-parent engagement, communication and support structures

b) Flexible curricula, vocational placements and alternative measures of success

c) Stricter school regimes (discipline and high expectations)

d) Committed and empathetic teachers

e) Effective school-community links

f) Support during transition(s)

g) Effective SEN provision and 'problem behaviour' management

Micro-level

a) Parental support and a stable home environment

b) Individual resilience and the notion of education as a means to leave the community

c) Community and youth work interventions

d) Student cognisance of value of education / career pathways

Macro-level

a) Legacies of the recent conflict

b) Felt effects of academic selection

c) Spatial detachment of schools serving the Duncairn Ward

d) Lack of inter-agency collaboration / disjointed provision of SEN support

e) Demographic change / unsettled demographic patterns

f) Exclusion from mainstream education

Meso-level

a) Negative teacher attitudes and behaviour management techniques

b) High levels of absenteeism

c) Perception of schools as 'detached' i.e. class-based identifications

d) Inappropriate curricula

Micro-level

a) Parents' lack of capacity to support their child(ren)'s education

b) Disadvantaged home and community environments

c) Low expectations / low self-esteem amongst young people (in contrast with RC community)

d) Peer, familial, community dissuasion

5.3. Macro-level drivers of attainment in Duncairn

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In terms of linking social capital, i.e. structural, demographic and policy-level factors, four key drivers of educational attainment were identified relating to: the collaborative involvement of external agencies; the provision of new and improved school buildings and learning facilities; the current economic climate; and additional resources for schools.

Collaborative involvement of external agencies

According to the data, the most important structural factor in terms of raising attainment levels in Duncairn is the collaborative involvement of external agencies. It was frequently suggested that such interventions have a particularly positive impact on young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, one principal highlighted the role of Barnardos whose parent support workers work in tandem with attendance officers; while another outlined a successful parent engagement project.

They will go out on home visits together. The girl from Barnardos, she works with the parents in providing the background support to the parents that may be helping them in terms of benefits, going along to the GP, accessing particular support. The attendance officer focuses on the boy ... and Barnardos is coming in and working with the parents. [Principal]

We now have a joint OFMDFM funded project with Holy Family. That's with the partners of Barnardos and Parenting NI and PIPS. So, we would have … Parenting Apart, mental health courses for the mummies and daddies which are phenomenal. It also a cross-community step which is wonderful and I couldn't feel more passionate about it. [Principal]

Several respondents also highlighted the provision of SureStart programmes which were seen as critical support mechanisms, particularly, for families from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or those families with histories of no or little educational success. Similarly, another principal recalled a '*fantastic*' intervention with Save the Children entitled the 'Families and Schools Together (FAST) programme' which she claimed had a real impact in terms of engendering improved relations and mutual understanding between local schools and the families they serve. It is also clear from the data that Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) in Duncairn play an important role in terms of providing a conduit between families and schools; and in working with schools to initiate support interventions. Notably, one EWO highlighted what she saw as a nascent shift on the part of schools to adopt a more holistic approach when addressing the needs of young people at risk of academic failure. This more joined-up method, she further argued, gave parents and schools the chance to avail of the widest possible range of support mechanisms.

Some schools realise to work on attainment means taking more of a holistic approach, the beginning of the year they would have a kind of multidisciplinary meeting with the support agencies working within the school, sitting down with the senior management of the school to look at those who are going into their final year, what do we have to do to help this child achieve, setting targets looking at flexibility within the timetable and what subjects is this child likely to achieve in. [EWO]

The value of extra-agency involvement was highlighted by a principal from the AE sector who claimed that such collaborations were essential in his school and cited the example of optometry services by claiming that although some of his pupils '*can't see anything*', many have '*never had glasses*'. However, this source cautioned against the over-use of other agencies being involved with the children who are experiencing learning adversity because '*it isn't always the answer*'.

It stigmatises them, it makes them feel things are getting beyond them; they're going out of control ... there should be an advocacy agency instead of social services for children with these particular types of needs. [AEP principal]

The provision of new and improved school buildings and learning facilities

According to the data, new and improved school buildings and facilities in Duncairn have a positive effect on the aspirations and attainment levels of local young people.

To me, the 3 things that have really helped ... the vocational courses, and then the second thing would be the Full Service school, and the third thing is the new building. [Principal]

The building is amazing, I couldn't imagine teaching in a school that didn't have an interactive white-board; it makes such a difference to the learning of the children. [Teacher]

The consensus here was that the provision of new school buildings and facilities has: made an *'unbelievable'* and *'absolutely brilliant'* transformation to the learning environment; and encourages pupils to be proud of their school because they were part of the design.

There is not any vandalism ... there isn't a mark and it's because the kids are proud of it. The old school was falling down and there was graffiti everywhere, toilets and all; and I'll be honest with you, it was so bad it didn't make it any worse. [Principal]

We have a hair and beauty salon here which is better than anything in Belfast and an electronic village hall for the computers. It makes it more 'real life' and the class results are brilliant, for example the CACHE results last year ... the A level results were, we had 33 in for it and we had 33 A*-C. [Principal]

Current economic climate

As will be apparent in further sections, the current economic climate has created significant hardship for many working-class families in Duncairn, particularly, in terms of cuts to public services and a contraction in the local labour market. However, a small number of school-based respondents argued that the dearth of employment opportunities has convinced many local young people to apply themselves more at school and to remain in education beyond the age of 16. One principal claimed that *'because there are no jobs ... the downturn in the economic climate has actually worked to our advantage'*. Moreover, these views were reinforced by a grammar school principal who highlighted that an increasing number of students are opting to stay on into 6th year.

We have never had as much focus; never had as much drive. [Principal]

We are taking far more girls into sixth form ... last year there was 64 of them doing A levels and 50% of them were getting 3 C's or better at A level now that's not bad for A level ... For us that was unheard of before. They are role models for the ones coming behind. [Principal]

Additional resources for schools

In terms of sustaining these raised expectations, a vice principal argued that when additional resources are made available to schools, these extra funds allow for an increased provision of smaller classes, particularly, for English and Maths. This, she further claimed, enables the development of more appropriate support frameworks for those children with literacy and numeracy deficits. Further funds have been allocated to schools in the area through several government initiatives. For example, the OFMDFM Delivering Social Change Signature Project involves the employment of 230 teachers (some within primary and post-primary schools that serve North Belfast) on a two-year basis to deliver tuition and support to children who are struggling to achieve required levels in literacy and numeracy (a £12 million investment). Belfast Boys's Model School was also part of the Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry/Bright Futures Programme, a programme to tackle underachievement in the targeted areas. The total budget for all schools funded under Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry was £720,000 per annum. Lastly, several schools that serve young people from Duncairn have been granted 'Specialist School' status in recent years. Schools were designated as specialist for a period of 4 years and received £100 per pupil in each of the 4 years to support the implementation of the school and community development plans and up

to £75,000 support grant to add to the £25,000 sponsorship raised to enhance provision in the specialist area. In 2006, Belfast Model School for Girls and Glengormley High School were designated as specialist for ICT, and in 2007, Hazelwood Integrated College was designated as specialist in the arts.

5.4 Meso-level drivers of attainment in Duncairn

In terms of school-level factors (conceptualised here as bridging social capital), i.e. their engagement, (horizontal) accessibility, and innovation, the following seven key drivers were identified: effective school-parent engagement; communication and support structures; flexible curricula, vocational placements and alternative measures of success; stricter school regimes (discipline and high expectations); committed and empathetic teachers; effective school-community links; support during transition(s); and effective SEN provision and problem behaviour management.

Effective school-parent engagement, communication and support structures
Both the community-level and school-level data confirm that effective engagement, communication and support structures between schools and parents is an important driver of academic success in the Duncairn Ward. Several local parents claimed that they frequently communicate with schools, particularly around homework, attendance and *'whenever they get into trouble'*. By and large, these parents felt comfortable speaking to school personnel on the phone or attending the school in person; and, commonly reported that teachers were helpful and understanding during such interactions. Homework was seen as the most common method of communication and normally entailed: establishing exactly what is required of the young person; ascertaining what reading level the child is at; and finding out if they are applying themselves and reaching their targets. Similarly, it was frequently claimed that regular communication between schools and homes was essential to ensure that a young person's attendance levels *'doesn't drop without anybody knowing'*.

The Extended Schools programmes offered in some schools were seen as: a further important way parents and schools communicate with each other; and a valuable source of support for struggling young people and parents. Several respondents identified that such programmes, typically: were less intimidating than visiting the school during school hours even though it was '*the same teachers and the same building'*; gave young people who perhaps don't have adequate parental support the extra help they need; and furnished parents with the skill sets they require to better support their child's education. These claims were supported by an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) based in the Duncairn area.

There's an awful lot of support in the Boy's and Girl's Model (schools), particularly, their Extended Schools projects. [EWO]

Primary schools in North Belfast receive approximately £20k per annum in Extended School funding, and post-primary schools receive approximately £40-50k per annum. The Department of Education also funds a 'Full Service Extended Schools' programme in North Belfast, which aims to address the real and specific needs of learners, their families and the local communities. 'Full Service Extended Schools' is located at the Belfast Boys' Model School and the Belfast Model School for Girls, with a project board managed by BELB; the focus is on working with families of learners of post-primary age, while at the same time, strengthening the links with the children and families of primary schools. Several other respondents also recognised this change of attitude and suggested that recent attempts by schools to become more involved in the community have created lines of communication which, it was claimed, did not exist previously. For example, it was reported that it is becoming increasingly common for '*ordinary people'* to be elected onto schools' boards of governors; and that, as a consequence, *'ordinary families'* are now more aware of curriculum content and contemporary teaching methods.

There are people from a community background that are getting onto that type of role ... there's more community buy-in into a school; there's more community interaction; and (ordinary people who join the) Board of Governors have a big input on a curriculum of a school ... and how teachers teach. [Community worker]

However, it is also clear from the data that schools serving young people from the Duncairn Ward are aware that a perception exists among some parents that schools are distant and that, often as a result of their own adverse experience of education, many parents find it difficult to engage with schools. Across the school-level respondents, there was broad agreement that: many parents have significant difficulties with English, reading, and their own essential skills; these deficits can have a detrimental impact on their children's academic achievement; and that it was incumbent on schools to empower parents to overcome any difficulties they may have. It was frequently claimed that such parents, commonly have low levels of self-esteem and confidence and are often reluctant to seek outside help because '*they feel they are not smart enough*'. Notwithstanding the, often, negative prior experience of these parents, several principals and teachers argued that schools are uniquely placed to provide support for these individuals. Many current teachers taught most of the parents when they were at school and thus, it was claimed, it was possible to build good relationships with them.

The other teachers here are all long-term ... there are younger teachers, but the four senior teachers have been here 16+ years ... so that is really settling. To me, the key to working in any area like this is relationships. [Principal]

Of course, this view highlights something of a mismatch between the schools' and the community's perceptions of the nature and impact of these historic relationships between teachers and parents. It was also suggested that the most effective way of building such relationships and addressing any essential skills deficits in parents was the provision of parent classes as part of wider Full Service programmes. Unsurprisingly, it was commonly reported that it is no mean feat recruiting participants who themselves have had a very unhappy experience of school. Principals spoke about patiently encouraging those hard-to-reach families and making sure the programmes were as accessible as possible.

So, whenever I took the classes, I sold it to them by saying "look, it's only me" and then they go "oh that's OK, then I'll come" ... I will say to people "bring your friend. If you need somebody to walk through the doors with you ... that's not a problem". [Principal]

A few teenage mums to come to mothers and toddlers ... but you have to be very proactive. It is easier with me having taught them ... some of the mummies will come and give me a hug and I'll say, "come on, you have to come to this course". [Principal]

It was also reported by one principal that these interventions have engendered '*some spectacular successes*'. For example, '*a mother who just wasn't coping at all*' and who was '*dependent on medication ... and had mental health issues ... actually ending up coming into school*' and completed her GCSEs. According to these school-level respondents, other important aspects of improving the links between parents and schools were: the adequate provision of Family Link Coordinators; home visits being made to every Year 8 family during the summer holidays; Family Welcome evenings; and the '*vital work*' undertaken by attendance officers. Several teachers highlighted the import role of attendance officers in: '*making connections with hard to reach parents*'; engaging with those (predominantly boys) '*whose attendance is drifting off*'; and addressing their truancy before it becomes '*embedded and serious*'. Such a role, it was further argued, acts as a critical conduit between schools and families, particularly, in situations where school-home links are weak. Another principal outlined the special relationship their attendance officer has with local parents.

She is a person who can make connections and is very skilled. She is from the local area, way back years ago she was the cleaner in the school. She is like their auntie. She can

literally get in the door ... a teacher coming out to the house would really not get over threshold. Our school attendance has gone up year on year for six years now. [Principal]

Flexible curricula, vocational placements and alternative measures of success

A second meso-level driver of educational attainment in the Duncairn Ward is the increasing willingness of local schools to: adopt flexible curricula; provide a range of vocational placements; and to develop alternative measures of success. As will be highlighted in further sections, there is a nascent positive change in attitude amongst many young people in Duncairn in terms of how they view and value education. Moreover, it would appear this shift in young peoples' perceptions is mirrored by a more flexible approach on the part of their schools. The consensus among school-level respondents was that: achievement is now based on a wider range of developmental competencies; all pupils are encouraged to achieve something; trajectories of effort and progress are increasingly used as alternative measures of success; there is, in several schools, a desire to widen the provision of vocational opportunities; and that it is important to recognise the different learning motivations of male and female students.

In terms of curricular content, several principals and teachers spoke about the need to design broad and diverse curricula so that it was possible to *'find a niche for everybody'*. Other school-level respondents posited that it was important to ensure that no child, irrespective of their home environment or community circumstances, leaves school with nothing to show for their time there. For example, it was commonly reported that '*it doesn't matter what subject, as long as they achieve in something'*. Similarly, a senior teacher from the AE sector claimed that for many young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, *'even getting one GCSE is amazing'*. While this same source conceded that the primary focus is on academic achievement, he also felt that schools have to address other skills such as interaction with their peers and teaching them to access learning.

It cannot run alone ... it has to run parallel to addressing adverse conditions. It's not all about measuring attainment. Our job is to get them ready and willing to learn and we are good at that. [Senior AE teacher]

The value of a more flexible approach was also reflected in the community-level data. Community workers, residents, parents, recent school leavers aged 18-21, and EWOs, agreed that, historically, schools have tended to *'too rigidly'* stick to the curriculum. This, it was claimed by one parent, meant that if a young person was not academically minded, they were simply *'forgotten about'*. Another parent argued that, irrespective of academic capacity, schools should actively address young peoples' future employment prospects.

I know every child maybe doesn't have it mentally, like my own son wouldn't have but he was great with his hands. If they had took him aside and taught him another skill or ... painting and decorating ... somebody might say "give this lad here a job". [Parent]

Several other parents argued that *'the curriculum needs to be looked at again'*; and that *'underachievers need to be given different opportunities in life'.* However, some of the barriers to a more flexible curriculum were highlighted in a focus group of EWOs. These respondents claimed that although some schools have used the enhanced curriculum as an opportunity to allow flexibility, other schools feel compelled to adhere to attainment targets. And, as a result, many young people '*lose out'*.

Some schools are prepared to kind of put their neck on the line a wee bit and actually break the rules. But, there is a lot of pressure on schools to meet attainment targets ... set by the government ... but they're not really child centred, so sometimes the children are suffering because schools are so busy trying to reach these targets that are supposedly meant to be for the benefit of the child but actually aren't really. [EWO]

The most obvious example of a flexible curriculum, according to parents and residents, is when schools provide vocational placements for pupils in their last year or two of school. These opportunities, it was further claimed, allow young people to develop themselves and utilise their talents, because *'they've got skills that are not being tapped into'*. One resident argued that such initiatives *'give people grounding and create a stepping stone for a lot of people'*. It was also frequently claimed that many 14 and 15-year olds have already *'given up'* on schooling by this stage and there seemed little point in them going to school just to turn up. These views were reinforced by a recent school leaver from the Alternative Education sector who got the opportunity to do a placement one day a week at a garage.

Last year in my school whenever I went to the secondary education place, I was put in school 4 days a week and working on Friday so we got into more of the world of work, but if I was in school, I would've been stuck in school 5 days a week. [Young male aged 18-21]

It was also argued by several school-based respondents that there was a need to recognise variations in inter-gender learning motives because *'girls study because they are told to'* and *'boys study because they need to'*. This dichotomy, according to one senior teacher means that boys are, commonly, more selective when it comes to directing their attention and energy and are likely to say, "*so what part do I need of this?'* and *if I don't need it, I won't do it"*. While it was accepted that, previously, many schools would have concentrated on English literature or additional Maths; several teachers and principals claimed that many boys found it difficult to be engaged by these *'very academic type subjects'*.

This wasn't for every boy; they couldn't see the relevance of Shakespeare ... if a boy doesn't see why it's relevant he doesn't see why he should work at it. I think it is a grouping that is affected more by that than any other grouping. [Vice principal]

The under-achievement of Protestant working class boys, which was a central theme in Dawn Purvis' (2012) 'Call to Action', was also addressed by many principals and teachers. Here, it was suggested that this group, commonly: don't always see things in *'big pictures';* have very few role models of employment; and that for these reasons, it was important to give them *'bite-size'* attainment targets.

You need to keep putting the carrot in bite sizes in front of them, you put it too far away, boys from that background can't do the tracking ... they can't see the relevance in it. If you talk about what to do after University, they don't get it. [Vice principal]

In terms of trying to foster higher levels of enthusiasm amongst low-achieving girls from Duncairn, several principals and teachers spoke about a need for a broader range of occupational studies to ensure that *'the weakest band'* or those whose *'strengths are in the practical'* can still attain *'their 5 GCSEs'* and thus access pathways to further education or work. In a similar vein, another principal claimed that: some girls are particularly motivated by vocational options such as music technology; some *'fantastic results with the performing arts'* have been achieved; such courses provide a route into 3rd level education or employment; and that teachers were able to encourage ones who showed interest in such activities by saying *'look ... this is the sort of thing you'll be doing when you leave school'.*

Stricter school regimes (discipline and high expectations)
A range of views were expressed, particularly in the community-level data, around the issue of discipline and the levels of expectation schools which serve the Duncairn Ward have for their pupils. There was fairly broad agreement around two propositions: firstly, that, historically, the schools attended by young people in Duncairn had poor standards of discipline, i.e. rowdy classes and teachers with no control over their pupils; but that in recent years, something of a *'sea-change'* has occurred and stricter school regimes are now in place. Secondly, it was similarly reported that previously these schools would have had low or no expectations for many of their pupils; but that now, they expect every young person to

leave school with *'something ... even if it's not a bunch of GCSEs'.* There was a clear consensus among residents and parents that these stricter discipline regimes in schools have had a positive impact on children's behaviour and academic performance. A focus group of local parents spoke at length about the importance of: wearing a proper school uniform; children knowing that *'gobbing-off'* to teachers is *'unacceptable and won't go unchallenged'*; and following through on punishments because *'they have got to know there is a consequence for messing about'*. It was also felt that there seems to be a new wave of principals in the local primary and secondary schools that are determined to *'shake things up'* in terms of acceptable levels of behaviour and dress code. The general view was that these stricter regimes: encourage young people to take school more seriously; improve their self-esteem; and raise their ambition levels. These views were supported by an Educational Welfare Officer who recalled the transformative impact of a *'new regime'*.

A new principal came in from outside of Belfast and said "no, these boys need to have a bit of pride in their school and in themselves and a bit of belief". The parents were totally 100% behind him. They were glad now that someone is telling their child that you're worthy of wearing a blazer and a tie rather than a sweat top and a pair of jogging bottoms and started to say "no, you are capable of achieving higher results". [EWO]

In terms of expectations on the part of local schools, several principals and teachers claimed that it was important that schools were guided by cultures and philosophies which engender self-belief.

You only leave when you've got qualifications; nobody leaves here without a GCSE; there is nothing inevitable about whether or not you succeed; and that while schools like Methodist College and the Royal Belfast Academical Institution make doctors and lawyers out of the sons of doctors and lawyers ... our school makes doctors and lawyers out of the sons of shipyard workers. [Principal]

The philosophy of this school has always been that success is available for all. [Principal]

It was also suggested that another highly effective way of enthusing young people was to show them what previous cohorts have achieved. The consensus here was that *'success breeds success'* and that if *'a year group go through very successfully'*, and these successes are communicated, *'the year coming up behind'* develop *'a can-do attitude'*.

"This is what they achieved and you are going to beat that", that kind of role model. That kind of marker ... that success is attainable. Once the bar is raised ... they all become more confident ... before, they didn't think they could do it. [Principal]

Other school-level respondents agreed that the raising of expectations, in addition to a more flexible approach on the part of the schools, has engendered a similar rise in GCSE attainment levels and the number of pupils staying on into 5th and 6th form. For example, a non-grammar school principal spoke about girls in 4th form who find Maths difficult being given the opportunity to re-sit their GCSE again because *'Maths is so important to them when looking for any job'*. Other principals claimed that *'year on year ... our GCSE results have gone up'*; and that far more students are opting to come back to sixth form.

In 2002, we had a very small sixth form and when the girls left here, they were lost to education, didn't want to do any more education, so we thought, "let's keep them interested" we now have 145 in Year 12 and 130 want to stay on ... in a grammar school, that's normal but for us that's unheard of. [Principal]

Many parents believe a transformation has taken place in terms of the expectations schools have, particularly, for students who may have *'struggled in the past'*. The consensus here was that schools now seem more determined to ensure that: nobody leaves with nothing; high-ability students get the chance to excel; and that GCSEs, A Levels and college are now viable options for a wider range of working class pupils.

Committed and empathetic teachers

The data reveal a broad consensus that for schools to make a meaningful contribution to the raising of attainment levels it was critical that the teaching staff were both committed to this aim and empathetic towards the young people in their care. Principals and teachers spoke about: the need for the *'right type people'* to be properly trained and encouraged into the profession; the need for a non-hierarchical structure in schools, i.e. recognition that *'if you are a teacher, you can't do your job without the classroom assistants or technicians'*; and the need for teachers to develop a *'thick skin'.*

Teacher training has come a long way, I think it is vastly improved, but I do think that some teachers are born; some teachers are created because they want a good salary and they want good holidays; and they are not the right type of people to be teaching. [AEP principal]

If you're going to be offended by a child not melting at your every word, falling into your feet, then don't be a teacher ... those days are long gone. [Principal]

Levels of commitment and empathy among teachers were also highlighted by parents and residents, several of whom contrasted their own experiences at school with the friendlier attitudes within contemporary classrooms. This attitudinal change, according to one EWO, is because schools are now more aware of family and community circumstances.

Some schools just see the child in school rather than seeing what is going on in their homes ... sometimes maybe a teacher has gone out to the home and they're often quite shocked when they realise, and they'll say "God, when I think now what that young person is going through" ... having been out to their house ... it's an eye opener to them. [EWO]

Similarly, it was suggested by other EWOs that the new generation of teachers are more cognisant of body confidence issues amongst their pupils and are thus less inclined to, for example, *'make people ... do gym'* who don't want to. This was seen as particularly relevant to *'lots of girls ... of a certain age'* and some boys who *'feel the same way'.*

There would be some boys who would be the exact same, whereas they would be quite flexible and they would let them come and help the teacher or they would let them use the timer and stuff, which keeps them involved but they don't have to actually do it. [EWO]

In a focus group of recent school leavers aged 18-21, two further examples of pupils responding positively to empathetic teachers were highlighted. The first relates to a young male who regularly took panic attacks having a teacher who was also his counsellor who *'went out of his way'* to help this person secure a place at college.

Ah, he was great ... only for him ... I wouldn't have gone. [Young male aged 18-21]

Another recent school leaver, who claimed he *'hated'* all the other classes, recalled a Religious Education (RE) teacher who *'was the only one who didn't go on at me'.*

I was top of my class in RE; that was the only class I was ever top in ... my teacher was a full-on Christian, I was atheist and I got top marks in every single exam I ever done in RE. [Young male aged 18-21]

In terms of engendering commitment and empathy, several principals and teachers spoke about the importance of a settled staff team where turnover is negligible and younger members of staff don't want to leave. Similarly, other respondents highlighted the value of having the *'same principal for 13 years'*, teachers who are ex-pupils and the sense consistency thus created. It was also suggested that teachers need to win the trust of pupils and do everything they can to maintain this trust, because, as one principal from the AEP sector pointed out, if the trust that pupils have for their teacher is lost, it is, often, lost forever.

I always tell the staff in here, "You will only get one shot at letting one of these kids down, you'll never be able to do it again because they'll never, ever trust you to get to the point where they're relying on you again, and it can take you years to undo that betrayal". So, the staff have had to learn, number one, to not make promises they can't keep, but also, if

they're going to do something for a child that is in their eyes almost trivial, so, right, "I will get you a new dinner ticket for today, you've lost your dinner ticket, that's OK", but if you don't do it, that child will not come and ask twice, they just won't have any dinner. [AEP principal]

Effective school-community links

The relationship between schools and the wider community is increasingly viewed as equally important as the relationships between schools and parents (Molina, 2013). Moreover, this relationship is seen as particularly significant for young people with inadequate levels of parental support (Epstein, 2013). In the more local context of Duncairn, it is clear from the data that principals and teachers feel that effective school-community links are critical in terms of enabling academic success. There was a consensus amongst these respondents that the two most important aspects of this relationship were around: the community's participation in Extended Schools / Full Service' programmes; and schools engaging with local community organisations in multi-agency approaches.

It is clear that many people in the Duncairn Ward have responded positively to Extended Schools / Full Service programmes. Several principals and teachers spoke about having *'no problem'* recruiting participants for these initiatives, particularly, those which encompass English and Maths classes after school. Indeed, one principal claimed that *'we don't call them extra class we call them free tuition'* because, he concluded, *'everyone is looking for free tuition'*. Another principal suggested that such programmes enable schools to concentrate on those pupils who need extra support and have a positive impact on attendance. One of the most important aspects of these programmes, it was argued, was the '*equalising effect'* these interventions have between pupils who have *'fantastic support at home'* and other young people who have no place to study, no help at home and no family history of doing exams*.

We get the whole social strata ... many are helped with work, pushed on. Others are just as intelligent but have 'negative support'. Full Service acts as parents for them and tries to give them the same support as if they had a supportive household. [Principal]

Since Full Service was established in this school in 2007, attendance has increased from 86% to 89%. [Vice principal]

The second important aspect of improved relationships between schools and communities was the creation of a range of other linkages and collaborative practices with community based groups and agencies such as Save the Children, SureStart, Duncairn Health Partnership, Newlodge Arts, and Small Steps. One principal claimed that her school would regularly *'link in with a lot of local community organisations'* and further argued that '*the more we work with'* the local community, the more *'the message about the value of education and need for qualifications will be spread'*. This same source highlighted the Families and Schools Together (FAST) programme as an example of successful community engagement.

Twenty-nine local families participated ... .and the feedback from the community was brilliant ... we need to reach out into the community but we do get a lot back from them ... they are very supportive. [Principal]

Support during transition(s)

A further driver of academic attainment in the Duncairn Ward is when young people are properly supported during (primary to post-primary) transition. Previous academic studies (e.g. Topping, 2011;[28] Midgley et al., 1989)[29] have consistently shown that this is, commonly,

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[28] Topping, K. (2011). 'Primary-secondary transition: Differences between teachers' and children's perceptions'. *Improving schools,* 14: 268

[29] Midgley, C., Feldlaufer, H., & Eccles, J. S. (1989). 'Student/teacher relations and attitudes toward Mathematics before and after the transition to junior high school'. *Child Development* 60: 981–992.

a very difficult period for young people, particularly those who lack confidence. Many principals and teachers spoke about the support mechanisms they have in place to limit any anxiety felt by those going from P7 to secondary school. Mention was made of: transition teachers who work in feeder primary schools in North and West Belfast'; and needs-led programmes which focus on individual, small group and whole class support in literacy, numeracy and ICT. The role of peer mediators was seen as a vital part of transition programmes because they: *'work very closely with our Year 8 intake'*; meet new intakes in the summer holidays before they start; and continue this support by being present in form classes each morning. One primary school principal highlighted the value of transition visits and recalled a conversation with a young boy who told her that "*visits to the big school teach us about feeling confiden*".

The Boys Model and the Girls Model are very attractive with the new buildings. The children were there yesterday and seem very excited about going back again. [Principal]

Of course, transition is likely to present additional challenges for young people who attend AEP schools. A principal from the AE sector argued that *'if they're coming from a special school environment it's usually a very good handover'* because *'it's more soft outcomes rather than academic outcomes'.* However, the same source contrasted this with mainstream handovers where it would more likely be *'hit and miss'* because many of these young people will have had a *'problematic exit'* and may only have been at school one or two days a week for 18 months and not achieved very much. Primary school principals and teachers also highlighted the issue of transition from nursery to P1. Here, it was suggested that if the nursery is part of the school, the transition process is *'all very straightforward'.*

We have a playgroup in-house ... our toddlers graduate into our playgroup and our playgroup would graduate into P1. So, they would be quite integrated into school life; use the same toilets as the P1s. It means our P1 transition is extremely smooth. [Principal]

The transition from single sex schools to mixed sex 6th form was also highlighted by two principals who spoke about a consortium arrangement between the Boys and Girls Models. This entails a totally joint 6th form and Full Service project which, it was claimed, prepares young people for life in mixed environments, such as, further education, or University. Moreover, the idea of bringing pupils from single sex schools together at 6th form was supported by another principal who argued that: it's better to wait until sixth year to do it because then they are mature enough; and that joint classes bring an added dimension to sixth form.

Effective SEN provision and 'problem behaviour' management
Although many issues related to the provision of support for pupils with SEN are more fully examined in the inhibitors sections, it is worth mentioning here that several parents with SEN children and a recent school leaver who during his time at school required additional help claimed that: appropriate and consistent support was provided; and that '*the schools here are great'* in terms of coming up with solutions and communicating these solutions to parents and other interested parties. The same young school leaver also said that his own education needs were met when his parent asked and he was relocated to a school with a classroom size he *'felt a lot better in'.* Similarly, although the issue of disruptive classmates is later examined as a further inhibitor, several community-level respondents identified successful interventions around rowdy and disruptive pupils. A number of parents highlighted a student development scheme which aimed to address behavioural problems, particularly, those which impacted on the rest of the class. This intervention was seen by local parents in Duncairn as successful and well-attended.

The one in the [named secondary school] ... there were schemes and mechanisms there for them ... many people availed of them. [Parent]

5.5 Micro-level drivers of attainment in Duncairn

In terms of bonding social capital, i.e. the factors which encompass a community's levels of empowerment, infrastructure and connectedness, four key drivers were identified around the issues of: parental support and a stable home environment; individual resilience and the notion of education as a means to leave the community; community and youth work interventions; and student cognisance of the value of education and career pathways.

Parental support and a stable home environment
The role of parents and other home-based influences in a young person's academic development have long been regular foci of education research (e.g. Desforges, 2003)[30]. These studies have explicitly and consistently demonstrated: the positive impact of parental support (Hands, 2013)[31]; and that a stable home environment is the setting most conducive to academic achievement (Epstein, 2013)[32]. According to the Duncairn Ward data, it is clear that parental support is seen as a critical factor in the educational development of local young people. Focus groups with community workers, Educational Welfare Officers (EWO's), parents, residents and young people who themselves had recently left school reported that the most important aspects of this support were: firstly, parents instilling in their children the value of education and a belief that they can achieve something which will help them in later life; and secondly, parents ensuring their child gets their homework done, gets to school on time every day, and behave themselves when they get there. While it was conceded that trying to enthuse local young people to apply themselves at school was often something of a challenge given that there appeared to be a real shortage of employment opportunities, the general view amongst these respondents was that the children who receive the most parental support are the ones who are most likely to succeed at school.

Similarly, several parents spoke about the importance of laying down the law when it came to ensuring that homework was being done on time and to the required standard. Many of these respondents claimed that parental support was just being a good parent and argued that if a high standard of behaviour is set in the home, young people will adopt a similar standard when they are in school. A stable home environment was also seen as an important driver of young people's academic development. According to residents and community workers, in such an environment: children go to bed at the proper time; they are *'always clean'*, fed, and well-rested when they set off for school; and they don't live in *'a party house'* or routinely witness drug and alcohol abuse. These views were supported in a focus group of local parents who claimed that the most important thing was to ensure young people went to bed at a reasonable hour and got up in the morning when they were told and, thus, have ample time to prepare for the school day. Several respondents posited that having both parents in the house was the optimal arrangement; and that the presence of a father-figure gave young boys in particular someone in the house to keep them out of trouble. However, it was also intimated that many single-parent households provided a more stable home environment in comparison to *'chaotic homes where mum and dad are fighting all the time'.* More broadly, it was felt that the critical features of a stable home were regular mealtimes, regular bedtimes*,* and a loving, caring, calm atmosphere.

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[30] Desforges, C. (2003). The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment. A literature review. DfES Research Report 433. London. Department for Education and Skills.

[31] Hands, C. (2013). Including all families in education - school district-level efforts to promote parent engagement in Ontario, Canada. Teaching Education, 24:2, 134-149.

[32] Epstein, J. L. (2013). Ready or not? Preparing future educators for school, family, and community partnerships. Teaching Education, 24:2, 115-118.

Individual resilience and the notion of education as a means to leave the community
A further driver of academic attainment in the Duncairn Ward relates to the individual resilience of certain young people who, despite a range of diverse disadvantages, achieve educational success. A principal from the AE sector spoke about some children being more resilient than others and contrasted the unstinting fortitude of some of his pupils with his own children. Similarly, a primary school principal recalled that she was particularly impressed with the strength of character shown by two pupils around the transfer test.

What some of them live in and put up with, I don't know how they do it. I mean, if I run out of milk my kids have a melt-down in the morning, but it's all relative. These kids, that doesn't even enter their radar. [AEP principal]

We have one girl went to grammar last year and one this year, we are hoping. I have never seen such strength of character, in both of them. They are just so determined. [Principal]

The individual motivation of young people as driver of academic success in Duncairn was also highlighted by respondents who spoke about a certain drive, which pushes them to try hard at school. One recent high-achieving school leaver categorised one set of young people who *'think they just to go school and get everything handed to them'*; and another set who took the view that *'if you don't try ... you don't get it'* adding that *'it's as simple as that'.*

Several other residents, however, suggested that what really motivates young people in areas such as Tigers Bay is the prospect that success at school may give them the chance to *'get away'* from *'this community crisis going on round them'*. A number of other residents claimed that *'most people round here have lived here most of their lives'* and that *'if you ever need any help there's always people there to help you'*. However, other residents spoke about many '*decent people'* who go out to their work and *'look after their family ... who'd love to move away'* but can't. A high achieving recent school leaver who said she didn't want to talk the place down had a different view and thought that apart from a few, most people in Tiger's Bay *'tend to be like wee home birds'* who were reluctant to *'flock from the nest'.*

I couldn't ever picture myself just leaving school, getting a job locally and I always wanted to spread my wings. [Young female aged 18-21]

As will be highlighted in the inhibitors section, the most significant barriers to individual resilience are peer dissuasion and negative influences. However, the consensus across the data was that a lot of pupils succeed against the odds; and that, commonly, these are the ones that are *'so focused'* and *'so driven'* and that *'it will not matter what their peers say ... they will go on'*. Finally, another principal highlighted an example of a young male from the Ward to make a point about the negative influences diminishing as pupils become more aware of the opportunities that are available to those who do succeed at school.

The pupils who come from Duncairn ... and I'm thinking of a family of 3 boys from very difficult family circumstances indeed – but one of them, is highly intelligent, and he was determined not to let his background hold him back. I hesitate to generalise, but as they mature, and grow beyond the very forceful influence of their neighbourhood, and as their aspirations grow and they become aware of opportunities like University and employment opportunities, then those priorities take the place of earlier ones. [Principal]

Community and youth work interventions
It was clear from the data that many local people feel that low academic achievement in Duncairn is, to a degree, connected to the presence of negative local influences and imagery (signs and symbols in the environment). It was frequently suggested that a series of positive local community and youth work interventions and activities have encouraged young people to resist such influences and instead create a new environmental aesthetic and forge improved inter-community relations. The most significant examples of these interventions relate to a youth reimaging project and the removal of interface barriers. As will be more fully examined in the section on the inhibitors to local educational attainment, the Duncairn area

continues, to be characterised by conflict-era issues and identifications. It is equally apparent that many (older) residents were directly affected by the recent conflict. For example, a local community worker claimed that most young men would have belonged to a particular paramilitary organisation; and that *'it was as normal as joining the BB (Boy's Brigade), that's how normal it was'.* Although several community workers claimed that *'things are changing'*, that a lot of progress has been made over the last number of years and that there has been a *'reduction in interface trouble'*, other residents and community workers spoke about continuing interface violence and the omnipresent influence of paramilitaries.

Across Northern Ireland, and in Belfast in particular, some of the most visible reminders of the 'Troubles' are the paramilitary murals which are especially prominent in the city's working-class areas (Kerr, 2014)[33]. In terms of social capital, such territorial demarcations are seen to reinforce the authority of dominant influences (in this context, paramilitary groups) by imposing a spectre of legitimacy which serves to perpetuate this dominance (Bourdieu, 1989)[34]. Up until recently, there were several depictions commemorating *'murdered loyalist combatants'* in the Duncairn area. One community worker spoke about young people *'kicking a ball against some of the murals'* and that *'one in particular had 19 dead faces ... on a wall'* and that *'the young kids said it was a graveyard experience'*.

They were asked to design an image that they wanted to go up to replace an image of a young guy that had died on the interface in 2000. A young popular guy, he died when a bomb he was handling exploded. It took a lot to get that mural down but it was about kids putting something back to replace that ... with positive imagery around education, community, diversity and sport. [Community worker]

It was further argued by the same community worker that: re-doing the murals gave young people a chance to define their own aspirations; that '*the aspirations of the past were hate, crime, drugs, and violence'*; but that now *'our aspirations of the future are of a better future'*. The same source also suggested that this reimaging initiative took place, primarily, because local paramilitaries had *'stepped back'*, and worked with the community to remove all of the paramilitary trappings and all territorial markings and put other art projects in its place. However, several months after this initiative, serious paramilitary feuding in the area has *'dragged the community back to the bad old days'* [community worker]. Moreover, in the wake of a recent murder attempt associated with an internal power struggle the PSNI district commander for North and West Belfast said in a Belfast telegraph interview that there was *"no justification for bringing violence ... to the streets of North Belfast";* and that *"this type of incident adds nothing to communities"* apart from *"fear, anxiety and tension"* (Belfast Telegraph, 2014).[35] Notwithstanding this latest episode of feuding, community workers claimed that *'interface incidents are down 75% within this Ward'*; new sets of relationships have been developed; and that people from Duncairn have an increased sense of mobility. However, it appears '*not everyone in the community is on-board'.*

There's been progress ... like opening that Alexander Park Peace Gate, a peace wall keeps communities apart, but a peace gate opens up that space to each other. So, it started to create a new dynamic ... not everybody signs into that, some people are scared of it; some people are opposed to it. [Community worker]

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[33] Kerr, A. (2014). *The Belfast Mural Guide,* Belfast. MSF Press.

[34] Bourdieu, P. (1989) 'Social Space and Symbolic Power', *Sociological Theory* 7: 14–25.

[35] Belfast Telegraph (Monday 13 October 2014).'UDA feud ratcheted up as rebel loyalist is shot. Three arrested including rival duo'. Available online at: http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/uda-feud-ratcheted-up-as-rebel-loyalist-is-shot-three-arrested-including-rival-duo-30527430.html

Student cognisance of value of education / career pathways

A further significant driver of educational attainment in the Duncairn Ward is students being cognisant of the value of education and having visible career pathways to work towards. This was seen by several principals as especially important for young people from Duncairn because of the low levels of aspiration and the prevailing sense of pessimism, which, it was claimed, was having a particularly negative impact on pupils from the Ward's more disadvantaged areas. However, a slightly different view was offered by several other principals and a vice principal who argued that: something of an awakening was underway which is driving many young people in Duncairn to focus on their schooling; there was a renewed value being placed on education; the visibility of career pathways was an essential factor in this attitudinal change; and that many young people are '*encouraged by the successes of recent previous cohorts*'. Another principal spoke about '*an awakening of the value and the need for qualifications*' amongst both pupils and parents which, he claimed '*we would have not had before*'. Awareness of the importance of English and Maths is also said to have increased and boys, in particular, are now very conscious that "*I need this*". That said, it was also suggested that there was still much to do in terms of countering prevailing attitudes, such as, studying and trying to succeed in education' is "*for sissys*" and is "*not cool*". Another principal argued that the role of parents in this nascent awakening is vital because up until recently many parents of year 12 children would have wondered "*why is he still at school at this age?*" And that "*he should be out getting a job*".

There was also broad agreement amongst these principals that sustaining this renewed interest in education was contingent on the visibility of viable career pathways. It was clear to many of these respondents that '*personal career planning really works*', particularly, in working class Protestant areas where, it was claimed, the culture is still very, very much aimed at employability as opposed to the value of education. To mediate this culture, a vice principal spoke about: going out into the community and getting employers to come into schools to deliver part of the curriculum; thus, putting '*real faces*' in front of young people so that they can see that it's relevant to their world*.

5.6. Macro-level inhibitors of attainment in Duncairn

The following six structural inhibitors to academic achievement were identified: legacies of the recent conflict; academic selection; the spatial detachment of schools serving Duncairn; a lack of inter-agency collaboration / disjointed provision of SEN support; demographic change / unsettled demographic patterns; and exclusion from mainstream education.

Legacies of the recent conflict

Legacies of the recent conflict were identified as a significant inhibitor of academic achievement in the Duncairn Ward. In terms of the school-level data, contrasting views were expressed around the longer-term effects of the Troubles. For example, one principal who has '*been here since the Troubles were going strong*' claimed that: the conflict has had little impact on either attainment levels or staff morale; that his school has '*been left alone really*' and '*haven't been troubled by paramilitary groups from either side*'; because '*both groups probably sense that we are doing something constructive and non-sectarian*'. However, other principals claimed the legacies of the conflict, such as extant paramilitary influence, have created a community which is '*splintered at times*', '*very fragmented*' and '*very divisive*'.

I would love to say the community is united, but they are only united when they are in here. That is the difficulty ... there is that idea of cliques ... it is hard for us to maintain a core group at anything because one weekend can change the face of the community. [Principal]

They find it very difficult to maintain relationships. Be it with their friends, their parents, their siblings, or their peers. So, there is an awful lot of conflict. [Principal]

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In the community-level data however, there was broad consensus that many people in the Duncairn area were, and continue to be, deeply affected by the 'Troubles'. Moreover, several respondents claimed that, in the broader context of North Belfast, the community endured: *'a disproportionate share of the conflict experience'*.[36] [Community worker]

That's what you done, your life was mapped ... you went to jail, you went to a graveyard, you fought on the interface. That was your limitations. [Community worker]

Some twenty years since the loyalist and republican ceasefires, a series of conflict-related factors continue to impact negatively of the lives of local young people. The data here identified six specific examples of conflict legacies which were seen as having the most detrimental effect on Duncairn's school age residents: spatial mobility restrictions; sporadic interface violence; extant paramilitary influence; insularity; ineffective political representation; and a *'local culture'* of alcohol and drugs. These six sub-themes are now examined in turn.

- *Legacy 1 - Limited spatial mobility*

Despite the fact the indices show that Duncairn is the 14th most deprived Ward in Northern Ireland (out of a total of 582), Duncairn is amongst the least deprived in the domain of 'Proximity to Services Deprivation' (547th out of 582). However, it was commonly reported that many residents of Duncairn are prevented from easily accessing important services, particularly those based in the city centre, because to do so entails transiting through the 'other' community. A range of examples were offered which indicate that *'just because something is close'* does not necessarily mean that it can be *'easily accessed'* [youth worker]. EWOs spoke about a SureStart facility on Duncairn Gardens which *'you might be right beside'* but which may not *'be in your area'*. Similarly, community workers from Tigers Bay claimed that despite the fact that the estate is '*only situated five minutes walking distance from Belfast city centre'* there was '*no safe passage'* and that *'half of them feel out of place going into town 'cause, they don't feel it's theirs'*. This sense of confinement was reinforced by two local youth workers. The first extract relates to a conversation with a young resident.

What's it like to live here? I asked him. He said, "it's living in a prison without bars; I can't walk onto the Duncairn gardens to get a bus, it's all Catholics; can't go down on the North Queen Street into town; it would take me five minutes, can't do it". He said "I've got to go back a way to find a safe bus and even then, I might get a kicking on the bus but I can't afford to take a taxi ... this is like living in a prison". [Youth worker]

They have got half a dozen streets that they can run about in, that they can say these are my streets. It's a very, very small world. But these kids feel safe there, that's the only place that they feel that. [Youth worker]

- *Legacy 2 - Interface violence*

It was also argued that, despite a significant reduction in inter-community divisions in the Duncairn Ward, sporadic violence at the interfaces, particularly during the marching season and in the aftermath of Old Firm games (Celtic versus Rangers football matches) was still a problem. This violence was seen as having two particularly corrosive consequences: firstly, the broader damage to local community relations; and secondly, that young people are drawn in to a conflict that was supposed to be over by the time many of them were born. It was also claimed that the interfaces in and around Duncairn were, at times, something of a magnet for young people from outside the area*.*

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[36] This claim of a 'disproportionate share' of the conflict experience is, to an extent, supported by "Sutton Index of Deaths: Geographical Location of the death". Conflict Archive on the Internet (CAIN) (retrieved 1 November 2014) which shows that 577 out of a total of 3530 conflict related deaths occurred in North Belfast.

A lot of them would have what I call a conflict deficit, that they felt they missed their crack at it ... they never got their go, that they think they're going to continue some war by firing a couple of stones across the interface. [Community worker]

Duncairn is occasionally a magnet for negativity which will attract young people from everywhere because it's very rarely young people from Tiger's Bay or Newlodge ... They're coming from as far away as Glengormley and the Shankhill; arranged fights and interface riots are all arranged over the social media. [Youth worker]

- *Legacy 3 - Extant paramilitary influence*

It was also reported that the extant influence of paramilitary groups has a negative impact on many young people in the Duncairn Ward. Youth and community workers claimed that paramilitaries are still recruiting members into their ranks and that some of these new recruits are *'as young as 14 or 15'*. It was also reported that *'paramilitary punishments'* are *'still happening'* and that a number of local *'young people have been badly beaten'*. Similarly, many local residents claimed the community has been held back by those *'who are still in the mind-set of the 70s'* and that it would take *'a few generations for this community to turn around'*. It was also suggested that the inter-community divisions of the conflict were being replaced by *'internal issues'*.

I don't think the Catholic/Protestant thing is really an issue any more. I just think that people in my community have seen that that's kind of resolved now and they're kind of pushing their anger elsewhere ... imploding on itself. [Male resident]

- *Legacy 4 - Insularity*

A further negative legacy of the conflict identified by community level respondents related to persistently high level of insularity among sections of the Duncairn Ward. It was accepted that in modern society, many people just *'want to live in their own wee bubble'* and that it was difficult to encourage community participation [community worker]. However, it was also conceded that, at least partially in account of the recent Troubles: communities in Duncairn tended to be *'very inward looking'* and *'very compact'*; many local young people's horizons are narrowed as they absorb these insular attitudes; and that, more broadly, residents in the Ward, particularly those with low attainment levels, *'haven't tended to venture outside'* of their own boundaries [female resident].

Aside from going to University, how do you travel outside of this community? Because that's not something that you were used to ... everybody just stayed within it and didn't venture anywhere. [Young female aged 18-21]

- *Legacy 5 - Ineffective political representation*

Several respondents also claimed that community development and post conflict transitions in Duncairn are being hindered by ineffective political representation. There was a fairly broad consensus among community level respondents that some local politicians are more concerned with conflict-era disputes than they are about the social or educational wellbeing of the Ward's residents. There were also several views expressed around: the political manipulation of working class people's *'identity issues'*; and the contrast between some unionist politicians who were seen as *'detached',* and nationalist politicians who were viewed as *'part of their community'*.

They (politicians) need communities like this. Communities like this keeps them in because nobody reads their manifestos ... They get voted in under the Union flag. [Male resident]

They are quite happy for communities like this to rot because they know when it comes to voting that they'll all go out and still vote for the unionist parties. [Female resident]

There's New Lodge there ... their MLAs live in streets with them ... everybody lives amongst each other ... It's more of a community. [Young male aged 18-21]

- *Legacy 6 - 'Local culture' of alcohol and drugs*

A further inhibitor of educational achievement in Duncairn, according to the data, is a *'local 'culture'* of alcohol and drugs. Some suggested that the genesis of this culture can be found in the conflict because during the 'Troubles' many local people turned to alcohol and/or drugs as a coping mechanism. A local youth worker claimed that the issue was *'a massive, massive problem'* and that drugs are now so accessible to young people that '*it's like going into a shop to buy a packet of fags or a packet of sweets'.* It is also clear that some school-age children in the Duncairn Ward are becoming involved in the practice of drug use, and it was alleged, their distribution. Mention was made of a *'really shocking, horrible'* incident where a young male from Tigers Bay died after *'he took some'*. Moreover, a youth worker recalled that *'only two weeks ago in the Tiger's Bay area'* two 13-year-olds were *'caught with a big bag of coke and a bag of Es'*. Similarly, a EWO claimed that many local children are also accessing prescription drugs and that this problem is increasing.

Academic Selection

According to school-level and community-level respondents, academic achievement in the Duncairn Ward is significantly inhibited by the processes of academic selection. Indeed, aside from those working in the grammar sector, there was a broad consensus amongst the principals interviewed that academic selection: firstly, labels those who fail, or who do not sit the transfer test as *'stupid'*; secondly, that if there has to be a selection process, then this should not take place at such an early age; and thirdly, that grammar schools are not contracting in line with demographic changes in the Ward and this is having a negative impact on the rolls of other secondary schools. Several principals claimed that the biggest problem with selection was that those who either fail the transfer test or don't sit it are labelled as lacking intelligence and, often, internalise this identification. One principal recalled that as part of the schools' data capture, pupils are asked about the transfer test and, invariably, respond *"oh, I was in the stupid group, I didn't do it"*; or, *"my mummy and daddy didn't want me to do it"*. It was also suggested that saying their parents dissuaded them was *'a good excuse for them'* and meant that they didn't have to admit they either failed *'or would have failed'* [primary school principal]. Another principal from the non-grammar sector argued that. At 11 years old, *'the level of maturity is just not there'*. Another principal spoke about *'seeing the damage that it does every day'*. It was further claimed by an AEP principal that selection makes *'unfounded assumptions'* around the transfer test results as reliable *'indicators of potential attainment'*.

If you're a baby and you don't sit up before you're six months, the whole world investigates why, and they try and figure it out, so there's a team of people that come together and they look at this child. And by the same token, if a child doesn't speak before it's three or whatever. And yet, whenever an eleven-year-old is tested at the transfer and gets a really poor grade, there's an assumption that it's because they are of a particular level of intelligence. [AEP principal]

It was also frequently argued that despite a decreasing proportion of Protestant school-age children in North Belfast, grammar schools are not contracting in line with these demographic changes. This, it was claimed, puts pressure on non-selective schools in two ways: firstly, falling rolls in these schools make them vulnerable to closures and amalgamations; and secondly, grammars are likely to take in pupils they wouldn't take before, and that these extra pupils would, in all likelihood, have been the *'top academic band'* in the other secondary schools. The consensus, certainly amongst the non-grammar respondents, was that: because grammars still take the numbers they always did*,* other schools are getting *'less academic pupils'* and, consequently, have lost *'all of our role models'; 'those kids could be left behind in a grammar school, whereas they would be our leaders in this school'*; many of these pupils may '*find it difficult in a grammar';* and that, as a result, these pupils could be undermined and develop confidence problems. However,

another principal conceded that it was not the fault of grammar school because *'they must take up their numbers'*.

If they have 160, they can't say we're just taking the best 120. They have to take 160, so the last ones they are taking are the ones who would have been ours before. [Principal]

The academic kids in our school are not going to be those kids in grammar schools and sometimes they are going to be left behind ... grammar schools ... are not used to teaching mixed ability children, and they are going to find it very hard, because they are expecting children to be able to do things, and that's a different sort of teaching and I think we are building up in the future for problems. [Principal]

The community-level respondents were noticeably less ambiguous and fairly unanimous in their views that academic selection labels many young people as deficient to the extent that many are simply written off. One resident likened selection to his own experiences of streaming and claimed that the only students in such a system who were *'looked after'* were the ones that were in the A and the B streams. He further argued that he was *'left to waste'* because he was put in the lower streams and that such an experience is bound to affect a young person and is likely to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The consensus among these respondents was that: grammar schools were very quick to write off young people because of the '*area that they were coming from'* [youth worker]; very few people *'from around here ... even do the test'*; and that when someone does the test *'he is one in a thousand'* because it's very unique to have *'a young person like that do well'*. [Resident]

I was the only one that sat and done the 11 plus ... The whole school closed for two days for one pupil ... to do the exam. [Young female aged 18-21]

Unsurprisingly, several school-level respondents from the grammar sector were in favour of selection. A grammar school principal contrasted the non-expensive routes to get *'a particular type of education'* in Northern Ireland with the public school system in England, *'where you have to earn this amount to get in'*. The same source also claimed that his school was proactively recruiting pupils from non-tradition grammar backgrounds.

We have staff who go out to feeder primary schools in P6 ... they went to 42 primaries and showed a DVD of the school ... that's when you are trying to say, maybe you don't come from a family which has anybody with a grammar school past; we have a lot of first-time grammar school and first-time University entrants among our pupils. [Principal]

However, it is clear that grammar sector rolls too are subject to the vagaries of parental influence. This same principal also claimed that several primary school heads commonly tell him that they *'really try'* to encourage children to apply for grammar school, but that, equally commonly, the pupils say, *'their parents aren't sure'*.

Spatial detachment of schools serving the Duncairn Ward
From the data presented in Table 5.1 (see under Local Context section) a 'bubble' chart was then created in Excel to graphically represent the distance (in miles) of schools serving young people from Duncairn from the Ward centre, and this distance was placed against the GCSE pass rate of the schools, and also to visually represent the numbers of young people enrolled in each school, both grammar (in blue) and secondary (in orange). The bubble chart below (Figure 5.4) shows the diversity of attainment levels within Duncairn - the bubbles within the chart lie both above and below the 50% pass mark (y-axis). It also shows that all the schools serving young people in the Ward are relatively far from the Ward centre (x-axis), given that the bubbles in the chart are spread widely across the x-axis. This reveals that schools are not highly visible or highly accessible to young people from the Ward – attendance perhaps requires a bus journey or more. The closest school is 1.2 miles from the Ward centre, ranging to 6.7 miles. Of all the Wards, Duncairn also has the most schools that cater for its young people – eleven in total – and there are three secondary which enrol the biggest proportions of young people from the Ward – Belfast Model School for Girls, Boys'

Model, and Hazelwood College. This also implies that there is not one post-primary school that could be considered the 'hub' or centre of the community; only Currie, the local primary/nursery school, is located at the Ward centre and could serve this role. Duncairn also has the fewest number of young people of all the ILiAD Wards who attend grammar schools, at 11.7% - this implies that the prospect of going to grammar school or mixing with peers who attend grammar school is not as open to young people from Duncairn as it is to young people from other deprived Wards.
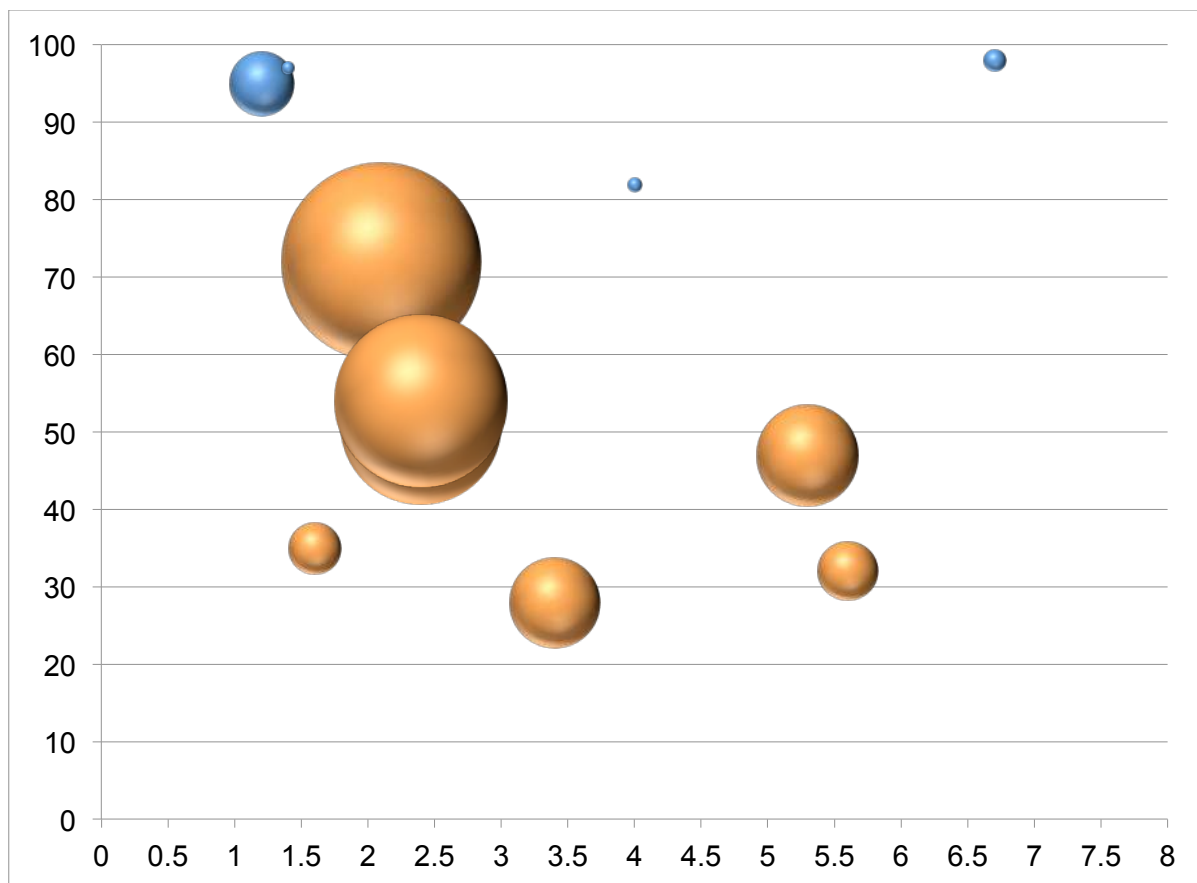
Figure 5.4: Schools in Duncairn GCSE Pass (A*-C) rates 2011 by miles from Ward centre and enrolment numbers. Blue- Grammar schools: Orange - Other

Lack of inter-agency collaboration / disjointed provision of SEN support

Across the data from the Duncairn Ward, it was frequently claimed that: a lack of inter-agency collaboration had an inhibiting effect on young people's education; and that this issue impacted disproportionately on those young people with limited parental support and/or Special Educational Needs (SEN). Several EWOs spoke about a support environment in which: it was often very difficult to get other agencies on board; Social Services don't always have the resources to appoint a social worker to attend school liaison groups or multidisciplinary meetings; and that, often, such initiatives are reduced to little more than *'a box-ticking exercise'*. The issue of staff turnover was highlighted by local EWOs and the fact that strong links built up over many years between EWOs and social workers are lost every time another *'new social worker that you've never heard of'* takes up a post. It was also claimed that ensuring adequate support is in place is made more difficult because there is a finite amount of money allocated for the provision of educational psychologists.

The school has to make the decision ... do they want the psychologist hours to be used going to this multidisciplinary meeting or assessing children? [EWO]

The issue of failing schools was highlighted in a parents' focus group where it was claimed that, despite poor attainment levels, increased rates of absenteeism, and falling rolls, no action is being taken. These parents were fairly unequivocal that, in most cases, the blame lay with those who oversee the running of schools.

It's the Belfast Education and Library Board's fault because they're bound to see what is going on; why are so much people leaving it? There's no one looking into it. [Parent]

There were also concerns around the *'disjointed'* provision of SEN support in Duncairn which local EWOs claimed was due to schools and other agencies not communicating with each other and having inconsistent SEN policies. While these EWOs agreed that some schools have in place *'really good'* support structures, other schools have taken the view that they don't want young people with SEN to return to school because *'their behaviour is too bad'*.

Schools are focused more on the children that are in school who have learning needs rather than the ones that we're trying to get into school who have behavioural difficulties. [EWO]

In a focus group of local parents, a mother with a son with SEN recalled that she *'had to fight the whole time for anything he got at school'*. She also claimed that the classroom assistant who was assigned to her son was asked to work with the whole class.

I had to fight for that every year ... to keep that in place ... when some of the teachers wanted that classroom assistant to do the whole class, I says, "Well, I fought for her". [Parent]

Another parent recalled an incident which highlights the problem of inadequate, and in this case, insensitive SEN provision. During exam time, the school put her son *'in a hall with 400 other wee lads'*. However, on account of her son's special needs, he was afforded an additional 30 minutes.

Some of those wee lads all got up and left (when their time limit had expired). Now can you picture all them wee lads all getting up and leaving, getting their school bags, the rattles of the chairs and (child's name) was still sitting there doing his exam. [Parent]

In a focus group of recent school leavers, one young person spoke about being dyslexic and *'never receiving any help all the way right up'* and was clear that the reason for this lack of support was because his primary school did not properly inform his secondary school of his condition. Another claimed that his secondary school told him they had no record of his problems because all the original copies were lost.

Demographic change / unsettled demographic patterns

According to Census statistics, demographics within Duncairn have changed considerably over the ten-year period between 2001 and 2011. This perhaps implies that the potential for positive intergenerational influence on young people and social bonding within the community is not as likely as it is in other Wards (assuming that a settled demographic pattern enhances opportunities for this to occur). Duncairn has an unsettled residential structure (assuming that a rising rented sector is indicative of a fluid / transient / unsettled residential structure) in that 21.1% of houses in Duncairn are private rentals (2011) compared with 8.9% Whiterock and 7.2% in Tullycarnet. This proportion of private rentals has more than doubled within Duncairn in the ten years between 2001 and 2011 – in 2001, the percentage of private rentals was 9.3%. Furthermore, the community structure itself has changed significantly, indicating that there is a 'new' community in Duncairn compared to 2001 – the proportion of Catholic/people who had a Catholic upbringing in the area has quadrupled, from 5.5% to 23.6%; a further 10.3% of people living in the Ward were born outside the UK and Republic of Ireland; and 5.0% were born in EU ascension countries. While this increasing diversity presents new opportunities for community invigoration and learning, this can be difficult when a community structure has changed rapidly and could be regarded as a challenge for community cohesion if meaningful integration has not occurred.

Exclusion from mainstream education

The data from Duncairn evidence widely held concerns around the growing number of young people who, for a variety of reasons, are excluded from mainstream education. There was a range contrasting views expressed around this issue. Some respondents felt that inclusion should mean that no child should be out of school, even if that means sending them to a special school. Others argued that mainstream schools should be all able to manage these children and be equipped to manage them. One principal claimed to have 52 pupils in his school who *'would have gone actually to special school's'* but their parents want them to go to mainstream school. While a principal from the AE sector spoke about a sense of stigmatisation amongst many of his pupils who commonly have: *'a heightened sense of injustice'*; and awareness that *'they're on their back foot'* and *'not on a par with their peers'*.

They're coming from a deficit as far as they're concerned, no matter how much you tell them they're not, they'll talk about mainstream kids who are better than them. [AEP principal]

It was also claimed that the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) legislation allows schools to exit children who disrupt the learning of others, thus, there is *'almost a mechanism for extracting children who were troublesome'*. However, this same source conceded that the reality is that some of these pupils *'honest to goodness, they would take schools apart'*. It was also suggested that a larger proportion of girls are been suspended or excluded from mainstream education and sent to AEPs:

If you look at the suspension and expulsion rates across the Belfast Board, and I'm sure the other boards are no different, girls are climbing right up there ... twelve years ago we would have maybe had seven or eight girls out of 200 pupils, now it is 50:50. [AEP principal]

5.7 Meso-level inhibitors of attainment in Duncairn

The school-level inhibitors of achievement in Duncairn were identified as: negative teacher attitudes and behaviour management techniques; high levels of absenteeism; perception of schools as 'detached' and class-based identifications; and inappropriate curricula.

Negative teacher attitudes and behaviour management techniques

A further inhibitor of educational attainment identified in the data relates to negative teacher attitudes and behaviour management techniques. In a focus group of recent school leavers aged 18-21, examples of negative teacher attitudes were, commonly, framed around teachers: not adequately explaining specific requirements; shouting at pupils, often, because they simply don't understand; and not doing enough to prevent rowdy or badly-behaved classmates disrupting the whole class. Similarly, other recent school leavers spoke about some teachers who, they claim: explain something *'to you once and if you don't get it, you're fucked basically'*; or '*come over and ask you what was wrong*' and when pupils say, "*I can't do that*" they just say, "*oh you know how to do it, get it done*". One of these respondents outlined the consequences of not receiving adequate instruction.

You were given a text book and you had to do it all. If you asked for help "wait 5 minutes", "wait another 5 minutes" ... at the end of the class you're screwed for the next day. You're 2 classes behind, next thing you know you're 3, 4, 5, that's it, you're half a year behind, and you're fucked. [Young male aged 18-21]

It was also frequently expressed by recent school leavers that young people *'can't stand it'* when teachers shout at them. These young people stated that the teachers with the most negative attitudes are the '*ones that don't really care about people*'; and that the reason they are *'so unfriendly'* is because they are not from the same background as most of the students. It was also regularly cited in this focus group that some teachers allow disruptive classmates to spoil the lesson for the whole class by not intervening or not doing enough to make them stop. Moreover, it was also claimed that a disproportionate amount of the

teachers' time was devoted to people that didn't want to be in the class to the detriment of those who did.

All their attention was then given to them ... why did they not help people that genuinely needed help and wanted to be there? [Young female aged 18-21]

The only way you got anywhere in the school was to be an arsehole. Anyone that basically fucked about and wrecked the place and got on like a dick got everything handed to them; got all the extra help. [Young male aged 18-21]

You are ignored ... you are not being recognised because you're quiet; the louder ones get recognised before you. [Young female aged 18-21]

In a residents' focus group, this notion of disproportionate attention was supported by a mother of two sons, one with Special Educational Needs (SEN), who recalled that the principal knew her first son because he was *'a problem'*, but had never heard of her other son because he was *'never in trouble'*.

That says it all ... he doesn't know him because he was a good kid. He worked very hard the whole way through the school ... but because you're not a child who's mad or a child who has special needs the principal doesn't know you. [Parent]

High levels of absenteeism

The eleven schools serving young people from Duncairn had an average high-absenteeism rate (defined as attendance below 85% during a school year) of 16.3% during 2012/13, ranging from 27.0% in Newtownabbey Community High to 3.5% in Campbell College (see Figure 5.5). This compares less favourably to the Catholic Wards within the ILiAD sample. Research suggests that absence tends to be higher in more disadvantaged areas where FSM provision is greatest, which in turn is likely to impact upon children's attainment levels (DENI, 2012). This is despite the Catholic Wards having the highest rates of FSM entitlement in the whole sample – again, this is evidence that the relationship between absenteeism and FSM entitlement is not perfectly aligned.
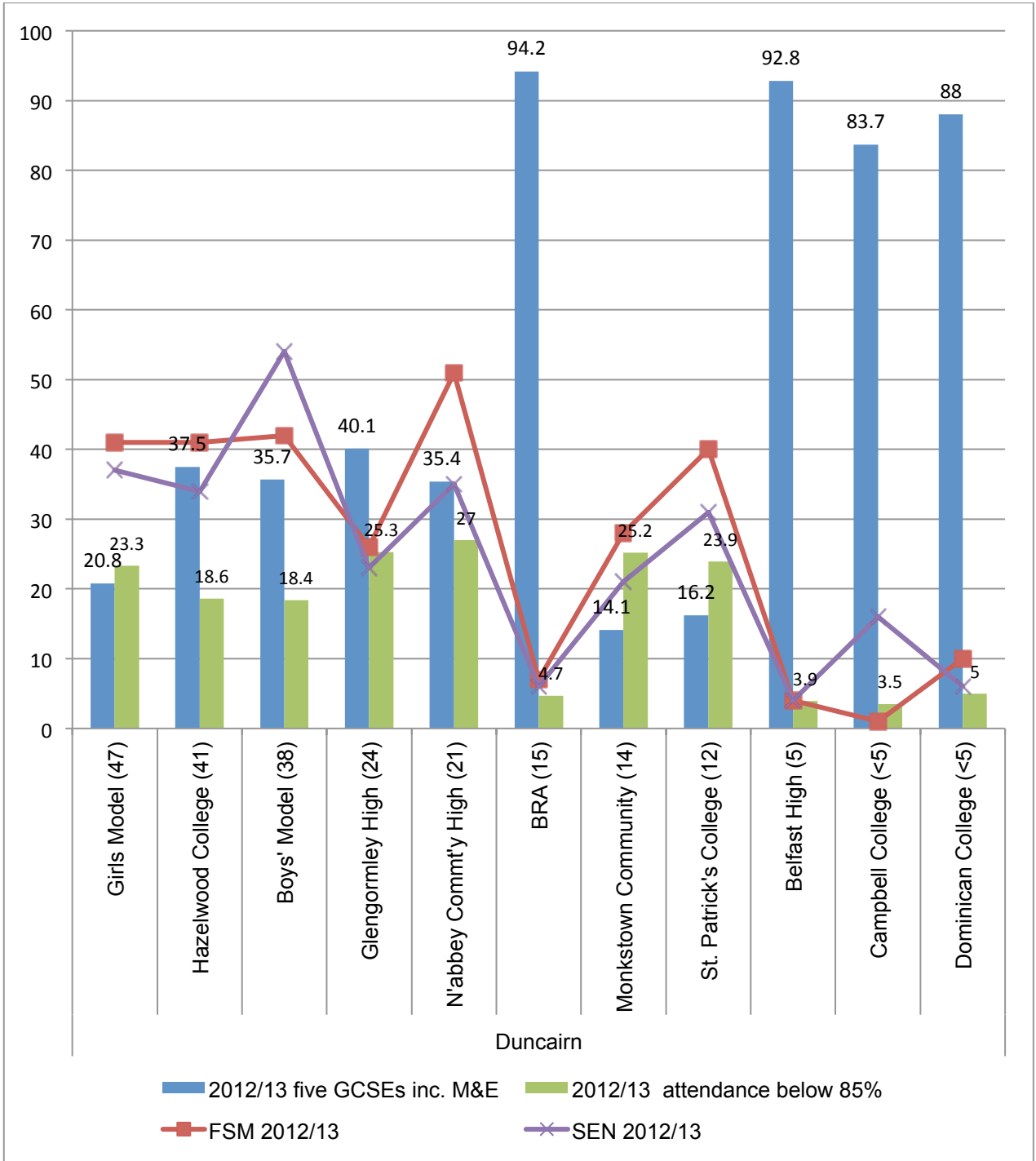
Figure 5.5: GCSE attainment, attendance, and average FSM entitlement rates – Duncairn

The results presented above suggest that absenteeism must be factored into any explanation of why Catholic Wards of high deprivation are out-performing Protestant Wards of similarly high (or lower) deprivation. However, like Whiterock, Figure 5.5 shows that there is not a completely straightforward relationship between absenteeism rates and FSM entitlement rates in Duncairn – for example, the Model School for Girls, Glengormley High, Newtownabbey Community High, Monkstown Community High and St Patrick's College all have similar high absenteeism rates, but out of these schools, both Glengormley High and Monkstown Community High have substantially lower rates of pupils entitled to FSM, and slightly lower rates of pupils with any SEN. Furthermore, Glengormley has the highest

attainment rate out of these five schools – 40.1% achieved five GCSEs including Maths and English in 2012/13; but Monkstown Community High has the lowest attainment rate out of these five schools, at 14.1%. There must therefore be other significant factors at play to explain these attainment differences between Glengormley and Monkstown. It must also be pointed out however that despite Newtownabbey Community High having the highest rate of absenteeism in the Ward and high rates of FSM entitlement and SEN in its intake, it was not far behind Glengormley in terms of its attainment rate (35.4% achieved five GCSEs including Maths and English), which points to the existence of other significant drivers of achievement within Newtownabbey Community School. Hazelwood College and Boys' Model School have almost identical rates of absenteeism, FSM entitlement, and GCSE attainment, but Boys' Model has a substantially higher rate of pupils with any SEN in its intake, indicating that there are also additional factors within Boys' Model that are having a positive influence on attainment rates.

Perception of schools as 'detached' and class-based identifications

As evidenced in the section on drivers to educational achievement, strong links between schools and families are consistently seen as having positive impact on a young person's academic progression. However, it is equally clear that in the absence of such links, many young people are inhibited from realising their full potential at school. Several parents spoke about some schools which serve the Duncairn Ward being detached from the realities of their pupils' lives, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The most frequently suggested reason for this detachment was that some teachers who work in the schools attended by young people from Duncairn: *'come from a middle-class type background'*; *'haven't endured or lived the life that these kids have lived'*; and thus *'it's totally impossible for them to relate to what's going on'* in their homes or communities. In a focus group of recent school leavers, it was claimed that it would *'not matter if they were from a nationalist background'*, but *'it would have been better if they were from a working-class area'*. Again, these responses were, commonly, framed around the contrast with the Catholic community where, it was argued, *'nearly all'* of teachers are working class*.*

Other issues raised by local parents included: parents feeling out of place when they visit schools; schools' lack of awareness of community and family circumstances; and parents being *'kept in the dark about stuff that happens'* in schools *'until it's too late'*. Amongst these local parents, there was a consensus that: schools need to do more to ensure that parents were made to feel welcome; and that proper lines of communication are put in place. An example of this communication detachment was recounted by a mother who claimed that schools rarely communicate with parents even when something *'really serious'* happens.

Like my wee girl last year in school she got into a fight with another wee girl, fist fighting and they didn't ring me to tell me about it, I found out from a friend that lives across the street who seen them fighting in the playground and I didn't know nothing about it until she rang me to tell me and I had to go up to see what was going on. [Parent]

Inappropriate curricula

It is clear from the data that many of the identified inhibitors are, to an extent, simply the flip-side of identified drivers. The issue of appropriate curricula is seen to fall into this category. Those who had earlier highlighted the benefits of a flexible curriculum were equally forthright in their views around inflexible ones; EWOs pointed to some schools' lack of willingness to be flexible in terms of subject choices; and it was also claimed that this inflexibility was *'undoubtedly'* due to the targets around pupils achieving 5 A* to C GCSEs*.*

Some of the lower ability children are taught Spanish when they're struggling with English ... so the kids start taking days off to avoid those subjects. [EWO]

As outlined earlier, the vast majority of community-level respondents argued for an increased provision of vocational opportunities. However, a far smaller proportion argued that the neglect of academic subjects was, in effect, *'masking over the problem'*. It was also claimed that the range of vocational options for girls was inadequate because *'there's only really child care or beauty'* and *'there's only so many child care jobs going'.* [Parent]

5.8 Micro level inhibitors of attainment in Duncairn

In terms of familial and immediate factors, the following four key inhibitors of academic attainment were identified: parents' lack of capacity to support their child(ren)'s education; disadvantaged home and community environments; low expectations / low self-esteem amongst some young people; and peer, familial, community dissuasion.

Parents' lack of capacity to support their child(ren)'s education
A significant inhibitor of academic achievement in the Duncairn Ward, particularly according to community-level sources, is the lack of capacity among some parents to support their child's education. It was also suggested by local community workers that, often, this problem was intensified for young people who also live in chaotic family environments. As earlier outlined, many parents in Duncairn appear both able and willing to support their children's schooling. However, it is also clear that a section of other local parents, often as a result of their own negative experiences of school, are less able to provide such support. There was a fairly broad consensus amongst local parents that *'schools are there to help and to guide'* but that '*at the end of the day'* the parents are responsible because *'it's their child and it's up to them' to push their kids'.* There was a similar consensus amongst community workers that, in the Duncairn area, some *'parents either aren't able or don't want to know'* and that inadequate parental support was the biggest problem in term of improving local attainment levels. Of course, these claims speak to wider debates around the inter-generational transmission of academic failure which is a common theme in education research (e.g. Rose and Dyer, 2006).[37] In the context of the Duncairn Ward, one EWO highlighted a local manifestation of this cyclical phenomenon and confirmed that many young people are dissuaded from education because of their parents' attitudes.

I think the attitude that their own parents have towards school and their own experiences of school and education ... and those of us who have been in the job long enough would now start to see maybe the kids of the parents that we had originally. [EWO]

The views of other respondents coalesced around: parents who felt anxious and intimidated when they had to visit or communicate with schools; the confusion caused by new teaching methods which were seen by some parents as *'very unfamiliar'*; and parents who, primarily because of their own literacy and numeracy deficits, are unable to help with homework. Some parents said that they *'hated going in [to schools] to speak to them'*, that '*it was just very awkward'*, made them feel as though they were *'back at school trying to get the words out'*. It was also suggested that some parents when they visit schools: *'get a rush of bad feeling of their previous experience'*; worry that '*they're going to come under the spotlight'*; feel that they are *'incapable of presenting themselves in a positive light on behalf of their children'*; and, as a result '*they take the easy option and they don't go'.* Other parents spoke about being put off from asking schools about new teaching methods because: *'they'd probably just waffle away to you and do nothing about it'; 'probably just look at you'* and say, *"this is the new education ... this is the way it has to be".*

In a similar vein, these parents thought that the issue of homework caused significant problems for some parents. It was argued that when a '*child comes home from school and says, mummy, daddy, can you help me with this homework',* many parents, *'out of*

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[37] Rose, P., and Dyer, C. (2006) Chronic Poverty and Education: A review of the literature. Background paper for the Second Chronic Poverty Report, London: Chronic Poverty Research Centre.

embarrassment, don't want to admit that they don't understand it'. Moreover, one respondent claimed that such parents *'come off with various excuses'* rather than admit to their children that *"I'm sorry, I can't help you because I struggled with all these things in school myself"*; or simply say *"forget about your homework, away on out to play"*. Another parent spoke about being embarrassed about her own limited literacy skills and expressed the hope that her daughter's school experience would be an infinitely happier one than her own.

You feel like an idiot! You go into the school and don't know a child's bloody homework. Half the time you don't want to go in because you're embarrassed with yourself. My number one hope is that it's going to be different for her. If they don't make her feel stupid and give her the help that she needs and just don't push her to the back of the classroom. [Parent]

The inhibiting impact of inadequate levels of parental support was also highlighted by school-level respondents whose views coalesced around: the impact of class-based disadvantages on a young person's support network; the correlation between essential skills deficits amongst parents and a child's confidence levels and subsequent academic performance; and the relationship between decreasing levels of interaction between parents and young children and an apparent deficit in early language development.

The importance of parental support was highlighted by one principal who claimed that *'20-25% of all kids learning is in school'* and that *'70-75% is at home'*. Another claimed that *'whenever you see a kid in here you can tell straight away'* which ones have home support and who doesn't. Importantly, this same source argued that middle class parents *'take it for granted'* that their child's education will be adequately supported because they themselves successfully navigated the education system, thus, it is *'easy'* for them to help their children do likewise. He then went on to contrast these favourable conditions to the more challenging circumstances of many working-class families.

You go down there in the middle of the Shankill and you see some fella who maybe had a hard time at school himself and his wife, a lovely lady but isn't educated herself they don't know how to help their kids; they just don't know. [Principal]

He also claimed that parents are constantly being told the benefits of reading to their child, but that many local parents are unable to follow this advice because *'they can hardly read themselves'.* It was also commonly reported that such essential skills deficits among some parents, in addition to disinterest in some others, can have a demoralising effect on their child in terms of their educational resilience*.*

Things can deflate their resilience that you wouldn't expect; can you imagine what it was like bringing a report home from school and you'd nobody to read it, or nobody interested? That would be very hurtful, especially if it was a really good report and you really needed somebody to say, "That's brilliant". [AEP principal]

Several other principals and teachers claimed that this lack of interaction between parents and young people extends beyond conversations around homework and school; and is, they argued, part of a wider problem of some parents not engaging with their children. Two extracts from the school-level data evidence this point and further highlight one of the most negative consequences of inadequate parent-child engagement as a deficit in young people's language development.

I don't think people appreciate the deficit in language that our children are coming into P1 with. We are very proactive about monitoring their language development because we have seen such a decrease in language coming in ... because some parents are not engaging with their children ... there's no interaction. [Principal]

That's why we have the courses, we have Incredible Years and a parent programme with Barnardos ... there isn't that interaction in language development. The expectation is there on our part that parents are doing that; it's not that they are wilfully not doing it; they just

don't know that they should be reading to their children. We would try to plug those gaps but it is very difficult when the children are not getting those opportunities. [Principal]

Disadvantaged home and community environments

The academic attainment of many young people in Duncairn is inhibited because they come from disadvantaged homes and live in difficult community environments. It is important to state on the onset of this inhibitor that the views expressed by community and school-level respondents (and this analysis of their perspectives) should not be read as reflective of typical home and community environments in the Duncairn area, but rather as a summary of the most acute examples of disadvantage in the Ward. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most vivid accounts of these challenging environments came from principals and teachers from the AE sector. These respondents highlighted that many of their students' lives are, often, characterised by: neglect; *'very poor nutrition'*; and '*very poor medical histories'* i.e. *'kids that just don't get taken for their vaccinations'*. These factors, it was argued, means that: *'all the milestones that normal, good parents see to, it just doesn't happen'*; these young people *'suddenly realise that they are different to their peers because they're not hitting the same milestones'*; and that all these factors conspire to have *'a terrible impact'* on them. It was also claimed that *'deprivation takes a variety of forms'* often '*not necessarily to do with economics'* and that, equally often, *'love is in massively short supply'*.

A lot of these kids are very unloved children as well. They can have a degree of security around them in that they have a home to go to and they've a bed to sleep in, but it might be a very dirty bed, it might be a very unhappy home, it might be a very unstable home, or it might be a home where they feel severe fear. [AEP principal]

Other (mainstream) teachers and principals thought that the key contributing factors to these difficult community and home environments were: a culture of drugs, alcohol and worklessness;[38] absent fathers; and insular community attitudes. It was claimed that the biggest difference in the community since the 1994 paramilitary ceasefires is the normalisation of *'widespread ... drug use'* and *'self-medicating'*. Moreover, several school-level respondents claimed that although many parents *'constantly ask us'* about drugs and alcohol awareness programmes, very few actually attend.

People talk about cocaine and heroin like it's normal. I'm thinking "no that's the lifestyles of the rich and famous"; I thought that was so beyond here, but with the availability ... that's the peace dividend for this community. [Senior teacher]

The issue of absent fathers was also forwarded as a key factor in some young peoples' challenging home environments. Several principals spoke about many local children having supportive mothers but absent fathers; and that this *'politically incorrect'* view was borne out in *'our statistics'*. Others highlighted that: it was very common for these young people to not understand why a parent is not there - because they left when they were very young and *'nobody's taken the time'* to explain; and that in working with some of these young people there were often *'double-edged'* complexities to mediate.

What about dad? And the mum will go, "We don't mention dad". Stories that become self-fulfilling then, you get children who have parents in the paramilitaries and then the son wants to live up to "be like my dad". So ... we have to be careful. [Principal]

It was also suggested by a senior teacher that problems in the communities were often intensified by insular attitudes. This means that young peoples' knowledge of external opportunities is limited; their social circles are narrowed; and their levels of ambition and aspiration are suppressed. Moreover, a principal recalled a conversation with a parent who

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[38] Data available from NINIS (Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service) show that the Claimant Count (the number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits) annual averages for the Duncairn Ward have increased from 7.3% in 2005 to 16.7% in 2013.

had recently arrived from Eastern Europe to demonstrate that many '*local people are suspicious*' and that '*it takes a very long time to be accepted in this area'*.

One of my Polish mummies came in to talk to me last week ... she said all the teachers are so friendly, but at the school gates no one talks to me. [Principal]

The views of these school-level respondents were supported by residents and community workers. According to these sources, many parents in Duncairn provide the safe, loving and calm environment that is known to be most conducive to a child's social, emotional and academic development. However, they also accepted that some young people in Duncairn are inhibited from realising their education potential because of chaotic family environments. Youth workers and EWOs spoke about the family home being a big factor in any child's life and that in Duncairn '*a lot of the family homes are dysfunctional'*. It was also claimed that: the realities of home life for some young people are domestic violence, mental health, suicides, '*a parent maybe in prison',* drugs and alcohol; and that there was a distinct correlation between dysfunctional households and education failure.

They weren't getting a meal made for them in the house. It said a lot for parental responsibility. [Youth worker]

The most unstable homes seem to be producing the least willing school pupils ... it would be unusual to find a child who's doing really well in school to come from a dysfunctional family. [Youth worker]

Arguably related to aspects of family dysfunctionality, the issue of mental health problems, which some respondents associated with the recent conflict, was also seen as an important inhibitor of educational attainment. One principal spoke about 15% of the school being referred to counselling for a range of issues such as physical abuse at home, social media bullying, self- harm issues, and sexuality issues. Another principal highlighted that suicides are on the increase in North Belfast, particularly, among young people. This source went on to recall that there had been another suicide '*over the holidays there*' which was '*very sad*' because '*it's the second child in a family',* both of whom were former pupils at his AE school.

Yes, we'd both boys here and the wee fella that killed himself at the weekend just left us. So, you ask yourself the questions, 'could we have we kept him? Could we have maintained him until he could maintain himself?' But these kids are choosing to leave, unless they're sectioned under the Mental Health Act, there's nothing we can do. [AEP principal]

Low expectations / low self-esteem amongst young people
Other micro-level inhibitors of attainment in Duncairn relate to the low expectations many young people have about their education and future and their equally low levels of self-esteem. One youth worker said that '*possibly 85% of young people I come into contact with'* have a negative attitude towards school. Similarly, a EWO spoke about there being no or very little aspiration amongst large sections of the community. In a residents' focus group, it was claimed that they had '*never heard of a child round here'* saying "*I want to be a fireman, a policeman or an ambulance man or doctor or nurse"*; because they think that '*when they leave school they're going to lie about and do nothing'*. It was equally clear that many respondents thought that such views mirrored the low expectations of wider sections of the Duncairn community.

It's not normal till them you know being educated ... in communities like this, it isn't normal ... what's normal in here is to run around drunk or on drugs 24/7 to go and rob places for your money, to be on the brew, you know what I mean. That's what these communities are. [Young male aged 18-21]

They can't cope in the normal society as such. Normality scares these people ... they're not fitting in because they have left school with nothing ... Normal society is about jobs and education and venturing out of a community. [Young female aged 18-21].

Interestingly, many respondents in the Duncairn Ward contrasted the lack of aspiration in the Protestant community with what they saw as the *'confident'* Catholic community. For example, a youth worker recalled that during the times of exams, almost no Catholic children attend youth clubs because *'their parents have them in the home'*; *'they're studying, they're revising'*; and their *'parents are being supportive'*. In a similar vein, a female resident contrasted *'the fact'* that Protestant schools are *'rubbish'* while *'Catholic schools are wonderful'*, because, she claimed, *'a lot of money goes into their schools, that's why'*. In terms of locating the source of low expectations amongst some young people in Duncairn, two suggestions were forwarded. The first concerned the equally low expectations of some parents and some schools. A number of parents, it was claimed, are less influenced by a school's reputation or standing in the league tables than they are by more pragmatic concerns. For example, one EWO posited that some parents say, *"well, I went there"* or *"that's where your brother went"*.

So, they go there and I don't know if there's that motivation or drive to improve or better the situation. [EWO]

Schools too, it was suggested in a residents' focus group, often display a similarly low level of expectation for young people.

I've a friend down there, her son's in fourth year and she was told "just keep him off, don't worry we'll put his mark in". Now how on earth can a school phone you up and say he's getting a wee bit disruptive ... just keep him off. [Parent]

The second source of low expectations amongst some young people was viewed as relating to the complete lack of employment opportunities when they leave school. Many young people, it was claimed in focus group of recent school leavers, don't try at school because: when they leave *'it's either North City Training or Impact Training and that's it and then on to the bru'*. Several other recent school leavers described these training schemes as *'meaningless'* because *'there's no job at the back of it';* and claimed that when young people leave school *'they near enough break down'* because they *'didn't know it was this bad'*. It was also claimed that those who <u>do</u> try at school are lulled into a false sense of security and *'think they're going to go out and walk into a job and a lot of them can't.*

I'm struggling, can't find work and I've a mate who's just finished his Masters; he's had to sign on again. [Young male aged 18-21]

The only reason I actually stayed on at school because it was either that or sign on. [Young male aged 18-21]

I didn't care about school, I didn't care about work at the time, I didn't really care about anything but now I care big time. [Young male aged 18-21]

These views were supported by principals and teachers, several of whom argued that a primary inhibitor to educational achievement in Duncairn is the low level of expectations and self-esteem among some local young people. The consensus here was that many young people: have internalised the stigma that has been attached to the community around issues such as drugs and paramilitary activity; routinely witness long-term unemployment amongst adults; and subsequently assume that they too will be excluded from the labour market. It was argued that this pessimism may, in part, be a consequence of cultural changes to society where young people's reality is juxtaposed with *'reality TV or whatever'*; and where young people develop *'absolutely unrealistic expectations'*. However, it was also claimed by a primary school principal that self-esteem has always been very low in areas such as Tigers Bay and has worsened, for 'local males' in particular, since the ending of the recent conflict because many men have suffered a *'loss of status'*.

This sense of lost status is supported in the literature on Northern Irish paramilitaries. For example, Feron (2006: 58)[39] argues that within the broader unionist community 'many (ex-loyalist prisoners) are now rejected as the shameful remains of a past that people would like to forget'. Furthermore, several school-level respondents also claimed that the Protestant community in Duncairn does not seem to have mediated the challenges presented by deindustrialisation. This point was reinforced by a primary principal who said that *'there is no industry'* and *'no great employability here'* and that this was having an impact in terms of the community's self-esteem. However, this same source contrasted this pervading sense of pessimism with the nationalist Newlodge community which is: *'literally two streets away'*; *'incredibly forward-thinking and progressive'*; and has *'great infrastructure with the Ashton Centre and a lot of training programmes'*.

I just feel that that is missing in this side of the road. But it is the leadership within this community ... there isn't one. [Principal]

This apparent divergence between Protestant and Catholic communities in terms of the education-work nexus was also raised by another principal who argued that the genesis of this dichotomy was to be found in their schools' historical approaches to poverty and higher education.

Even in the 1970's, when it came to poverty the way out of it in the Catholic sector was they pushed their kids to go onto University ... here, they didn't need to because they were jobs for them. It was only when the jobs dried up that the Controlled side cottoned on to the fact that education really matters. [Principal]

More broadly, it is also clear from the data that this sense of pessimism amongst sections of Duncairn's adult population has been transmitted to younger residents. It was commonly reported that there is amongst many young people from Duncairn a lack of aspiration. A primary school principal recalled asking a child what she wanted to do when she left school and the child saying, *"I want to work the phone in the Chinese".*

I remember thinking that is totally different to about 10 years ago when we would have had "a teacher", or "a lawyer". But their awareness is low, because people don't work. [Principal]

Other principals and teachers talked about *'a huge focus here addressing barriers to learning in recent years'* particularly in terms of counteracting the negative effects of social deprivation. However, it was also argued that the constant focus on Protestant working class boys' underachievement is leading to *a self-fulfilling prophecy;* and that *'the rhetoric and language of initiatives and policies needs to change to a positive focus'*.

Peer, familial, community, and external dissuasion

As previously outlined, young people tend to attain higher achievement levels when they are supported and encouraged by friends, parents and the wider community. However, it would appear that some young people in Duncairn not only lack this encouragement but are also actively <u>dissuaded</u> from trying at school. According to several community-based respondents, this dissuasion happens on four different levels: discouraging attitudes amongst their peers, families, and the wider community; and external stigmatisation based on *'where they are from'*. For example, a high-achieving recent school leaver who went on to University recalled a *'whole big row'* with her peers on Facebook when the issue of her education *'got brought into it for no reason'*. The row centred on how she could afford to go to University and how she *'shouldn't really be there because of where she's from'*; *'how can someone like me go to somewhere like that'?* Other recent school leavers in this focus group also highlighted the medium of Facebook as a dissuasive force; and a local youth worker offered another example of peer discouragement.

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[39] Feron, E. (2006) ''Paths to reconversion taken by Northern Irish paramilitaries,'' International Social Science Journal 58, no. 189, 447–456.

You get out of school and the first thing you want to do (is), what's happening on Facebook, because nowadays people don't really give a fuck about anything. All they want to do is check their Facebook. These days, you're not popular unless you're popular on Facebook. If you're not then nobody really wants to bother with you and you're just not that motivated to do anything with your life. [Young male aged 18-21]

One young person who's done well and has gone on to (a named grammar school) ... and he gets a bit of abuse from people his own age because he has done well. [Youth worker]

In terms of familial dissuasion, and in addition to the points made in the previous section, youth workers and EWOs claimed that there was a generational problem where parents who have spent long periods unemployed pass very few *'aspirational attitudes'* to their children.

I think a lot of people have already just almost accepted that there are no jobs anyway and sure no one in our family has ever worked and no one in our family has ever got a GCSE. [Youth worker]

There does seem to be a lack of positive achieving male role models because quite often the parents have separated or the dad's not working. [EWO]

It was also claimed that some young people are dissuaded from education because of the negative influences within their own community. Several youth workers and parents felt that: local young people are surrounded by *'negative people'* and *'negative attitudes'*; their community is very divided; and that there are too many bad role models.

It's just not a nice place to live. It's just a lot of negativity and hatred, social problems and differences. [Young female aged 18-21]

A number of ex-paramilitaries have done well when they've got out of prison and they've been good role models. But others have moved towards criminality, drugs, and kids are seeing this, you know, "I want to be like him". [Youth worker]

In such an environment, it was argued by a young female resident that young people who do well at school or who go on to University tend to leave the area because they would be viewed as being *'abnormal within a community like this'.*

There is maybe one or two people in Tiger's Bay that I know that are at University but (although) they live in the community (they are) kind of outsiders ... I just think they feel like they're not accepted. [Young female aged 18-21]

It is also clear that some young people from Duncairn are dissuaded from achieving at school because of external stigmatisation. This was seen as particularly evident if young people progressed to *'better schools'*. Several parents and recent school leavers claimed that in Duncairn young people *'were already labelled before you got through the door'* [parent]; and that because *'you were from that type of community'* and '*unless you were brilliant at sports or you were brilliant at something'* you would be *'ignored'.* [Young female aged 18-21]

Like if you were from Tigers Bay ... there was no chance of you getting a position as head boy or deputy head boy. [Young male aged 18-21]

They looked down upon you ... you were automatically seen as scum or peasants. [Young male aged 18-21]

5.9. Summary of findings from the Duncairn Ward

The data evidence that a range of structural, school-level and familial/neighbourhood factors, (and the interplay between these factors) have a significant impact on the learning and subsequent attainment levels of young people from Duncairn. It is equally apparent that, across these levels, there are factors which are seen to enable academic achievement in the Ward and others which appear to patently inhibit such progress. In terms of macro-level

factors, i.e. those informed by historical, demographical, and policy considerations, a range of issues have been identified as significant barriers to educational success. For example, the Ward's history has clearly been shaped by the recent conflict and, as a consequence: spatial mobility restrictions and insular attitudes are common; paramilitary groups retain an influence, particularly amongst young people; and more broadly, the wider community continues to be characterised by both intra and inter-community divisions. Similarly, significant changes to the Ward's demographic profile have occurred such as: a falling number of Protestant school-aged residents; the near quadrupling of the Catholic community within the past decade; the steep rise in (often transitory) private rented sector tenures; and the fact that over 10% of the Ward's population were born outside of the UK and Ireland. For some residents of the Ward, this has created an unsettled and transient community characterised by impermanence. Related to these demographic changes, it is also clear that the learning of local young people is inhibited because there are no secondary schools located in the hub of the Ward and as a result, the detachment many local young people already feel in terms of education is further compounded by (a) the invisibility of structured learning in their communities; and (b) the distances they now have to travel to the nearest available schools.

Despite the fact that only 11.7% of local secondary pupils attend grammar school (the lowest in the ILiAD study), the Duncairn data make clear that the policy of academic selection and the inter-related issue of the grammar school sector not contracting in line with demographic changes are having a negative effect on local attainment levels. The data here further evidences that the most important aspects of this impact are that: those who fail or do not sit the transfer test are routinely labelled as deficient; grammar schools are encouraged to 'cream' higher performing pupils from the non-selective sector; such processes make these non-grammar schools vulnerable to closures and amalgamations; and deprives these schools of positive role models / likely high achievers.

The Duncairn data also highlight several (structural) macro-level factors which enable academic attainment. Firstly, although it is clear that a number of young people and parents in the Ward are acutely disadvantaged, school collaborations with external agencies such as Barnardos, Parenting NI and SureStart have made a substantial and positive contribution in terms of addressing their needs. Secondly, improvements and renewals of school premises and facilities have affected positive change and confirmed that young people are more likely to succeed if their learning environment reflects aspiration and not decline. Moreover, it is indicative of the broader economic context that a further structural driver was the current recession and the argument that this has encouraged many young people to stay on at school. While this is positive, it needs to be remembered that many are only doing so because they are, often deeply, pessimistic about their labour market prospects.

In terms of the meso-level factors, a range of both positive and negative influences were identified around schools' levels of engagement, accessibility and innovation. Young people in Duncairn are encouraged to learn and attain qualifications because many schools which serve the Ward now have in place meaningful and effective engagement processes with communities and parents. Whilst it is clear that this has not always been the case and many parents recalled very different levels of engagement during their time at school, these schools have patently adopted a more collaborative and outward-looking approach in recent years. It is also clear that these relational changes have been mirrored by similar improvements to: school regimes which are seen to have engendered higher expectations and discipline standards; and teacher attitudes which are seen as markedly more committed and empathetic.

These schools have also sought to become more accessible to pupils and their families, particularly those who are disadvantaged and/or require additional support. Perhaps the most salient example of this relates to the provision of Extended Schools programmes in

some of the schools which serve the Ward. In addition to improving attainment and attendance levels, these initiatives have created: *'a level playing field'* for young people with weak parental support; and opportunities for parents to address their own essential skill deficits and become more involved in their child's education. Schools which serve the Ward have also adopted innovative practices which are seen to have had a positive impact on the educational outcomes of local young people. For example, many of the schools which serve Duncairn now have in place: flexible curricula; a wider range of vocational placements; alternative measures of success; effective support packages during transition(s); as well as higher standards of SEN support and problem behaviour management. There were, however, a number of school-level factors identified which were seen to inhibit academic progress. The most important of these concerned: schools which continue to adhere to inappropriate and inflexible curricula; some teachers who display negative attitudes and behaviour management techniques; the stubbornly high levels of absenteeism in the Ward; and more broadly, community-based perceptions of some teachers in Protestant working class schools as '*middle class'* and *'detached'*.

In terms of micro-level factors, i.e. those informed by familial and neighbourhood influences, the inter-related issues of parental support and home/community environment were the most important. Many young people in Duncairn have the parental support and stable conditions at home which are long known to be most conducive to their learning and development. However, many others have a distinct lack of either. Moreover, the parents of this less supported group, commonly, have a range of disadvantages themselves, primarily related to their own time at school, including: essential skills deficits; a lack of confidence; and an, often acute, aversion to engage with schools. In addition, but in all likelihood related, to weak familial support, many young people in Duncairn have very low self-esteem and equally low expectations for their future. Of course, the current recession has done little to raise these expectations and the latest indices show that youth unemployment in the Ward which stood at 7% in 2001 had risen to 22% by 2011. Moreover, their self-esteem and expectations are further depressed in two important ways: firstly, rightly or wrongly, they routinely contrast their own pessimistic outlook with what they perceive as an increasingly confident Catholic community; and secondly, many young peoples' academic aspirations are dampened by peer, familial, and community dissuasion. For many young people from Duncairn, considering a grammar school means contemplating being separated from friends and being the *'odd one out'*; the negative attitudes of some parents convinces their children that school is a waste of time; and community norms around education, often, dissuade academic success because it is such an unusual occurrence. In other words, although there would appear to be an *'awakening'* among some young people of the value of education, in other sections of the Ward's population a pervading sense of pessimism exists.

There were a number of micro-level factors which were seen to enable educational achievement in the Duncairn Ward. However, in terms these immediate influences, the primary drivers were limited to: the resilience and self-motivation of individuals, many of who view education simply as a means to leave the community; some young people becoming more cognisant of the value of education and potential career pathways; and finally, local community and youth work interventions, particularly those which (a) divert young people attention away from conflict, paramilitaries, and interface violence, and (b) provide out-of-school guidance for the section of young people in Duncairn with limited levels of parental support.

5.10 Social Capital in Duncairn

It is clear that within the Duncairn Ward there are high levels of bonding capital. Indeed, respondents presented a variety of examples which showed disadvantaged residents in Duncairn sticking together and being united by a shared sense of adversity. Similarly, many young people in Duncairn have the necessary levels of parental/familial support, community encouragement, and individual resilience to allow them to succeed at school. However, as evidenced in the data, many other young people from Duncairn have significantly lower levels of these attributes. Therefore, these 'absences' conspire to diminish local stocks of bonding social capital.

In terms of bridging social capital, analysis of the Duncairn data show that many schools which serve the Ward have recently: established/renewed effective tri-partite relationships between school, home and the community; adopted flexible curricular and higher expectations; and put in place targeted support mechanisms, particularly around transitions, and addressing the needs of those pupils with SEN. However, this is not the case in all schools and, in other schools, negative teacher attitudes, high levels of truancy and community perceptions of schools as *'detached'* remain prevalent. Moreover, in a broader context (and primarily related to the recent conflict), insularity and spatial mobility restrictions are seen to seriously inhibit: (a) the formation of bridging ties with neighbouring communities; and (b) perceptions of *'safe passage'* to the city centre which, although within walking distance, commonly entails transiting through 'the other' community.

Linking social capital refers to the structural factors which are seen to impact on local attainment levels. In the context of Duncairn, the Ward's history, geography, and demographic profile appear to also conspire against educational achievement. Corrosive legacies of the conflict such as extant paramilitary influence and sectarian polarisation interplay in complex ways with Duncairn's geographical realities and current demographic patterns to foster increased levels of insularity, distrust of outsiders and fatalism. As Evans (1997) has noted, in communities which are characterised by conflict, the nature, meaning and utility of social capital becomes more complex. Moreover, recent demographic changes have contributed to the closure of local schools and the subsequent need for young people to attend schools which are neither located in nor seen as part of their communities. It is important to note here that in another ILiAD Ward (Whiterock) the local (visible) provision of quality schools was identified as perhaps <u>the</u> most significant driver of attainment. This again highlights the somewhat obvious point that the absence of social capital indicator, in this case, good schools located in the Ward, tells us as much about local social capital formations as presences do.

Considered together, therefore, it is clear that although there are a number of *presences* of bonding, bridging and linking social capital indicators in Duncairn, across all three levels there are, arguably, a greater proportion of significant *absences* which at best diminish and at worst completely negate any positive outcomes, particularly for those local young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

The final element of the theoretical framework adapted for the ILiAD study concerns the development of negative social capital. As outlined earlier, many of the community bonds which have been created in Duncairn are based on shared experiences of adversity, besiegement, and external stigmatisation. However, the social capital literature consistently shows that these types of bonds often create the wrong type of social capital. Fukuyama (2001),[40] for example, claims that in such environments, a form of negative social capital is created because this type of group solidarity is commonly purchased at the price of hostility towards out-group members. This phenomenon is clearly apparent in Duncairn where high levels of inclusionary bonding social capital can, to an extent, be attributed to exclusionary processes linked to historical ethno-religious divisions. In other words, the bonds created in

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[40] Fukuyama, F. (2001) 'Social Capital, Civil Society and Development' Third World Quarterly, 22, 1, 7-20.

certain parts of the Ward are restrictive in terms of the community developing the more outward looking bridging bonds which are seen to counter the effects of 'bounded solidarity' (Portes, 1998).[41] A host of previous social capital analyses have shown that bounded solidarity is a common feature of communities who have endured the collective 'experience of adversity and opposition to mainstream society' (ibid: 17). Moreover, it is claimed that the interplay between bounded solidarity, external stigmatisation, and embedded fatalistic tendencies, commonly, engenders restrictive processes and a downward levelling of social norms (Harper, 2001).[42]

Three examples from the Duncairn data around neglect of the positive, accentuation of the negative, and undesirable role models ably demonstrate this phenomenon. There were several accounts in the data (i.e. around successful transfer tests, high achieving school leavers, and University offers) which showed that narratives of individual success were, occasionally, actively dissuaded at peer, familial, and community levels. Portes (1998: 16-17) argues that this is a regular feature of communities whose bonds have developed through a 'narrative of oppression and besiegement'. Such communities, he concludes, have 'no place for individual success stories' for they undermine community solidarity, especially where this solidarity is 'premised on the alleged impossibility of such occurrences'.

Similarly, many community level sources offered profoundly pessimistic overviews and prognoses of Duncairn and the Ward's social, economic, and educational challenges. In a later publication, Portes (2010)[43] argues that emphasising the plight of a community or neglecting to highlight a community's positive assets become important 'methods of cementing' such bonds, because these bonds are premised on 'acquired schemata' of continual 'shared adversity' and 'inevitable collective failure'.

It is also clear that a perception exists among a number of Duncairn's younger residents that: education is a waste of time; achievement is beyond them; worklessness is a feasible option; and the only local people who seem to '*really succeed*' tend to be those who do so through nefarious means. This, according to the literature, has serious implications for local social capital formations. For example, if young people increasingly come to see unemployment benefit or criminal enterprise as viable strategies in the 'field' they occupy, some are likely to adjust their 'habitus' to suit these specific conditions (Moser, 2006).[44] In other words, while habitus relates to an individual's 'internalised structures' and dispositions, they are 'equally influenced' by the individual's 'desire to conform to prevailing and dominant norms' (Oliver and O'Reilly 2010: 56-57).[45]

[41] Portes, A. (1998) 'Social capital: its origins and applications', Modern Sociology Annual Review of Sociology, Vol. 24: pp 1-24.
[42] Harper, R. (2001) Social Capital: A Review of the Literature. London: Social Analysis and Reporting Division, Office for National Statistics.
[43] Portes, A. (2010) Economic Sociology: a systemic inquiry, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
[44] Moser, C. O. N. (2006) Reducing Urban Violence in Developing Countries, Washington: The Brookings Institution.
[45] Oliver, C. and O'Reily, K. (2010) A Bourdieusian analysis of class and migration: habitus and the individualizing process. Sociology, 44: 49–65.

Case study 6: Woodstock

6.1. Local Context

Deprivation Levels

Woodstock is ranked 39th out of 582 Wards on the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure, NIMDM 2010) but the GCSE pass rate (5 at A*-C level) has increased particularly since 2009, jumping from 26% in 2008/09 to 40% in 2009/10 and 50% in 2010/11. As of 2012/13, the pass rate was 52%, meaning that Woodstock performs at approximately the same levels as Duncairn (a slightly more deprived, but also predominantly Protestant Ward) and Dunclug (a less deprived, mixed-religion Ward), and slightly better than Tullycarnet (a less deprived, but also predominantly Protestant Ward). However, achievement within Woodstock remains slightly lower than the predominantly Catholic Wards of the ILiAD sample, even compared to Whiterock, the most deprived Ward.

Figure 6.1 shows a map of the Output areas within the Woodstock Ward, colour-coded by intensity of deprivation. The colours of the Output areas refer to the severity of deprivation, based on their multiple deprivation score (ranging from 1.5 to 81.73, with 81.73 being the most deprived) as calculated by NISRA (all statistics are based on the 2010 measures unless otherwise indicated).
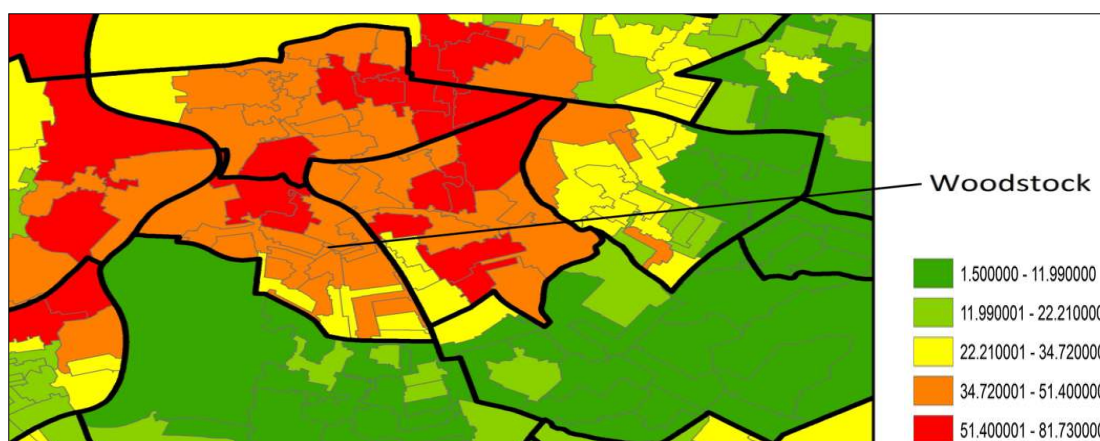
Figure 6.1: Multiple Deprivation in Output Areas: Woodstock Ward

Woodstock comprises the urban, mostly Protestant, inner-east area of central Belfast. It is bordered by the River Lagan on the north-west side, and the (similarly deprived) Albertbridge Road and Ballymacarrett Ward to the north and Orangefield Ward to the east. The affluent Ravenhill Ward to the south (in light-dark green, which includes Ormeau Park) is the exception in terms of the deprivation levels of the bordering Wards. The interface area between Woodstock and the Short Strand is clearly demarcated in red in the map above – the Albertbridge Road divides the interfacing Output areas (which, interestingly, are also areas of severe multiple deprivation). In these respects, the Ward is similar to Duncairn in the north of the city; however, Woodstock scores substantially better across many different domains of deprivation, but performs worse educationally than Duncairn. In particular, the rate of employment is much better than in Duncairn (Woodstock is 110th for employment deprivation compared to Duncairn, at 17th); health is better than Duncairn (Woodstock is 45th for health deprivation and disability, Duncairn is 18th); crime and disorder is worse in Duncairn (Woodstock is 60th for crime deprivation, Duncairn is 25th). The only domain (apart from education) where Woodstock is (slightly) worse than Duncairn is the living deprivation domain; Woodstock ranks the 5th worst in Northern Ireland, while Duncairn is 15th.

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Woodstock is one of the predominantly Protestant Wards in the ILiAD research sample (86.7% according to the Census 2001) although the Census 2011 revealed that the percentage of Protestants in the Ward has decreased to 63.3% (the percentage of Catholic residents has increased substantially since 2001 (from 6.2% to 19.4% in 2011). The Ward has a higher than average percentage of residents who were born outside of the UK or the Republic of Ireland (14.7%, more than double the NI average of 7.1%) or born in EU ascension countries (7.8%, more than three times the NI average of 2.1%). The population density within the Ward is by far the highest of the ILiAD sample, at 92.2 persons per hectare, more than twenty persons more than the next highest density Ward. There is also evidence of some change in housing tenure within Woodstock between 2001 and 2011 (according to Census statistics). The percentage of owner/occupier housing decreased slightly (from 39.7% in 2001 and 34.1% in 2011, the second lowest proportion within the ILiAD sample after Duncairn), as did the percentage of social housing (from 41.2% to 34.7%), and the percentage of privately rented housing increased, from 18.7% to 28.3%, the highest percentage of privately rented housing of all the predominantly Protestant Wards in the ILiAD sample and nearly double the NI average of 15.1%. Woodstock has the second largest population size of the sample of seven Wards, at 5445 persons (NISRA, 2011). The percentage of young people under the age of 15 is 16.8% according to the Census 2011, just under the Northern Ireland average of 19.6%.

Parts of the Woodstock Ward are also encompassed within the Inner East Belfast Neighbourhood Renewal Area. In 2012/13, the Department for Social Development invested £626,284 in supporting programmes under this initiative. There are also a variety of organisations providing services to young people and families in the Woodstock Ward which contribute directly or indirectly to education processes. For example:

- East Belfast Community Development Agency provides services for young people dealing with issues such as family relationships, self-esteem, parenting issues, bereavement, abuse, addiction, self-harm, bullying, sexual identity etc;
- NEETS initiatives (for 16-24-year-old young people Not in Employment, Education or Training) being funded through DEL;
- Oasis Caring in Action Project, which is a community organisation with the aim of seeing people empowered within their personal, family and community lives. Oasis provides a range of community programmes for local people;
- Northern Ireland Alternatives' Street by Street programme is an innovative community safety initiative aimed at tackling anti-social activity in East Belfast;
- Newtownards Road Women's Group. This project is to provide high quality, affordable, accessible childcare and family support services within the Inner East Belfast area which focuses on family support, education and training;
- The Skainos Project is an urban regeneration development in inner east Belfast, including the Woodstock area. It brings together a range of strategic partnerships to contribute to improvements in youth work, family work and community development;
- The Micah Centre is operated by Willowfield Parish Community Association and provides a range of programmes aimed at benefiting of the inhabitants of the area;
- East Belfast Community Development Agency in partnership with Ballymac Friendship Trust, Bridge Community Association and Inner East Youth Project operate a project which helps young people recognise and develop their ability and respond to their needs.

School Provision, Intake Characteristics, Achievement and Destinations

In terms of education provision, Woodstock has one of the largest numbers of pupils within post-primary schools out of all the Wards in the ILiAD study (221 pupils in 2011), with eight schools serving these young people in 2011 (see Table 6.1 below). That year, 20.4% of

young people from the Ward attended grammar schools (the third highest proportion of the seven ILiAD Wards) and 79.6% attended secondary schools. The research team decided to choose a geographical mid-point within each Ward area, and to map the distance from this point to the schools that serve each Ward area.

Table 6.1: Schools serving young people in Woodstock

Miles to school	% GCSE pass	Enrolment (2011)	
1.1	51	10	St. Joseph's
1.5	22	23	Orangefield High School
1.6	96	12	Grosvenor
1.7	91	13	Wellington
2.2	23	71	Knockbreda High School
2.4	72	20	Lagan College *(has a grammar stream)*
2.7	42	61	Newtownbreda High School
3	68	11	Ashfield Boys'
Total Grammar enrolment		45	20.4%
Total Secondary enrolment		176	79.6%

Blue – Grammar schools Orange - Other schools

Looking at average GCSE achievement rates in Woodstock for the three years prior to the ILiAD research commencing (2008/2009/2010), 38.8% of school leavers achieved ≥5 GCSEs or GCSE equivalents (at Grade C or above) – the second lowest of the seven ILiAD sample Wards. When considering 'pure' GCSEs only, this figure dropped to 32.0%, and the figure dropped to 27.2% if English and Maths are included (this is the third lowest variation of any of the ILiAD sample Wards). Looking specifically at female school leavers across these three years, 45.8% achieved any five GCSEs at A*-C, and 33.3% achieved five GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths. For males, the figure for any five GCSEs was 32.7%, dropping to 21.8% with the inclusion of English and Maths.

Between 2008 and 2012, 28.4% of school leavers from Woodstock were entitled to FSM – this is not only lower than the FSM percentage within Duncairn (38.5%), which is the Ward with the next-highest level of multiple deprivation; it is also lower than the FSM percentage within Rosemount (39.0%), which is not as highly deprived as Woodstock. In terms of the achievement rates within the Ward of school leavers who are entitled/not entitled to Free School Meals (FSM), Woodstock shows one of the smallest variations of all ILiAD sample Wards. Between 2008–2012, 41.2% of school leavers not entitled to FSM achieved five or more GCSEs at A*-C, compared to 30.8% of school leavers who were entitled to FSM (in other words, a 10.4% variation). Woodstock is also unique amongst the ILiAD Wards because FSM-entitled males from the Ward have achieved at a higher rate than females who are entitled to FSM (34.6% compared to 26.9%, 2008-2012 data). Furthermore, it is also unique in that FSM-entitled males achieved at a higher rate than non-FSM-entitled males over the same time period (34.6% compared to 32.3%). However, there is a large differential between non-FSM-entitled females and FSM-entitled females in the Ward, with females not entitled to FSM achieving at a much higher rate (49.3% compared to 26.9% - the second highest differential of all the ILiAD Wards). There are, however, some obvious differentials in regard to the needs and circumstances of the pupils who attend the different secondary schools within and around Woodstock and the corresponding numbers of pupils who achieve five GCSEs including Maths and English, as illustrated in Figure 6.2 below.

The average rates by school (2008-2012) for rates of FSM, SEN, and five GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths are shown in Figure 6.2, and the destinations of school leavers in 2012 are shown in Figure 6.3. Woodstock presents a similar picture to Tullycarnet in terms

of both the number of young people who attend secondary schools, and the secondary schools which serve young people from the Ward. The exceptions are Knockbreda High School and St Joseph's College, which do not serve young people from Tullycarnet. These two schools have a very slightly higher number of FSM-eligible pupils than the NI average of 28.9% - respectively, 32.6% and 32.4% of their intakes are FSM-eligible. St Joseph's also has a higher than average number of pupils with any SEN- 39.8% to the NI average of 30.8%. These schools also have fewer than average percentages of pupils who achieve five GCSEs including Maths and English (19.5% in Knockbreda and 22% in St Joseph's), and while a large percentage of school leavers from Knockbreda entered further education in 2012 (85%, see Figure 6.3), over one-fifth of school leavers from St Joseph's were unemployed or at an unknown destination in 2012 (21%).
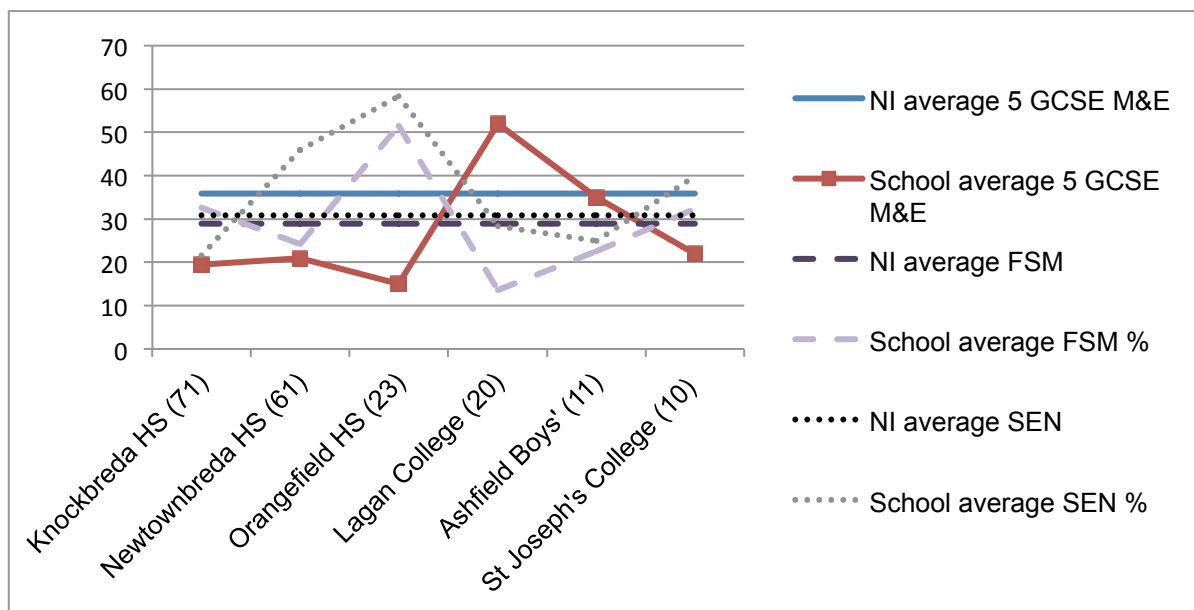
Figure 6.2: 2008-2012 percentages of 5 GCSE (including Maths & English) attainment, Free School Meals eligibility, and pupils with any Special Educational Needs – Woodstock non-selective schools against NI secondary school averages
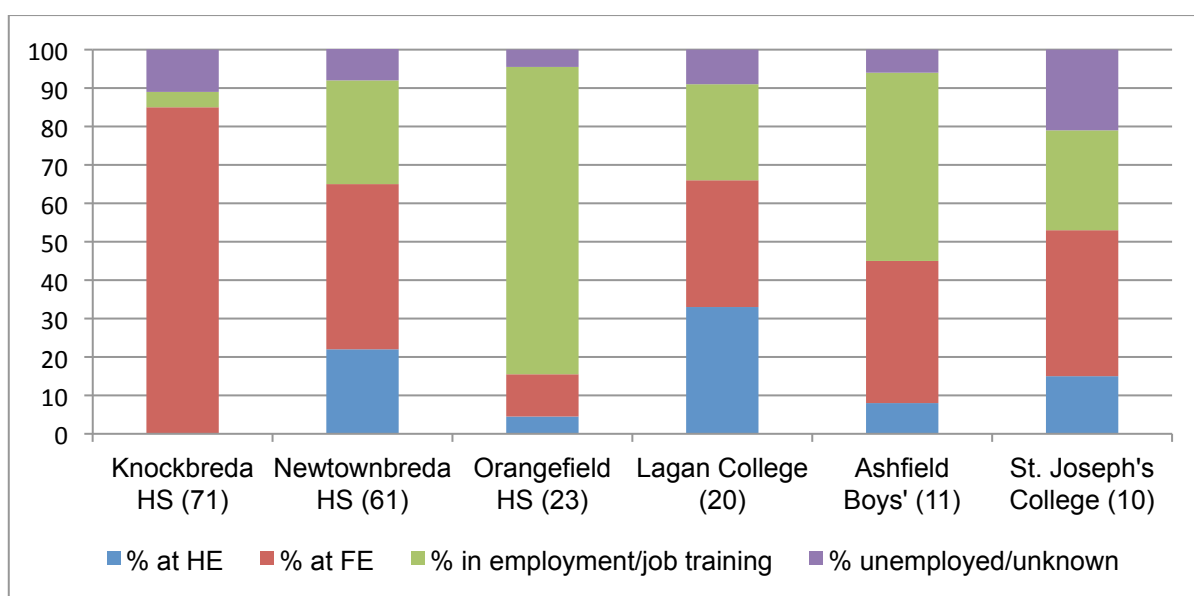
Figure 6.3: Destinations of School Leavers 2012 from secondary schools serving Woodstock Ward

Looking at the destinations of all school leavers from the Ward across the years 2008 – 2012, further education was the most frequent destination (37.0%, the third highest rate within ILiAD, behind Dunclug at 48.8% and Tullycarnet at 44.6%). These three Wards had the lowest levels of school leavers entering higher education (the rate for Woodstock was 14%). Woodstock had the second highest rate of school leavers entering employment/job training (34.0%) of all the ILiAD Wards, and it has also enjoyed relatively low rates of school leaver unemployment over the last five years, with the exception of 2010, when over twice as many school leavers entered unemployment than the usual number (21% compared to an average of 11.4% between 2008-2012).

The following sections of this chapter will outline the key drivers and inhibitors of academic achievement in the Woodstock Ward. To categorise and explain these enablers and barriers to educational attainment, findings from the document review and secondary data analysis of official statistics are presented alongside the qualitative data from both community-level and school-level respondents. These community-level data are based on interviews and focus groups with youth and community workers, Education Welfare Officers (EWOs), parents, residents and recent school leavers from the Ward. The school-level data relate to similar discussions with principals and teachers from the schools serving young people from the Ward, and young people themselves (see Table 6.2). The drivers and inhibitors will be presented as: macro-level (structural) factors to examine linking social capital; meso-level (school-level) factors to explore formations of bridging social capital in the Ward; and micro-level (immediate/familial) factors to explain the levels and impact of bonding social capital.

Table 6.2: Profile of participants in Woodstock

School level	Community level
Post-primary principal interview x 3	Education welfare officer focus group x 1
Post-primary vice-principal interview x 2	Parents focus group x 1
Post-primary senor teacher interview x 4	Community representative interview x 2
	Youth and community workers focus group x 1
	Residents focus group x 1
	Young people focus group (residents) x 1
	Neighbourhood Partnership personnel focus group x 1

6.2. Force-field Analysis of drivers and inhibitors of achievement in Woodstock Ward

Drivers

Inhibitors

Macro-level

a) New and improved school buildings and facilities

Meso-level

a) Positive triangular relationship between school, home and community
b) The raising of discipline standards and expectations on the part of the schools
c) New, younger and more empathetic teachers
d) Schools' provision of vocation opportunities and visible progression routes
e) Alternative measures of success and the rewarding effort and achievement
f) Strong, visionary school leadership and a pupil-centred ethos
g) An effective pastoral care system
h) The provision of effective support during transition
i) The adoption of inter-active learning strategies
j) Appropriate SEN support in schools

Micro-level

a) Parental support and encouragement

Macro-level

a) Legacies of the recent conflict
b) Schools attended by young people not located in the Woodstock community
c) Felt effects of academic selection
d) Demographic change and a perceived 'loss of community'
e) High levels of deprivation, insularity, and benefit dependency
f) Lack of inter-agency collaboration, school closures and inter-school competition
g) Influx of non-English speakers to local schools
h) Lack of resources in schools

Meso-level

a) Low attainment expectations on the part of schools
b) High levels of absenteeism

c) Disruptive classmates and peer dissuasion
c) Weak linkages between schools and the community
d) Inappropriate curricula / GCSEs as only indicator of achievement

Micro-level

a) Parents' incapacity and/or unwillingness to support their children's education
b) Youth disaffection and lack of ambition amongst young people
c) Culture of alcohol and drugs and mental health issues

6.3. Macro-level drivers of attainment in Woodstock

In terms of linking social capital in the Woodstock Ward, the only significant structural driver of educational attainment to be identified related to recent renewals and improvements to school buildings and facilities.

New and improved school buildings and facilities
According to the data, enhancements to the learning environments of Woodstock's school-age residents such as improvements to existing school buildings and the provision of modern and high-tech facilities have made a significant and positive impact. Several principals argued that pupils take more pride in the school, exhibit higher levels of motivation, and are, generally, better behaved when they are *'surrounded by technology and a building which is fresh and designed for their needs'.*

I think it has a big impact. Our school is very well kept, but I would like to see more investment … newer facilities raise motivation. [Principal]

Our new build has led to vastly improved behaviour. In four years, we have had no vandalism; zero. They see it as their school. [Principal]

The principal of one school about to relocate spoke about her hopes that the new school building will improve both aptitude and achievement. In the current building, she claimed, the school is *'very spread out'* and pupils face a *'10-minute walk across school grounds'* to get to their next class. This, often, created problems because *'walking a distance can raise energy levels and make it hard to settle'.* In the new school, she added, every room will have an interactive whiteboard, Wifi, and computers. The envisioned benefits of this new environment, she further claimed, are that it will encourage learning, give pupils *'focus'*, *'calm them'*, and give them a sense of ownership. In a similar vein, another principal spoke about his school's recent relocation and the inclusive role played by the student council which is made up of a male and female representative from every form class.

They attend school council ... they can say whatever they want ... our toilets were a disgrace. They look after the new toilets better because they feel they fought to get them open. They also designed the cafe in the new build. [Senior teacher]

6.4 Meso-level drivers of attainment in Woodstock

In terms of bridging social capital, conceptualised in the framework devised for the ILiAD study as the efficacy of a school's engagement, (horizontal) accessibility, and innovation, a total of ten meso-level drivers were identified. Of these ten, the five most significant were: positive triangular relationship between school, home and community; the raising of discipline standards and expectations on the part of the schools; new, younger and more empathetic teachers; schools' provision of vocation opportunities and visible progression routes; and alternative measures of success and the rewarding effort and achievement.

Positive triangular relationship between school, home and community
The importance of effective tripartite relationships between schools, the home environment and the wider community is well established in education research (e.g. Henderson and Mapp, 2002;[46] Molina, 2013).[47] In a more local context, the data analysed here indicate that the principals and teachers of the schools attended by young people from Woodstock place *'great importance'* on these triangular linkages and view them as a significant enabler of attainment. They also highlighted that the three most important aspects of these relationships were: encouraging the notion of schools, families and communities working together; the provision of support for parents to enable them to more fully involve themselves in their children's education; and for schools to intervene and provide addition support for

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[46] Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

[47] Molina, S. C. (2013). 'Family, school, community engagement, and partnerships: an area of continued inquiry and growth'. *Teaching Education*, 24:2, 235-238.

young people who are either struggling with school work or have a weak support network. In terms of encouraging an ethos of collaboration between schools, homes and communities, these sources frequently highlighted the need for schools to become much more aware of community characteristics and family circumstances. This was seen as particularly important in areas such as Woodstock because of acute levels of deprivation and the fact that most of the schools attended by the Ward's young people are not actually located in their communities.

It is also clear that, in some cases, this spatial disconnection to schools experienced by young people in Woodstock is compounded by: cultural factors such as a general distrust of schools and the low value placed on education among sections of the community; and class-based factors related to the view among several community-level respondents that *'middle class teachers teach working class Protestants'* [community worker]. These issues are more fully examined later in the section outlining the inhibitors to attainment in the Ward. To overcome some of these perceptual barriers as highlighted above, one principal argued that schools need to evidence a willingness to reach out and demonstrate that they genuinely care about the young people in their charge; while another principal used a sporting analogy to express the importance of everyone pulling in the same direction.

What makes a good school is ... people who care, who are passionate, who are prepared to work together ... that includes families, not just staff. [Principal]

Pupils are the front row (of a rugby scrum), parents are the second row and teachers are the back row, and all are needed to make a winning team. [Principal]

Several schools which serve the Woodstock community have clearly adopted new and creative ways of engaging the local community. For example, the principal of a girls' school spoke about the provision of various free evening classes for parents and grandparents; mother-and-daughter evenings *'with cookery or ... make-up demonstrations'*; and daughter-and-dad nights. It is also clear that the Extended Schools programme has played an important role in fostering improved relations between schools, communities and parents. One principal spoke about: teachers putting forward ideas in terms of programme content; the programme's focus on improving attendance, and how the programme has enabled the school to improve their induction programmes which parents were also able to attend. The data highlight two key benefits of the Extended Schools programme: firstly, the consistency provided for children, particularly those with limited parental support; and secondly, the creation of a reassuring environment for parents to address their own literacy and numeracy deficits, thus, increasing their own capacity to support their children's academic progress. It was also suggested that in the absence of the Extended Schools programmes, the, commonly, low attainment levels of such disadvantaged pupils would continue.

We provide the consistency for these children, so a child from a deprived background can stay here to 6pm each night. This makes a big difference. [Principal]

Where you don't have that support for children from deprived backgrounds, you have children who are underachieving. The school has a crucial role to play: you have to have the scaffolding to support the child ... where you don't have that, they don't succeed. [Principal]

Several principals and teachers also claimed that their Extended Schools programmes are particularly sensitive to the challenges many parents face in supporting their children's schooling. The consensus here was that parents with negative perceptions and unhappy recollections of their own education, can, with empathy and encouragement, come to see schools as open, friendly, and welcoming. It was also frequently reported that many local parents, including those for whom school was a struggle, now regularly attend numeracy, literacy, and internet protection programmes specifically designed for parents.

From the perspective of local parents, the Extended Schools programmes were seen as *'extremely helpful initiatives'* both in terms of extra help for struggling pupils, and valuable guidance for parents who want to better support their child(ren)'s education. Extended

Schools provision for the 2012-13 school year has ranged from approximately £32k for primary schools serving the Ward (with no extra provision given the main nursery school serving the area), to approximately £30-40k for post-primary schools serving young people from the Ward (with Newtownbreda High School receiving the most for that year, £42,004).

The important role of homework was also highlighted both in terms of maintaining home-school communication and involving parents in their children's academic progression. These views are explicitly supported in the broader education literature which consistently demonstrates that homework provides a crucial link between school and families (Cooper, Robinson, and Patall, 2006)[48]. While several parents in Woodstock stated that local schools don't always give pupils an adequate amount of homework, others thought too much. What these respondents did agree on was that parents needed to do more to ensure homework was *'getting done at all'* and schools needed to do more to ensure it was done correctly.

The raising of discipline standards and expectations on the part of the schools
Across the Woodstock data, it is clear that a second important meso-level driver of educational attainment is that the schools which serve Woodstock have in recent years raised their standards of discipline and their expectations of young people. Moreover, it was also claimed that these schools' raised expectations extend also to teachers and other school staff. Local parents and young residents who themselves have only recently left school agreed that stricter discipline regimes are now in place. These respondents also agreed that the arrival of new principals who were determined to set higher standards was the catalyst for this change. There was similar consensus that as a result of these changes, bullying and general bad behaviour were considerably less prevalent.

Teachers have got stricter and there's not as much messing about because if someone does something wrong the teachers would go down harder on them. [Young female aged 18-21]

The structure from the top changed when a new Nettlefield principal came; that shook things up a hell of a lot, you know. [Parent]

One young person contrasted these new stricter regimes with her own school experience 5 or six years previously.

A teacher would have got called out and the class would have been sitting in the whole subject just by themselves with no teacher, like you were told to sit there and read a book but everybody just messed about because there was no teacher. [Young female aged 18-21]

Community workers claimed that: previously, many local parents would have regularly visited the schools only to *'berate teachers and headmasters ... because wee Johnny was in trouble again'*; and that the harder line adopted by the new leadership in one particular school had proved effective; and that parents are *'towing the line more'*.

The new principal said he'd turn things around when he told the parents to either let us teach or stay away. [Community worker]

However, several parents claimed that schools really only take an interest in a child if they feel their interest is been matched by a similar level of commitment on the part of parents.

My son was truanting. I went to the school and for one month they got someone to chaperone him class to class. They acted because I was taking an interest. [Parent]

Parents, residents and community workers in Woodstock spoke about the impact of a proper school uniform. The consensus here was that uniforms encourage students to take their schooling more seriously and, commonly, improve behaviour both in and around school, i.e. travelling to and from. Notably, they also ventured that schools now expect similarly higher standards from teachers and other school staff.

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[48] Cooper, H., Robinson J. C., & Patall, E. A. (2006) 'Does homework improve academic achievement? A synthesis of research, 1987–2003'. *Review of Educational Research*, 76(1), 1–62.

Recent changes ... means that the school is now more people friendly and pupil friendly. Headmistress has done a tremendous job; she introduced the shirt and tie back to replace the grey track suit. "This is the standard we expect." [Resident]

Playground assistants, dinner ladies, tended to shout at kids. I'd been witness to it ... it's not acceptable. Basically, it took a lot of staff changes to change habits. [Principal]

It was put a stop to; the teachers that weren't doing their job were weeded out and new ones brought in. [Parent]

It is clear that many parents in Woodstock perceive a transformation has occurred across the schools which serve the Ward in general and in the local primary school in particular. Moreover, many believe this transformation will, in time, be reflected in rising attainment levels. Others were more pessimistic, *'given the area'.* What is clear is the scale of the challenges faced by this school as vividly outlined as recently as last year when an Education and Training Inspectorate report on an inspection carried out in January 2013, conclude that:

In almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this school is inadequate; the areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified significant areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching and leadership and management, which need to be addressed urgently if the school is to meet effectively the needs of all of the children. [ETI, 2013]

More broadly, it is clear that, in the absence of a marked increase in levels of parental support, it was unlikely that such raised expectations within these schools could, on their own, make a significant difference to actual attainment levels. This point is perhaps best evidenced in the following exchange with two local parents who are also on the Board of Governors of a local primary school:

I: You've over 300 kids here ... now I know you'd like to see them all achieve but have you any that you would ... have a lot of confidence who'll maybe say achieve 5 GCSEs?

R: Nowhere near what you would hope ... I would say less than five per cent.

R: Much less.

I: No listen, I need to press you on this, because you have told me that this school is transformed to what it used to be and yet you still say that only 5% of them.

R: Because what you do in school is lost if that can't be continued at home.

New, younger and more empathetic teachers
Related to the above driver around schools' higher expectations of their staff, a further important enabler of educational attainment in Woodstock is the positive impact made by of a recent wave of new and younger teachers. This new generation of educators seem more empathetic and have the ability to enthuse young people in terms of their learning.

Kids will relate well with the younger teachers because the younger teachers are exciting; the younger teachers bring in new ideas and a new vibrancy to the learning system. [Parent]

[Named school] has had a recent influx of local teachers. This has made a really big difference. [Parent]

Younger teachers, it was commonly posited, can interact with children in newer and more positive ways than older teachers can. For example, one parent claimed that her daughter who is about to enter P 7 already knows her next teacher and has a '*good rapport with her';* and that she even *'knows that she owns a dog and what her dog's name is'.* However, another parent voiced frustration that previous cohorts of primary pupils were unable to fulfil their potential because *'it certainly wasn't like that a few years ago'.*

We're seeing kids now that are capable of things that wasn't even realised they were capable of but in saying that there, there are kids who have lost out. [Parent]

The views of these parents were supported by a recent school leaver who described herself as low achieving and spoke about the positive impact teachers can have when they highlight a young person's successes as often and as forcibly as they highlight their academic shortcomings.

Teachers motivating you, telling you that you could do better and they were always telling you good things, like it was never anything bad, if it was something bad they'd make it out to be a good thing to make you feel better. [Young female aged 18-21]

The data from Woodstock also confirm a rather obvious point around the need for confidence building interventions aimed at instilling in young people, particularly those who find studying a challenge, a belief that they are capable of academic success. Several other recent school leavers claimed that: teachers rarely took the time to assess or address low confidence levels in the classroom; and that when young people don't feel confident in school they tend to lose interest and stop trying.

Schools' provision of vocation opportunities and visible progression routes

A fourth important meso-level driver of attainment in the Woodstock Ward is schools' provision of vocation opportunities and visible progression routes. There was a fairly broad consensus amongst principals and teachers that: vocational options were valuable and should be increased; and that a proportion of boys from Woodstock would probably never be engaged by traditional subjects but, nonetheless, routinely apply themselves in more vocational settings. It was also argued that young females in the Ward should be made more aware of the range of vocational opportunities available. Despite the fact that they routinely outperform boys in terms of GCSE results, it was suggested that local girls tend to gravitate towards gender-specific jobs such as hairdressing or care-work, which are, commonly, less well paid. However, a contrasting view was offered by a grammar school principal who posited that although vocational qualifications provided engagement for pupils, many young people in his school were *'totally underwhelmed by the qualification itself'* because they knew that their vocational qualification was *'worth nothing'* and that what they really wanted were *'proper GCSEs'*. This view was, however, countered by the vast majority of non-grammar principals and teachers who highlighted the value of giving young people a wide range of employment options and further extolled the virtues of school classrooms having a similarly wide range of backgrounds and ambitions.

In grammar schools, there is the expectation that everyone knows what they want to do, professions, primarily middle class. We have kids who want to be mechanics working alongside kids who want to be doctors. [Senior teacher]

Parents and youth workers similarly argued that: vocational placements should be more widely adopted; decently paid placements would *'incentivise the kids'*; when *'real opportunities'* are created, then young people will respond positively; and that access to such placements should be conditional on regular school attendance and improved levels of effort.

Two days schools, three days placement; if you don't try in the two school days, no placement. [Youth worker]

In addition to vocational opportunities, it was also felt important for schools to clearly demonstrate to young people visible pathways to the labour market and/or further/higher education opportunities. Several teachers and principals argued that: tangible progression routes acted as a critical counter to the widely held and pervasive perceptions amongst sections of Woodstock's school-age population that educational attainment was *'alien'*, *'pointless'*, and *'beyond their reach';* and that to address these misconceptions, schools needed to explicitly show direct connections between attitude, aptitude, formal qualifications such as GCSEs, and young people's subsequent entry into the world of work. Two of the

most important ways of creating these visible pathways were seen as: schools using (local) tradesmen and workers in other professions as positive role models and inviting them to speak to pupils; and a consistent provision of careers advice, support, and guidance.

One boy desperately wants to be a chef, another, a PSNI officer ... I then try to get those real people in to talk … to show it is possible to achieve and how they did it. [Senior teacher]

The key benefits of this approach were that *'it is not teacher talk'*; the tradesmen etc. who visit schools say things like *'you need GCSE Maths ... but you will never use it again because ... Iphones do it for you'.* Similarly, these tradesmen advise pupils to *'just get to the next stage and then you'll be ok; just get through each wee stage and you can be successful'.* It was also suggested that pupils could more easily relate to these *'messengers'* even though, or perhaps because, some of them *'slagged school off to the hilt'*, said they hated school, but got what they wanted out of school in terms of required qualifications.

Residents and community workers agreed that tangible incentives and the visibility of opportunities were important drivers of educational attainment and claimed that young people from Woodstock are best encouraged to apply themselves in school when they can envision that their efforts will increase their employment and/or further education prospects. They further posited that allowing young people to hear and learn the experiences of members of their community who have achieved success in the labour market: made them more aware of potential career pathways; gave them something to aspire to; and, more broadly, widened the horizons of Woodstock's school-age residents.

If these kids saw that 5 GCSEs or whatever would lead to a trade maybe ... or a job with progression routes, I've no doubt they would put the effort in. [Community worker]

Most important thing is to get young people to think there are other avenues. Out of the bubble of East Belfast there are opportunities for me. [Youth worker]

In terms of career guidance, one senior teacher spoke about: individual careers interviews in year 12 to explore options - *'here is what will happen if you do X'*; and the provision of careers teachers on site all day of GCSE and A level results to, for example, make phone calls to technical colleges and universities. Another teacher recalled that on the day of results, school staff don't leave school site until they know each child has *'something concrete'* to go onto.

Alternative measures of success and the rewarding effort and achievement
In addition to visible pathways as discussed above, engendering an increased sense of value on education amongst young people in Woodstock is also contingent on alternative measures of success and the rewarding of effort and achievement. This was seen to be particularly important in areas like Woodstock because many young people: don't see themselves as academically minded; envision few prospects in the labour market; and, thus, feel there is little point in applying themselves in school. To counter these pessimistic outlooks, principals and teachers argued that there was a need to encourage those who perhaps would struggle to attain GCSE English to instead complete Essential English level 2. This qualification, they further claimed, is the equivalent of a 'C' pass and allows young people to meet college entry requirements and means these students *'leave with something'.* In a similar vein, one principal recalled a conversation with a despondent pupil which made her determined to ensure that alternative measures and more rounded definitions of success were developed; another argued that it was important to strike the right balance between formal qualifications and value-added benefits.

Before I took up post, I visited the school on Results Day and asked one girl how she had got on. She said, "I haven't achieved anything, I've got nothing out of school and I'm glad to be leaving." None of my pupils will be able to say that. For me, achievement is a pupil who comes in on, say a level 3, and leaves with 5 'E' grades. Other people don't grade that as achievement, but we have to get away from always walking the traditional route. It can't

always be GCSE's. Your definition of achievement can't simply be examination results; it must provide opportunities for the whole person. [Principal]

Achievement is currently measured by GCSE, AS and A level ... It is valuable only for positioning you in the league table. What's more important is the value added. [Principal]

It was also claimed that although schools are under pressure from the Inspectorate to secure a wider attainment of five GCSEs with English and Maths, *'a school isn't just about that kind of achievement'*; and that it was equally important to ensure that young people are *'being properly equipped for what they want to do next'*.

We've been under the spotlight of the Inspectorate ... I personally would disagree with that pressure ... we're trying to demonstrate that getting D's or E's is also an achievement ... and will see them into a course in 'tech'. [Principal]

Other principals concurred that the inclusion of English and Maths in the targets is the *'main difficulty'* and highlighted the importance of recognising other forms of achievement such as extra-curricular activities and the development of softer skills such as self-esteem and motivation. It was also seen as important to recognise and reward a wider range of social and educational competencies such as standards of uniform, time-keeping, attendance and conduct; and to ensure that all school staff members buy into the idea that achievement and effort are to be celebrated. One principal claimed that *'achievement is absolutely in our mission statement'* and that his school's assemblies are based on recognising success. Another spoke about having *'a really good credit system in Year 8'* where each form class gets rewards and credits; that, at the end of the school year, they get rewarded as a whole form class; and that this policy had an encouraging effect within classrooms.

They get rewarded when they excel at things, so even if you have someone in the form class who isn't necessarily obtaining those rewards, the whole class will get it, so we're hoping it will kind of gee up the less motivated ones. [Principal]

The importance of developing effective reward strategies was also mentioned, particularly, around making the rewards more gender specific. Some schools, it was claimed, conduct surveys to determine gender appropriate rewards; others felt that it was impossible to generalise because, for example, *'there are still some girls who would love go karting'*. It was also suggested that there was a need to make the credit system less obvious because boys can be embarrassed by being rewarded. An effective way of mediating these challenges is to give boys credits *'electronically on SIMS, rather than an obvious stamp on their homework diary'*. More broadly, the consensus was that the reward strategies as outlined above increase punctuality levels and incentivises young people to study more, adhere to dress codes, and behave better.

In addition to these key drivers, a further five, albeit less frequently cited, drivers were identified around: strong, visionary school leadership and a pupil-centred ethos; an effective pastoral care system; the provision of effective support during transition; the adoption of inter-active learning strategies; and appropriate SEN support in schools.

Strong, visionary school leadership and a pupil-centred ethos
A further important meso-level driver of attainment in Woodstock was identified as strong leadership and a pupil-centred ethos within schools. The consensus amongst principals and teachers serving young people from the Ward was that success in schools was contingent on: clearly defined and visionary leadership; empowered staff buying in to this vision; and the effective communication of this vision across the school community.

If the Principal hasn't a clear focus of what they want to achieve ... and hasn't got staff backing, then the school will fail. [Principal]

Several principals and teachers argued that the vision and ethos of a school should encourage maturity, safety and happiness and ensure that young people: are taught in a positive environment; develop their potential; and foster a sense of respect for each-other. In terms of leadership, setting high expectations and achievable targets for teachers, parents, and young people was seen as essential. Moreover, it was equally important to know and communicate precisely what these expectations and targets were, and when to consider interventions. For example, in terms of target-setting, principals spoke about: having a tracking system around GCSEs; the provision of intervention strategies and mentoring programmes in year 12; and the use of Progress in Maths (PIM) and Progress in English (PIE) *'to give baseline scores in year 8'*. More broadly, *'self-evaluation as a core principle'* and the crucial focus on extra-curricular activities were also emphasised.

An effective pastoral care system
The data from the Woodstock Ward, evidence that, in addition to the above outlined leadership, vision, and ethos, a further precondition of a successful school is a *'powerful, efficient and fast-acting'* pastoral care system where intervention is *'quick and continuous'*. To create such a system, several principals highlighted the importance of: working closely with counselling services; effective collaboration with agencies such as the YMCA; the adoption of anti-bullying policies; and schools priding themselves in being caring. To evidence this holistic philosophy, one principal used the metaphor of a boxing ring.

First and foremost, the pastoral care system has to be right. It's like a boxing ring: it's a regular shape and the whole community ... pupils, parents, teachers, governors ... are inside the ring; the ropes are our protocols and standards, the ropes are clearly defined, they're there to protect us and make sure we're happy; but sometimes people will come up against the ropes, and like a boxing ring, there has to be some give and take. [Principal]

In terms of the context for this pastoral care, it was posited that: the recent flag protest was, notwithstanding the sporadic episodes of civil disorder it engendered in Woodstock, a *'pebble in a big pond'*; that emotional health and well-being are the *'really big issues'*; and that a recent spate of suicides has had a huge impact on local young people and created *'shockwaves throughout the community'*. Another principal claimed that there have been *'13 suicides in this area in one year'* and expressed concern that so many young people were seeing suicide as a *'legitimate option'*. It was also suggested that some schools needed to adopt a more structured, in-house counselling service because *'counsellors coming in from outside doesn't work'*. In summary, the consensus was that effective pastoral care was, essentially, about ensuring children were happy in school and that schools adapt themselves to the needs of young people and not the other way around.

The provision of effective support during transition
Another meso-level driver of educational attainment in the Woodstock Ward is the provision of effective support for young people as they transition from primary to secondary school environments. Previous studies around educational attainment and associated barriers consistently highlight the issue of transition as a critical time in a young person's social, emotional, and academic development (Topping, 2011).[49] It is clear that this issue is a *'key priority'* for the schools serving the Woodstock Ward and several principals and teachers claimed that they were confident that *'transition is something ... we do well'*. Many of these schools have in place extensive programmes to support pupils as they advance to secondary education and it was commonly reported that the most important elements of this support are: meeting P7 pupils in their own school; inviting them to visit the secondary school of their choice; establishing their specific learning needs; gaining an awareness of their family circumstances; fostering relationships with their parents; and providing mentoring

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[49] Topping, K. (2011). 'Primary-secondary transition: Differences between teachers' and children's perceptions'. *Improving schools,* 14: 268

support when they enrol. An example of these transition visits was offered by one principal who claimed that the Head of Year would visit the feeder schools and meet the pupils who have chosen their school. Following this visit, P7 pupils are invited up to give them a tour and a *'feel for the school'.* In terms of peer support, another principal talked about: using 6th formers who have received mentoring training through agencies such as PIPS and Childline; assigning these mentors to young enrolees for the first two years of secondary; and the provision of a separate playground for the first few months.

It is also clear from the data that schools themselves benefit from the frameworks they adopt to ease transition. For example, it was commonly reported that when staff from secondary schools visit primaries they speak to every individual child and every individual teacher. The key aims here are to gain an understanding of family backgrounds, identify positive role models, and determine which pupils are vulnerable and, thus, are likely to require support.

Here's a kid who needs support and ... here's a child who has been identified as a peer mentor. [Senior teacher]

Getting the information from the primary school has made transition much easier ... you get the overview; you know the child before they come. Whatever the issues are ... you can be more sensitive in your language and they feel more included. [Senior teacher]

It was also suggested that a particular challenge for parents during transition concerns the purchase of new school uniforms. This often presents significant problems for low income parents because *'the uniform grant has not changed in 40 years, although the price of uniforms has multiplied'.* One principal talked about having a system where used uniforms are brought in and are *'dry-cleaned and re-presented so that parents can access them'.*

The adoption of inter-active learning strategies

Analysis of the Woodstock data also reveal that the adoption of inter-active learning strategies on the part of schools is another driver of educational attainment. Several residents recalled their own time at school and concluded that young people were frequently disengaged by *'old-style'* teaching methods such as the teacher *'just talking to you all the time'.* In contrast, several recent school leavers felt that opportunities to explore beyond the boundaries of their immediate environs and new ways of learning around science were more effective in terms of engendering improved levels of enthusiasm and interest.

There were always school trips but like educational school trips, like for history they would have took you to the Marble Arch caves and showed you all the stuff about Vikings and stuff, so you were outside but you were still learning. [Young female aged 18-21]

In Science class, we were learning about neutrons and my teacher got everybody up in the class to move round the room and pretend to bump into each other; or in the playground pretend that we are planets and are all moving around. [Young male aged 18-21]

One day, we did the human body and everybody had to pretend you were different organs and somebody had to pretend they were blood and go around through the organs. It was something that you always remembered ... it was fun. [Young female aged 18-21]

Appropriate SEN support in schools

The final meso-level driver of educational attainment in the Woodstock Ward relates to the effective and consistent provision of Special Education Needs (SEN) support for young people with learning difficulties and/or issues related to social and emotional development. By and large, the data here show that parents, community workers and recent school leavers from the Ward are very appreciative of the effort made by schools to put in place effective SEN support systems. One young female with dyslexia and one young male with *'a kind of bad temper problem'* recalled that the local schools did everything they could to help and didn't make them feel *'like little freaks'.* Another young male remembered an early

problem being dealt with before it became too much of an issue; and a local community worker with a child with SEN outlined the value of inter-school relationships.

I used to write backwards and my teachers just let me do it and then my mum said to them I needed a bit more help. The whole way through the rest of the school I was alright, I always got extra help if I needed it. [Young male aged 18-21]

There is quite a few of our own local children that would need extra help. I must say [named primary school] is fantastic at providing support, and bringing Harberton in, you know, to give these children the extra help that they need. [Community worker]

6.5 Micro-level drivers of attainment in Woodstock

In terms of bonding social capital, i.e. the immediate, familial factors which encompass a community's levels of empowerment, infrastructure and connectedness, the only significant driver of educational achievement to emerge from the Woodstock data related to the support and encouragement young people receive from their parents.

Parental support and encouragement

The Woodstock data make clear that many local parents actively support and encourage their children to apply themselves at school. This encouragement takes many forms including: ensuring homework is done; providing help if required; and making sure children eat well, sleep well, and get to school on time. Several parents spoke about consistency in terms of homework routines and expected levels of behaviour.

In my home, the children come in from school, the first thing we do is we have a wee drink or whatever if they need and then the homework's done, you don't go out to play, they don't play on anything until the homework is done. [Parent]

Other parents highlighted the need to adopt child-specific methods of encouragement because *'some kids want to learn and others just don't'.* One respondent recalled a conversation with a parent of two children who had completely different attitudes to school.

She just applied herself ... she would come in and sit down, do them (homework tasks), get them done, finish it up, put it in her bag. But, the other one ... she would still be sitting an hour later fooling about and drawing wee pictures. [Parent]

Another parent spoke about her daughter preparing to sit the transfer test with the help of a hired tutor to assist her with Maths. The following exchange with this parent was indicative of the types of issues and conversations many parent-respondents recalled having with their children as they sought to encourage their academic progress.

R: My own wee girl is going to sit it this year the test.

I: Do you want her to sit it?

R: I don't believe in it, no, I don't believe at this age just coming up to 11 that they should be sitting such a big test to determine their future.

I: But you're going to let her do it?

R: I gave her the option, do you want to do it, "yes, I would like to have a go". So, I have a tutor that comes ... from May right through into the middle of July. The tutor was off for 3 weeks, came back last week and said my goodness, what has happened? She didn't want to get up that morning, she wouldn't wash her face, she went down in her pyjamas and she sat at the kitchen table, yawning and yawning. I said, "I'm not paying for a tutor to look at your tonsils" ... that was Monday, came back on Thursday, fantastic.

I: So, what do you think was the problem?

R: I don't think she realised, you know, the simple act of getting up, washing her face, getting dressed, coming down and being prepared. She thought I'll get up and do it anyway, where she couldn't, she'd be still tired, she was lethargic, So the tutor arrived, went away came back on Thursday, she was up, she was washed, she was dressed and she sat and she flew through a paper no problem, you know. So, it's the simple things ... if the parents can't be bothered to say go, wash your face, you know, go do that, I mean, some of the children, and it's sad to say, come out and you think "my goodness, have you had your hair brushed?"

6.6. Macro level inhibitors of attainment in Woodstock

Analysis of the data from the Woodstock Ward highlighted a total of eight structural inhibitors to academic achievement. Of these eight, the four most frequently cited related to: legacies of the recent conflict; the fact that many schools attended by young people are not located in the Woodstock community; academic selection; and demographic change and a resultant perceived 'loss of community'.

Legacies of the recent conflict
One thing that is clear from the Woodstock data is that legacies of the recent 'Troubles' continue to have a significantly negative impact on the local community. There was a fairly broad consensus among community workers, residents, and parents that the Woodstock community remained primarily characterised by conflict-era politics. Indeed, some of these respondents claimed that the Ward has been *'poorly represented by local politicians'* whose sporadic use of '*inflammatory rhetoric'* heightens tensions and perpetuates inter-community divisions; and that the *'only thing this flag protest in East Belfast gave young people was criminal convictions and jail terms'.* Several of these community-level respondents also argued that the extant influence that paramilitaries have in the community is negative; that young people who choose to join the paramilitaries do so because it gives them the identity and purpose they lack.

A further corrosive legacy of the conflict is the continuing inter-community divisions between Protestants from the Woodstock Ward and their Catholic neighbours (e.g. in the Short Strand). Community workers claimed that cross-community interaction was practically non-existent. Moreover, it was argued that because so many working-class residents of Woodstock don't actually have jobs and rarely leave their communities, there are very few opportunities to create positive inter-community relationships. This lack of engagement with outside communities, these respondents concluded, reinforces the insularity and inward-looking tendencies of many Woodstock residents. Similarly, many were also very pessimistic that such relations would improve any time soon claiming that *'the religious conflict is never going to go away'* because it is *'too deeply ingrained'* in both traditions and *'too much hurt has been suffered'.*

Moreover, it is clear that many Woodstock residents' spatial sense of self is informed by conflict legacies and notions of being *'fenced in'*, *'surrounded on all sides'* and severely limited in terms of safe passage to city centre-based services and facilities.

There is not one road into Belfast city centre without going through a Catholic community. [Youth worker]

It was also argued by community workers that *'every day, young Catholics in Aquinas uniforms walk up and down the Ravenhill Road, no problem'* and that *'not one word is said to them'.* However, the same sources added, *'nobody sees that'* and that many young Protestants are not safe in other areas of the Ward; and that getting home from the city centre at weekends was more dangerous now than during the Troubles.

We are the most tolerant people going. But in terms of cross-community relations, our young people take their lives in their own hands when they walk up the Albertbridge Road. [Community worker]

I always urge my son to take a taxi home. It was safe to walk when I was young, but not now. [Community worker]

The views of these community-based respondents around the enduring impact of the conflict were supported by principals and teachers from the schools serving young people from the Woodstock Ward who argued some, boys in particular, were discouraged from applying themselves in school because of: the recent flag protest; a distinct lack of positive role models; and a preponderance of negative ones.

The recent flag protest which, it was argued, proved to be particularly attractive in areas like the Woodstock, clearly had a destabilising effect on many local young people. During this period, it was claimed, a significant number of pupils from the Newtownards Road struggled to study for exams. For example, an incident was recalled where a young girl who was *'leaving the bins out'* narrowly escaped serious injury when *'a petrol bomb flew over her head'*. Similarly, during this time, young people *'would say they weren't sleeping at night'*. It was also reported that *'a few boys were involved ... and were cautioned by police'*. In the aftermath of the protest, teachers recalled spending *'a lot of time with them ... to get them to think about what they were trying to achieve, and the consequences of their actions'*. It was also claimed that one of the more effective ways of making these young people reflect on their actions was to invite 6th formers to talk to the junior school in assemblies about the flag protests. This intervention was seen as powerful because it was coming from those who lived in the area.

Several principals and teachers also lamented the lack of positive role models in areas such as Woodstock and pointed out: the high numbers of unemployed residents, many of whom are family members of the young people; the low achievement rates of recent school leavers; and the general impression that people from this area *'just don't succeed'*. Conversely, these same respondents highlighted the regular occurrence of criminality in the area; and the perception among some young people that the only people in this area who seem succeed do so through unlawful means.

Schools attended by young people not located in the Woodstock community
As the tables and graphs presented below indicate, many of the schools which serve the Woodstock community are located outside of the Ward. It is also clear from the qualitative data that residents of Woodstock and the principals and teachers from these schools believe this spatial detachment, or what was described as the *'invisibility'* of schools, is an important inhibitor of attainment. It was frequently argued that many young people found it difficult to feel a sense of connection to higher achieving schools, such as Wellington College or Grosvenor Grammar as well as controlled sector high schools such as Newtownbreda and Knockbreda, because of their distance to their home communities.

I think that visibility thing is crucial and if [named grammars schools] are not visible then how can they be relevant; so, there's something about how do you create visibility for education in places. [Community worker]

In terms of grammar schools, it was argued that: this geographical detachment was making it harder for parents in Woodstock who do want their children to achieve; these schools routinely fail to present themselves as relevant to local people; and that only a very small proportion of their students live in the Ward.

These schools are miles away and it is not just about physical miles away, they're just not part of that community, they don't engage. [Community worker]

How could [named grammar school] relate to a particular community on the lower Woodstock Road where actually only 6% of their pupils come from, if that. [Community worker]

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From the data presented in Table 6.1 (see under Local Context section) a 'bubble' chart was then created in Excel (see Figure 6.4 below) to graphically represent the distance (in miles) of schools serving young people from Duncairn from the Ward centre, and this distance was placed against the GCSE pass rate of the schools, and also to visually represent the numbers of young people enrolled in each school, both grammar (in blue) and secondary (in orange). The chart for Woodstock shows that all of the schools that serve young people from the Ward are one to three miles from the centre of the Ward; it is therefore not likely that these schools are considered as 'local' schools by the residents. The two main secondary schools that young people enrol in, Knockbreda and Newtownbreda High Schools, are over two miles away, and both of these have low rates of GCSE attainment (as shown below as their 'bubble' fall low on the y–axis). The grammar schools or schools with a grammar stream (in blue) do however enrol a substantial number of young people from the Ward: 20.4% of the total number living there, and while young people also have to travel more than a mile to get to these schools, they perform relatively well.
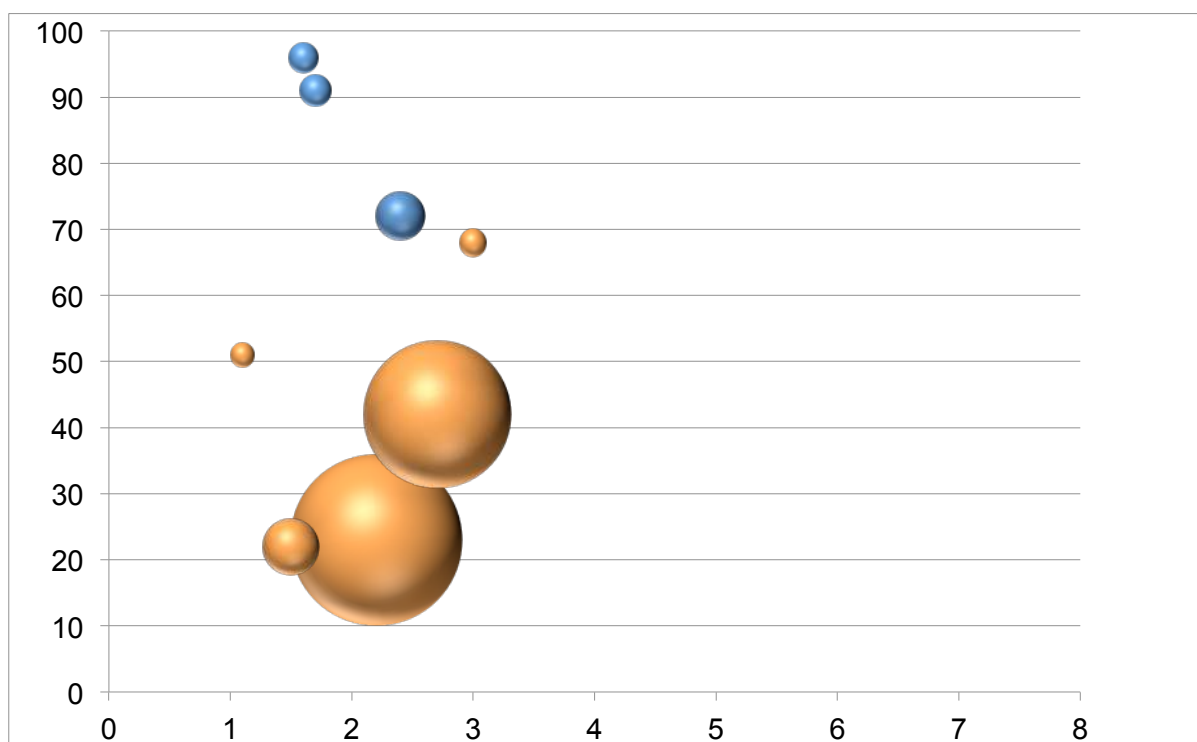
Figure 6.4: Schools in Woodstock GCSE Pass (A*-C) rates 2011 by miles from Ward centre and enrolment numbers. Blue – Grammar schools Orange - Other schools

In terms of addressing this spatial detachment between young people from Woodstock and their place(s) of education, it was reported that plans are at a fairly advanced stage in respect of building a new secondary school in Avoniel (which is actually located in the neighbouring Ward of the Mount but is much closer than any of the other 'local' secondary schools). Such a development, it was claimed, would reap two important benefits: firstly, a clear message to the community that the educational welfare of local young people is a priority; and secondly, that the new school would become an integral part of the wider community fabric, and a *'game-changer'* in terms of the community's attitude to education and its value.

The Belfast Education and Library Board has gone ahead and made a plan to redevelop Avoniel school. Now, for us that would bring this closer to the most disadvantaged community and it would send out a very strong signal ... to the community ... so that we can utilise that as an opportunity to really drive up levels of educational aspiration in that particular area. I think that there's everything to play for ... I really like the idea of a new school. If you're talking about education, I think if we get a new school at Avoniel with a new

identity and a bought-in community, well then ... that'll be a bloody good start to the process and a different school than the ones that exist currently; a school that has a community focus and is rooted in the community. [Community worker]

It was also suggested that the proposed new school would give local young people the opportunity to reassess their secondary school choices during transition by providing a quality local option. Moreover, it was further argued that the visibility of educational opportunities in the local area could be significantly enhanced if a stand-alone sixth form was built in the community.

If you had a brand-new school in here ... our view was wouldn't it be great if some kids who were trying to get into the oversubscribed schools in the leafy suburbs could decide that it was an OK thing to come into the not so leafy suburbs because they were going to a good school too. [Community worker]

I feel boys and girls, they would quite like to have a joint sixth form centre or a sixth form centre ... and I would argue that if you're going to build a sixth form centre for post primary kids, why does it have to be attached to an existing school? Why not build a sixth form somewhere in here, a sixth form college? [Community worker]

More broadly, there was consensus around the acute need for new educational infrastructure and policy interventions in the Woodstock Ward to ensure that local young people can avail of the significant developmental benefits of new learning environments and the chance to avail of third level education.

Academic selection

The third macro-level inhibitor of educational achievement in the Woodstock Ward concerns the policy of academic selection. Aside from respondents from the grammar sector, there were very few respondents who thought selection was either fair or effective. The clear consensus among principals and teachers from the controlled sector was that selection: reinforces pre-existing disadvantage, particularly amongst young people from deprived backgrounds and/or those with limited parental support; was an arbitrary and *'crude'* way of categorising young people, many of whom are written off; and that many 11 and 12-year olds are insufficiently developed at this stage to allow schools to make definitive judgement about their future. A grammar school principal who spoke out in defence of selection argued that it gave high ability children the opportunity to leave school having achieved their potential. However, this view was at odds with the controlled sector principals and teachers who claimed that the same process, commonly, prevents the more disadvantaged students from doing likewise. Moreover, a senior teacher posited that selection has elevated the status of grammars schools to the wider detriment of the secondary school sector.

Secondary schools should be given more respect. There's a powerful grammar school lobby and a lot of respect goes there. [Senior teacher]

These control sector perceptions of academic selection were mirrored in the community-level data where very few respondents were in favour of the process. Indeed, many residents and community workers condemned the practice as *'cruel'.* The consensus here was that: *'kids are written off'* before they reach their teenage years; they then envision that they will leave school with no qualification; and are, thus, likely to wonder why they should *'try for the next four years'.* Several local parents spoke about selection being something of a *'non-issue'* for their children because *'they don't even do the transfer test'* or they *'just want to go to [named secondary school] ... the school that all their friends go to'.*

It's exceptional for kids to want to go to grammar school in these ... it's almost like nobody wants to go to grammar school in these communities. [Community worker]

As previously mentioned in the Local Context section of this chapter, 20.4% of young people from the Woodstock Ward attended a grammar school or a school with a grammar stream in 2011. Looking at the number who attend grammar schools alone (i.e. schools that are fully

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selective on an academic basis), that figure falls to 11.3%, which would be the lowest figure of all Wards in the ILiAD sample (Duncairn is the next-lowest, at 11.7%). The low number of young people from Woodstock who go on to sit the transfer test was confirmed by parents, residents and community workers who claimed that many local parents often dissuade their children from sitting the test, primarily, because they fear their child will feel excluded in a grammar school environment. Two residents who also sit on the board of governors of a local primary school also highlighted the, often, arbitrary consequences of the transfer test for local families, as evidenced in the following exchange:

I: So how many kids in [named primary school] would do the transfer test?

R: Four came out I think. I think that's another case of kids that can do it that parents won't let them.

R: In fact, there was, we had wee twins, we'd twins, one passed, one didn't. So, you know, that was a bit of a kick in the teeth to the mummy.

R: One passed, one didn't. Now they're going to the same school, obviously they're going to Lagan but one's going in to the grammar stream and one's staying the other stream.

Moreover, a community worker who described selection as an *'absolute disgrace'* and *'the most awful way'* of managing the education system highlighted an addition problem caused by selection. The other secondary schools, she claimed, are losing their brightest intake because falling rolls have compelled grammars to *'claw more and more'* of their traditional students.

Grammar schools are more open to taking young people that they wouldn't have considered a long time ago, because they're all pushed for numbers, there's not enough young people to populate the schools. [Community worker]

Despite this opening up of the grammar sector to non-traditional enrolees, these schools remain perceived as exclusive, particularly for low income families and/or students who live in working class areas. Examples of this exclusion were forwarded by a local community worker and a high-achieving student from the *'lower end'* of the Newtownards Road.

All schools have their hierarchies; people talk about school uniforms being able to kind of equalise everything but if you're not getting a new pair of shoes every year or a new blazer every year then it's not that equal and you never get to go on the school trips because they're far too much money. [Community worker]

There were other ones there that really did look down their nose at you and say; "oh you're from the lower end of the road". I thought "who do you think you are? I'm here learning as well as you, you know". [Young female aged 18-21]

Demographic change and a perceived 'loss of community'
The changing profile of the Woodstock Ward and the perception that the area had suffered *'a loss of community'* as a result of such change was a consistent theme in the community-level data. Community workers and residents claimed that there were two key aspects to the Ward's new demographic profile, an increased proportion from a Catholic background, and the high number of recent arrivals, particularly from Eastern Europe. Moreover, according to these sources: the *'disruptive'* and *'unsettling'* impact of Woodstock's fluid demography is an inhibitor of local educational attainment because: such population changes indicate and promote fatalistic perceptions of *'encroachment'* and *'inevitable decline';* and that these notions are absorbed by some young people who are then dissuaded from applying themselves in school.

The 2011 census shows that between 2001 and 2011, the population of the Woodstock Ward remained fairly static and increased by only 423 people or 8.2% compared to a Northern Ireland rise of 7.3%. However, the census data also show that the proportion of

residents who describe themselves as belonging to the Protestant community has fallen from 86.7% in 2001 to 63.3% in 2011. The corresponding figures for residents from a Catholic background are aligned to this pattern and grew from 6.2% in 2001 to 19.4% in 2011. The changing (religious) profile of the community and its *'thankfully limited'* impact on inter-community relations was reflected in the following exchange with a local community worker:

The community between Ravenhill Avenue and the Albert Bridge use to be 100% Protestant, it's now 70% and it's a credit to this community that, by and large, everyone lives together peaceably. [Community worker]

There was also a fairly widely held perception that the number of ethnic minorities in the Woodstock area has increased *'sharply'* in recent years. It was clear from the qualitative accounts of residents and community workers that these transformations to the local population structure have presented challenges to the community, perceived or otherwise. For example, it was commonly reported that: 20% of Nettlefield primary pupils are recent arrivals to Northern Ireland; it was *'near impossible'* to get a house because of the *'dramatic rise'* in inward migration; and that, more broadly, *'the place is flooded with foreigners'*[50]. According to local parents, residents and community workers, impacts and manifestations of these demographic changes fall into four sub-themes around: a lost sense of community; an increased private rented sector; the stigma of racism; and the creation of economic and social interfaces. These four inter-related issues are examined in turn below.

- *Demography 1 - Lost sense of community*

There is clearly a perception amongst some residents of the Woodstock Ward that the above outlined changes to the Ward's demographic profile have led to a lost sense of community. Several respondents reminisced of a more settled and homogenous past when *'everyone knew everyone and every street was a little community'*.

I could take you to the street I was raised in, 40 yards from here. Now, nobody knows their neighbour ... there are now only 2 or 3 long term residents left. [Community worker]

It was also suggested by local community workers that a contributing factor to this lost sense of community was a long-standing perception within loyalist communities which tends to be about *'having their identity erased'*. This was contrasted with the Catholic community where, it was argued there is a *'clearer vision ... about why you're doing things'* and *'an overarching ideology that underpins almost everything.'*

- *Demography 2 - The private rented sector and perceptions of Woodstock as a 'dumping ground'*

It is clear that many people in Woodstock feel the ever-increasing proportion of houses in the private sector has had a negative impact on the community.[51] There was a consensus that the local private rented sector has attracted people who had been *'put out'* or *'expelled'* from other areas and that the Woodstock area was being used as a *'dumping ground'*.

In 1991, I seen what this area was becoming a dumping ground for some lower elements – the growing private rented sector means that anyone can move in; this was a community but not anymore. [Community worker]

Several respondents felt that the use of the private rented sector to house *'the displaced'* means that *'people come in and wreck all around them, then move on'*. Others spoke about

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[50] The population in Woodstock has increased from just over 5,100 in 2001 to 5,550 in 2013 (Source: NINIS). Overall net migration in Northern Ireland peaked in 2006/07 at 10,930. It has fallen since then to -2,338 for the 2012/13 year (Source: NINIS). On Census day 2011, 35,704 or 2% of the total residents in Northern Ireland were born in an EU accession country. A report by the Housing Executive published on 1st June 2014 stated that 76% of migrant workers reside in privately owned accommodation; 3% live in Housing Executive accommodation; and 5% live in Housing Association accommodation.

[51] According to the Census 2011, 63.1% of households in Woodstock were privately rented; this was a marked increase from the number reported in the Census 2001, when 16.3% of households were privately rented (415 out of 2542 households).

such incomers being *'rewarded for being a problem family'* and the corrosive effect these transitory tenures can have on the wider community.

If you have a community and move in all those bozos, you have not fixed a problem; you have created one and destroyed a community. [Community worker]

It was also argued that, alongside recent arrivals from Eastern Europe, the resettlement of displaced families made it increasingly difficult for *'locally born'* residents to secure social housing. The clear implication of these perceptions is that the dispersing of the 'old' community and settling of a 'new' one has decreased cohesion and people's sense of connection within the area.

- *Demography 3 - Stigma of racism*

According to several residents and community workers, a spate of recent racist attacks on ethnic minorities in and around the Woodstock area has unfairly labelled and stigmatised the community. There was a sense of frustration that community-level attempts to help new arrivals settle and integrate, such as inter-cultural cooking classes and youth football competitions involving *'all kinds of kids, Roma, black, local all getting on great'* are routinely ignored by the media because *'good news does not sell papers'.* Although many respondents were outright in their condemnation of such attacks, others appeared to limit the scale of the problem. For example, it was suggested that incidents commonly portrayed in the media as racist, are, often*, 'actually internal stuff, factions within the Roma community; Russians and Poles knocking seven bells out of each other'.*

- *Demography 4 - Economic and social interfaces*

In addition to the ethno-religious divisions as outlined previously, it is also clear that economic cleavages also characterise the Woodstock community. In the broader context of East Belfast, some of the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland sit alongside some of the most affluent. For example, the Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM) for the Woodstock Ward shows that it is the 39th most deprived Ward (out of 582); while the neighbouring Dundonald Ward is rated the 544th most deprived (or the 38th most affluent). Moreover, it would appear that there are similar economic cleavages within the Ward. Several respondents highlighted: the growth of private developments, many of which, it was claimed, are designed as *'gated communities'*; the creation of new social interfaces; and a *'two-tier'* education system.

When we speak of interfaces people automatically think of Short Strand, Albertbridge Road, Bridge Street, Lower Newtownards Road, but the whole demographics of East Belfast is changing into social interfaces. When we see private houses being plonked into the middle of working class communities; they're being gated; the first thing that goes up is a fence before they put a brick down. [Community worker]

Education is one of the most visible representations of inequality in East Belfast; it is like the tale of two cities, we have some of the best schools in Northern Ireland but we've also got four Wards amongst the top 10% most disadvantaged. [Community worker]

Relatedly, despite a host of regeneration initiatives in and around the Woodstock Ward in recent years, several residents thought that some parts of the Ward have become increasingly *'ghettoised'.* For example, one community worker argued that communities in Inner East Belfast are *'less socially balanced than they would have been a long time ago'.* Another highlighted the likely impact on the self-esteem of the Ward's less affluent residents when they see the *'poverty in North Street and Templemore Street'* and contrast the deprivation there with *'yuppie type apartments across the road at Templemore Avenue'.*

Imagine the effect that that has on young people when they see that. They probably accept that they are going to live in poverty for the rest of their days. [Community worker]

In addition to these four structural inhibitors a further four macro-level barriers to academic attainment in Woodstock were identified as: high levels of deprivation, insularity, and benefit dependency; a lack of inter-agency collaboration and the spectre of school closures; a perceived 'Influx' of non-English speakers to local schools; and a lack of resources in schools.

High levels of deprivation, insularity, and benefit dependency

A further macro-level inhibitor of academic achievement in Woodstock relates to the high levels of deprivation, insularity and benefit dependency. A common theme to emerge from the data was that East Belfast, once considered the *'industrial heartland'* of Northern Ireland, was now something of an *'industrial wasteland'.* Similarly, several respondents spoke about the fact that everywhere there are visual reminders of a time when people had lots of work, i.e. the shipyards and industrial waste-ground. Other respondents highlighted the decreasing number of commercial premises on the once *'bustling'* Newtownards Road where '*all you see is the facade of closed shops'.* Moreover, these symbolic indicators of industrial and commercial decline serve to: remind local people of the complete lack of employment opportunities that are available today; and, thus, further lower their self-esteem and accentuate their detachment from the labour market.

Principals and teachers of the schools serving the Woodstock Ward also commonly cited that: the '*lack of local jobs brings a lack of hope and that damages aspirations'*; many young people live in homes where there are *'money problems'* and *'distraught'* parents; and that the dire state of the local labour market and wider economic problems have engendered *'stresses and break-ups in families'.* These school and community-level respondents also agreed that Woodstock was characterised by a *'complete lack of real opportunities'* and high levels of economic inactivity. These assertions are certainly supported by the latest deprivation indices which report that in 2011: 33.6% of local people aged 16 to 74 years old were economically inactive compared to 12.9% across Northern Ireland; and 7.9% were unemployed compared to a Northern Ireland figure of 4.9%. The NI Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010 shows that Woodstock is within the top 10% of Wards for income deprivation (53rd out of 582 Wards).

It was also frequently suggested that the Woodstock community is characterised by insular attitudes which, as highlighted earlier, are compounded by the restricted spatial mobility of many residents. Principals and teachers spoke about children in their schools who *'don't go anywhere else'* and feel that *'they are only OK in their own areas'.* Similarly, it was argued that many young people from Woodstock *'have never been to Short Strand'*; don't take public buses apart from school bus; don't know the stops; don't know main routes such as Botanic Avenue or the Ormeau Road; that the *'Inner East is their whole life'*; and that many have *'never been on holidays'.* It was also claimed that the recent flag protest has intensified these inward-looking views; and that, perhaps, the only opportunity of addressing insularity in the area was the social mix that is available in some schools.

They get here and mix with kids who have been abroad and have been to other areas. Social mixing is good for them. [Senior teacher]

In terms of accusations of welfare dependency in Woodstock, the data indicate that many residents have a genuine sense of compassion for individuals and families in receipt of social security benefits. It is equally clear that such people face an increasingly difficult range of challenges as they mediate: barriers to a skills-centric labour market; the demise of local industry; the withdrawal of welfare entitlements; and swingeing cuts to public services (O'Hara, 2014)[52]. In addition to these challenges, the data here also show that some of their fellow residents blame them for their predicament. It was frequently expressed that a culture of benefit dependency is having a particularly negative impact on local education attainment levels. Admittedly, there was broad acknowledgment that: East Belfast was something of an *'industrial wasteland'*; there existed extremely few employment opportunities; and many

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[52] O'Hara, M. (2014). *Austerity bites: a journey to the sharp end of cuts in the UK*. Bristol: Policy Press.

'decent people' are suffering significant economic hardship. However, it is equally apparent that some in the community distinguish between the poor and those they deem the undeserving poor. Several residents of Woodstock clearly harbour resentment towards those who are accused of choosing *'welfare as a lifestyle'* and the impact these *'lifestyle choices'* have on the aspiration of local young people. In focus groups with young people aged 18-21 and local residents, it was argued that such a culture dissuades young people from finding work or trying at school.

I think they're seeing their friends, how their families work ... they're basically thinking to themselves why should I go do this when I can get paid more for doing nothing? [Resident]

What's the point in trying at school because I'm just going to go on benefits anyway? I do think that there is a serious benefit culture and it's passing on to the kids. [Resident]

The notion of people in deprived neighbourhoods becoming trapped by welfare is a common theme in the literature on social exclusion (Jordan, 1996)[53]; so too is the tendency for blaming attitudes from their working-class neighbours (Pierson, 2010)[54]. In this study, although several Woodstock residents were keen to highlight the influence of political economy and other structural factors for this poverty trap, other residents directed the blame at those who, it was claimed, are *'milking the system'.* However, a significantly more sympathetic view was offered by a statutory employee who argued that what really trapped many local people, particularly single mothers, in the welfare-poverty cycle was a complete lack of affordable childcare.

They would have no childcare if they go to work. I used to work in the Benefits office and I would sit down with clients and work out how much they would earn if they took a particular job. In some cases, they would only be £5 better off a week, but they would need to pay for childcare, dental and optical costs so there was no benefit in working. [Community worker]

Lack of inter-agency collaboration and the spectre of school closures
As indicated earlier, the collaborative involvement of external agencies is an important driver of academic attainment in the Woodstock Ward. However, similar to other drivers such as the <u>presence</u> of parental support and effective pastoral care systems, in situations where there is an <u>absence</u> of collaborative inter-agency involvement, young people are inhibited from realising their full educational potential. Moreover, this inhibitor of attainment in the Woodstock Ward is compounded by the omnipresent threat of school closures. According to local community workers, this lack of collaborative involvement of external agencies in Woodstock is because: schools get caught up in a *'lot of paperwork'*; some external agencies are focused on *'covering their backs'*; and that *'there's no huge history of collaborative activity in East Belfast around education in quite the same way as North and West Belfast'.* Previous attempts to initiate collaborative fora have failed, primarily according to a senior figure in the community sector, because the Belfast Education and Library Board claim they *'don't have enough personnel to populate all these meetings'.* The lack of inter-agency engagement in the Woodstock area was also highlighted by another community worker with a long-standing interest in the field of community education.

North and West have almost cornered the market of all the executives so by the time you get to the table there's nobody left to actually be here. There is a much more holistic approach, education working much more closely with the community in North and West Belfast than would be evident in South and East. So, we have quite a different culture of engagement. [Community worker]

The need for collaborative practices was also raised by EWOs who emphasised the importance (and frequent absence) of coordinated approaches to support underachieving

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[53] Jordan, B. (1996). *A Theory of Poverty and Social Exclusion*, Oxford: Polity Press.

[54] Pierson, J. (2010). *Tackling Social Exclusion* (second edition), London: Routledge.

pupils. These same sources also lamented the fact that: EWOs cannot make direct referrals to the Educational Psychology Service (EPS); and that the EPS are not always aware of the SEN of pupils whom the EWOs are working with. A further example of this disjointed support relates to the issue of 'statementing' where another EWO claimed that as schools *'only have access to a restricted number of referral slots'*, a number of pupils may be struggling with school work because they have not been assessed and thus may have undiagnosed learning conditions such as dyslexia or ADHD. However, the same source conceded that the EPS appear to be significantly under-resourced thereby limiting the number of pupils they are able to carry out assessments on.

Related to the notion of schools being detached from external, macro-level support, it is also clear that education attainment in Woodstock is further inhibited by the corrosive spectre of, supposedly imminent, school closures, and the endless delays in building new ones. Community workers and parents claimed that the *'constant rumours'* that the local primary school is closing was having an acutely negative impact on the area; EWOs spoke about a *'threat hanging over the community'*; and residents argued that, in the light of such rumours, many local parents had *'given up'* on this school as a viable choice. Furthermore, in terms of attempts to counter the impact of this spectre, one respondent said she was sceptical that the proposed new school at Avoniel would ever get built. She then went on to criticise those who manage education policy in the area by citing previous broken promises in respect of a new replacement school following the closure of a local primary school some six years ago.

I am very sceptical about plans for the new secondary school ... there was a bit of an uproar over the closure of Mersey Street school in East Belfast but the promise was made to build a new school and that's about six years late in the making. So, none of the children who were at Mersey Street ever seen the new school and it's still not there. [Community worker]

Influx of non-English speakers to local schools
As highlighted earlier, the recent arrivals of migrants, particularly those from Eastern Europe, have presented a range of challenges (perceived or otherwise) for the Woodstock community. According to several parents and community workers, the most significant of these challenges relates to the integration of the children of these recent arrivals into local schools. It was frequently expressed that: schools are struggling to cope with the influx of non-English speakers; there is *'massive polarisation between ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples'*; and that *'having young people there who can't speak the local language ... must have a detrimental effect'* on attainment levels. Moreover, it was claimed that the needs of *'locally born'* children are being neglected as schools' energy and resources are directed towards '*these foreigners*' who, it was argued by some, are *'getting everything'.*

At [named primary school] we have always had a busy SEN unit because plenty of local kids needed help. Now you have a school with 19 different languages, so what happens to the indigenous kids who are struggling with their reading? People see this, so they do. [Parent]

However, it would appear that local schools' initiatives to integrate these recent arrivals have engendered at least one unforeseen positive outcome. A community worker recalled that in the local primary's after-school club, Polish children learn English through reciting nursery rhymes. The same source added that the club is now introducing this method to *'local kids'* because *'every year they're getting slower coming into P1; half of them can hardly speak'.*

Lack of resources in schools
The final macro-level inhibitor of educational attainment in the Woodstock relates to the lack of resources in schools. Several principals and teachers claimed that resource deficits in schools' impact on a range of issues, including: funding of staff posts; physical maintenance of school buildings; ability to pay utility bills; provision of new technology and Extended

Schools programmes; and the creation of improved, in-school careers advice services. One principal spoke about having floors that haven't been repaired in 40 years and the need for interactive whiteboards and tablet technology, which, it was claimed, would make a difference because *'this is how young people learn today'.* However, other cost pressures often prevented the meeting of such needs, let alone the realisation of the school's more ambitious plans.

94% of my budget goes on staffing, then I have to pay for heating and lighting ... we don't have the money ... to take this school to the next level. [Principal]

Another principal said that their school had *'lost 7 teachers last year ... due to funding cuts'* adding that *'we have this lovely building, but teachers are worked to death'.* Similarly, a third principal lamented that *'we should be able to offer Full Service funding classes to parents in the evening for free'* adding that *'North and West Belfast have this and East Belfast doesn't'.* This respondent then gave a specific example of the consequences of funding withdrawal.

I had a very successful course running for some of the lowest achieving girls ... this was having a profound impact upon them ... the funding has been removed. [Principal]

Finally, a senior teacher admitted that although schools are supposed to incorporate careers guidance in the curriculum, *'it is hard to fit in the time'.* She also conceded that: the *'inspectorate picked up on'* the issue of careers advice *'as a weakness of ours'*; that *'we need to do much more'*; but that her school was restricted by budgetary concerns.

6.7 Meso-level inhibitors of attainment in Woodstock

A total of six school-level inhibitors of achievement in Woodstock were identified as: low attainment expectations on the part of schools; high levels of absenteeism; disruptive classmates and peer dissuasion; weak linkages between schools and the community; and inappropriate curricula and GCSEs as the *'sole indicator of achievement'.*

Low attainment expectations on the part of schools
According to the data, an important meso-level inhibitor of educational attainment in Woodstock is the low expectations some schools have for local young people. Although some residents and community workers accepted that *'they are not going to be a bunch of brain boxes coming out because of the area'*, they also thought many teachers simply give up on them. Teachers, it was argued, too often conclude that if parents *'don't give a monkeys'*, neither should they; and that, because they think *'the majority of those kids are road to no town'* there was no point in bothering.

It doesn't take long for the teachers to crack on; "you don't give a fuck, I'm not giving a fuck". What's the point in trying if the family don't care? [Parent]

One parent outlined an incident concerning the transfer test which, she claimed, ably demonstrates the low expectations Protestant working class schools have for their pupils. The same source then went on to contrast this experience with the likely response of schools in the Catholic sector.

This year there was three wee girls in P7 and they got an outstanding mark in their transfer test, and they came in on the Monday after the results were delivered ... this is a true story, and they were all excited on the Monday morning, and the teacher says, "Keep that quiet, you'll annoy some of the other kids by talking like that". [Parent]

The Catholic areas are working class too ... a Catholic friend told me, "See them three kids, the principal here would've had them up in front of the assembly"; where they would say, "these girls got an outstanding mark and this is what hard work can get for you". [Parent]

Further examples of low expectations were offered around some schools' relaxed attitude to children being excused from homework when they are off school but are still more than capable of homework completion. Similarly, another respondent highlighted low literacy

levels amongst some young people and argued that if the work pupils submit is inadequate, teachers should make them do it again until it was right.

My eldest wee girl is in P5 there, and she was off sick for two days so I went up and was getting her homework. "Oh, she's sick, don't bother with it"; I said, "No, no, she's not dying she's just unwell. Her two arms work, and her brain is still intact, so she can do it". [Parent]

So many of the young lads ... you want to see some of their writing; it's illegible; you're talking about wee lads at 11 that can't really write properly. The teacher should be saying "I can't read that, so I'm not accepting that; go and do it again". [Community worker]

High levels of absenteeism

Research suggests that absence tends to be higher in more disadvantaged areas where FSM provision is greatest, which in turn is likely to impact upon children's attainment levels[55]. Woodstock is not as highly deprived as Duncairn, nor as affluent as Tullycarnet – it ranked 39th for multiple deprivation in the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010, and the percentage of school leavers entitled to FSM between 2008 and 2012 was 28.4%. Figure 6.5 shows that FSM entitlement and high absenteeism go hand-in-hand in the Woodstock Ward. The eight post-primary schools serving young people from Woodstock had an average high-absenteeism rate (defined as attendance below 85% during a school year) of 21.3% during 2012/13, ranging from 39.7% in Orangefield High School to 2.0% in Grosvenor Grammar (see Figure 6.5 below).
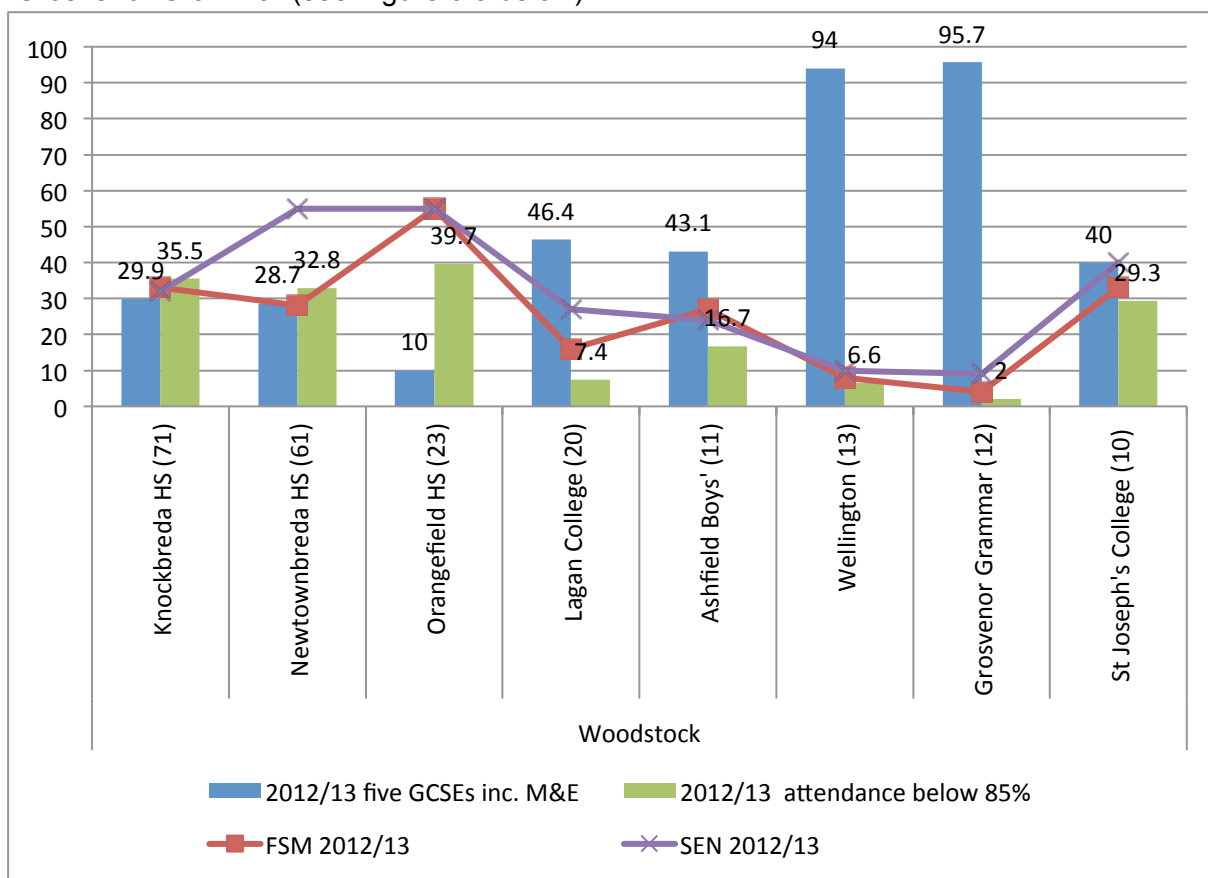
Figure 6.5: GCSE attainment, attendance, and average FSM entitlement rates – Woodstock

The results do suggest that absenteeism must be factored into any explanation of why Catholic Wards of high deprivation are out-performing Protestant Wards of similarly high (or lower) deprivation. The schools that serve Woodstock are mainly the same as the schools

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[55] RSM McClure Watters (2012). *Research into Improving Attendance in Schools Serving Deprived Areas.* Belfast: Department of Education Northern Ireland.

that serve Tullycarnet, with a few exceptions. Knockbreda High School serves most young people in the Ward (71 from the Ward in 2011/12), but, like Newtownbreda and Orangefield, the next two most popular schools, approximately one third of pupils have high rates of absenteeism – 35.5% in 2012/13. Given that Newtownbreda has a much higher rate of pupils with any SEN than Knockbreda, this again points to other influences with Newtownbreda that are having a positive impact on pupil achievement. Interestingly, St Joseph's College also has similar rates of high absenteeism, FSM entitlement, and SEN intake as Knockbreda, but the GCSE achievement rate is ten percentage points higher – pointing to other positive influences on achievement within St Joseph's.

Disruptive classmates and peer dissuasion

Another significant meso-level inhibitor of educational attainment in Woodstock is the impact of disruptive classmates and peer dissuasion. It was frequently claimed that badly behaved children sometimes completely disrupt the learning for keener and/or more able students; and that, too often, teachers don't do enough to prevent such distractions. To evidence the impact of disruptive pupils, a local community worker recalled a situation in his son's P5 class when the arrival of a young boy with severe behaviour problems had a particularly negative impact on what was previously '*a great wee class'*.

A new lad to the area was put in P5 class which was doing great, the new lad brought in knives. The class descended into chaos, telling the teacher to eff off. That one wee lad totally wrecked that class. [Community worker]

However, it was during the focus groups with young people aged 18-21 where the most salient examples were outlined. Here, it was claimed that a disproportionate amount of the teachers' attention was directed towards the '*troublemakers'* at the expense of the '*tryers'*.

There were always people in school that would mess about and they always tried to distract everybody and put the teachers off and the teacher's attention had to go on the person that was messing about, so everybody else in the class that wanted to try it was getting left out. [Young female aged 18-21]

The teacher would usually take the two people that's messing about outside and they would have to talk to them outside so the class is left by themselves and then everybody else starts messing about until the teacher comes back in so you're losing 15, 20 minutes of the lesson. [Young male aged 18-21]

Teachers were doing nothing about it; they were telling everybody else not to listen to them but it was hard because they were shouting over the rest of the class; they were distracting everybody from listening to what the teacher was saying. [Young female aged 18-21]

One young person who subsequently achieved 5 GCSEs and stayed on for A levels, recalled that '*to get away from all the distractions'* they had availed of after-school classes. While another high achiever spoke about her and her friends being actively dissuaded from studying and being picked on and ridiculed simply for applying themselves at school.

All the people who weren't interested didn't go so in the afterschool classes it was just the people that wanted to learn. Everybody that stayed on passed in that subject, like everybody that stayed in the extra class passed. [Young female aged 18-21]

See the people that really wanted to try, they were getting bullied because they wanted to try. People were like "oh you're trying". Other people were laughing at someone because they were trying. Believe it or not ... people here get made fun of, get slagged off for working. [Young female aged 18-21]

They'd say like "ha, you're a wee teacher's pet", so if you really wanted to try you'd have got bullied. Like we used to wear our school ties and people used to go up and pull their ties so they couldn't get their ties out and it was really tight. [Young female aged 18-21]

One of my best friends actually really wanted to try hard but wanted to be in with all the people who were playing about but he got put off trying because he didn't want people to say to him "ah you're trying hard" so he messed about. [Young female aged 18-21]

Weak linkages between schools and the community
A fourth meso-level inhibitor of educational attainment in Woodstock to emerge from the data was the weak and disjointed linkages that exist between local schools and the communities they serve. Several contributory factors were suggested by parents and residents for this *'long-standing dysfunctional relationship'*, including: the frequently expressed view that some teachers *'don't want to teach in areas like th*is'; many teachers *'don't belong'* to the local community and, consequently, *'don't care if the kids fail'*; and the perception that children are, too often, *'yelled at and shouted at'*, which, several parents claimed, undermines the confidence of young people and makes them *'shirk away from learning'.* It was also suggested by community workers that: schools often adopt a piecemeal approach to engaging with the community; schools' boards of governors seldom engage with the wider community because they see their role in terms of managing the schools and are, historically, *'very internal set ups'.* It was also claimed that East Belfast was particularly poorly served when it came to effective school-community linkages because there was little or no history of such engagement. Moreover, because schools were not compelled by, for example, inspections to form such structures, few unilaterally chose to do so; and that in the absence of such an obligation, a *vacuum* has emerged and schools have been '*very much left to their own devices'.*

Some principals would be maybe coming from another place where they would have been used to having a relationship with the community and they've come to a school in East Belfast and think it a bit odd that the school has little or no relationship with the community and therefore might attempt to do things. Others might say 'if we're not inspected on it, we're not going to do it. [Community worker]

It was also suggested that: although schools are supposed to demonstrate their commitment to establishing community links, the issue was very much opened to interpretation; and that, consequently, there was a range of untapped local learning resources.

So, people could see it as the parents of the children who go to their school rather than the community in which the school is located, but they're not necessarily the same thing. They can interpret it in that very narrow way. [Community worker]

There are benefits to be gained for schools by tapping into the capabilities and resources that exist in communities to actually produce young people going to their school with an appetite for learning and an ability to learn. [Community worker]

As evidenced in earlier sections, a further cause of disconnect between schools and local communities is the perception in Woodstock that most of the teachers who teach in working class schools are middle class. Although it was pointed out by several respondents that this is actually not the case, this perception clearly contributes to this sense of detachment.

The kids come here, and a lot of the teachers aren't from Belfast, so they can't look at us for role models. They look at us and think, "aw yeah, you're middle class", and they say, "ah but it's different where you're from". [Senior teacher]

Inappropriate curricula / GCSEs as only indicator of achievement
The final meso-level inhibitor of attainment to emerge from the Woodstock data concerns the mismatch between the current school curriculum and the needs of many young people. Several community workers and residents argued that: young people need to be shown the relevance of their learning; a more flexible measure of attainment is required to avoid a *'fixation'* on the *'mantra'* of 5 GCSEs; and, a differentiated curriculum needs to be created to take into account the specific needs of socially disadvantaged school children. It was also

clear from the data that many principals and teachers feel that GCSEs only provide narrow definitions of a school's success and an individual's achieved attainment. There was a fairly wide consensus amongst those involved in the education of young people from the Woodstock Ward that: the emphasis on GCSE attainment levels neglects other important achievements; and that it is equally important to recognise vocational achievements, the development of pro-social skills, increased self-esteem, and young people's cognisance of the modern labour market. Moreover, it was argued that although inspectors use the five GCSEs benchmark statistics to define achievement, and that these statistics are valuable and important, there are many young people from Woodstock in the non-selective sector who are unlikely to achieve this.

6.8 Micro-level inhibitors of attainment in Woodstock

In terms bonding social capital, i.e. the familial and immediate influences on a young person's factors academic attainment, the following three key inhibitors were identified: parents' incapacity and/or unwillingness to support their children's education; youth disaffection and lack of ambition amongst young people; and the prevalence of alcohol, drugs and mental health issues in the Woodstock community.

Parents' incapacity and/or unwillingness to support their children's education
The Woodstock data indicate that the most significant micro-level inhibitor of education achievement is the incapacity and/or unwillingness of some local parents to support their children's learning. As outlined earlier, many local parents, often in difficult circumstances, do everything they can to provide a loving home environment and help their child succeed at school. However, the data make it clear, that for a variety of reasons, there are parents in the Ward who are either incapable, or, it was claimed by some, unwilling to do likewise. There is, however, a very important point to make at the onset of this inhibitor discussion. The respondents who provided the data analysed here were asked to identify the most obvious obstacles to attainment in an area with pockets of significant social deprivation. Therefore, their responses and this discussion should not be read as reflective of local parents in general, but rather an examination of the most vivid and, often, extreme examples of inadequate parental support.

The data make clear that there are a number of parents in the Woodstock Ward are inhibited from adequately supporting their child's education because of their genuine lack of capacity, often, attributed to their own negative experiences of school. The data highlighted: very poor turnouts at school-parent nights; an acute essential skills deficit amongst many parents (and their reluctance to avail of necessary support); their lack of understanding of new teaching methods, such as phonics; their inability to help with homework; and the likelihood of consequential tensions between parents and young people. In terms of responding to these parental support deficits, it was suggested by residents and community workers that parents with literacy and numeracy difficulties, should be supported to address their own essential skills limitations rather than simply *'throwing their kids into Sure Start and going home'.*

In respect of homework and new teaching methods, it was frequently suggested that there are many parents who want to provide support but '*can't help their kids with their homework because they just don't know how to do it'.* Similarly, it was claimed that *'everything is changed now ... we are told teach them phonics ... but not how'.* It was also suggested that if parents '*haven't been educated ... there's a kind of tension in families'* particularly when '*children become a bit more educated than their parents'.* This often creates tension between parents and their children and made some young people *'ashamed'* of their background. It was, however, also apparent that sympathy for local parents who struggle to support their children's education was not limitless.

Ok, a percentage of parents can't help support their child's education, but for a bigger percentage it's a lifestyle choice. [Community worker]

These concerns around essential skills deficits and new learning methods were similarly expressed in a focus group of locally-based Education Welfare Officers.

Part of the problem is that even if parents are trying to help their kids with homework. The kids are being taught in a completely different way, in some new-fangled way. The parents don't understand it or it's different and therefore everything just falls apart. [EWO]

In Woodstock, there are after-school volunteers who do homework with the kids, but it is not reinforced by their parents, it is not looked over. There is low educational achievement amongst some parents and they can't help them with it ... they have no basic literacy or numeracy skills. Some enrol to help themselves but others don't want to. [EWO]

While the general view was that many local parents take an active interest in their child's schooling, it was also suggested that a small proportion of parents displayed varying levels of disinterest.

If there's a note inside the school bag from the school, how many of the kids go back to the school the next day with that note still in their bag because the parents haven't even looked in it? [Community worker]

In terms of locating causes for incidents of inadequate parental support, several EWOs argued that family distress patterns were being handed down from one generation to the next. One spoke of currently working with many children whose parents were themselves formally under the attention of EWOs; another highlighted that *'there are a lot of one-parent or fragmented families'* and that *'out of a case load of forty families there are only three that have both parents living at home'.* In a similar vein, a third EWO claimed *'there is a real issue about absent fathers who have no interest or involvement in their children's education'.*

Youth disaffection and lack of ambition amongst young people
A second micro-level inhibitor of academic attainment in the Woodstock area relates to youth disaffection and a concomitant lack of ambition. Many young people from the Ward, it was claimed: are in total despair; live only for today; *'don't give two effs'* about their future; and lead *'pretty aimless lives'.* These community workers also spoke about gambling addiction, suicides, teenage promiscuity, and a complete disinterest amongst young people in their own living environment.

Big Brother, Essex girls, modern culture, they identify with these programmes more than they identify with their own communities. [Youth worker]

The data reveal three key aspects of this disaffection relating to a lack of positive role models, fatalistic tendencies amongst young people, and a lack of opportunities. It was frequently claimed that positive role models of any description are *'very, very thin on the ground'*; the inter-generational transmission of both education failure and exclusion from labour markets were significant factors; and that in the absence of positive examples, young people were increasingly prone to aspire to paramilitary lifestyles and benefit dependency.

You see the papers ... big-shot paramilitaries and the kids think "that will do me"; they look at mates and family on DLA and think "why do I have to go to school?" [Youth worker]

I think it definitely comes from their parents ... that translation of them thinking: "That's what my life's going to be, that's what my career path is". It's really scary. [Senior teacher]

Moreover, it was further claimed that because some young people in Woodstock routinely witness drug taking in their community, they tend to normalise such behaviour. For example, a community worker recalled a conversation she had with an eight-year-old boy around his future.

What do you want to be when you grow up? Without a second thought, he says "a drug dealer". He then started to laugh and said "no, I'm only joking". [Community worker]

In terms of fatalism, a host of previous academic studies have shown that such passivity in Protestant working class communities, particularly around educational and labour market prospects, is a well-established phenomenon (i.e. McKay, 2005;[56] Mulvenna, 2012).[57]It is also clear that many young people from Woodstock don't see the point in trying at school because there is little prospect of securing employment when they leave, Thus, a proportion of school-aged residents become disillusioned and take alcohol and drugs to *'reinforce each other's negativity'.* The views of these residents and community workers were supported by principals and teachers who claimed that because they don't see job opportunities for their parents, the task of persuading young people from Woodstock to have aspirations was becoming increasingly difficult.

We've so many coming in now with just no aspirations. It's quite scary. They have no dreams of anything. You are talking to them in careers, and you ask them, what do you want to be? "Dunno". What are you good at? "Dunno". It's like something's just been killed in them, before they even get here. They're not being awkward ... they just genuinely don't know. They just don't think that they are good enough to do anything. [Senior teacher]

In terms of gender and class differentials, it was suggested that it was slightly easier to speak to girls in Woodstock about their career options than their male counterparts. The girls, it was claimed, always have something in mind but, often, these options were restricted to gender-specific jobs. Moreover, another respondent distinguished the level of motivation between '*the more middle-class boys'* Protestant boys and Protestant working class boys.

The girls from the likes of the Woodstock would aim to be hairdressers, nursery nurses, because their mums usually did that job. [Principal]

The working-class boys here, increasingly, are so disengaged they just lacking such motivation. But the more middle-class boys, are striving big time ... they know their career from Year 8, they are pushing themselves on. [Senior teacher]

Of course, the issues raised here speak to wider debates on educational disadvantage amongst the Protestant working class. Four years ago, Dawn Purvis (2011)[58] highlighted the influence of cultural factors in Protestant working class families' perceptions of education and its value. The report, which clearly resonates with the issues examined here, pointed to the demise of the industrial base, particularly in areas such as East Belfast and the concomitant shift towards a more 'consumerist, service driven economy'. These factors, the report concluded, has 'left elements of the Protestant working class stranded with redundant skill-sets and abilities'.

The data analysed here patently concur with such a prognosis and it was frequently claimed that: Woodstock is characterised by a complete lack of real opportunities and high levels of economic inactivity; deprivation and poverty are rife in sections of the Ward; many disadvantaged families are not living *'on the edge of poverty'* but are actually *'in poverty'*; and that although areas like Woodstock are called working class communities, *'nobody works'* and the community is now becoming a *'social underclass'.*

It is also clear from the data that there is a dichotomy between the expectations and entry requirements of employers and the stark facts around local attainment levels. Subsequently, many recent school leavers in the Ward, in cognisance of these labour market realities, have come to regret *'messing about'* and not taking their schooling seriously. Several young people lamented that they *'found out too late'* that they should have applied themselves more

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[56] McKay, S. (2005). Northern Protestants - An Unsettled People (second edition). Belfast: Blackstaff Press.

[57] Gareth Mulvenna (2012): The Protestant working class in Belfast: education and civic erosion – an alternative analysis, Irish Studies Review, 20:4, 427-446

[58] Purvis, D. (2011) 'A Call to Action: Educational Disadvantage and the Protestant Working Class'. Available to download from: www.nicva.org/sites/default/files/A-Call-to-Action-FINAL-March2011_0.pdf

during their time at school, some claiming that they were *'just in with the wrong crowd, other boys who weren't interested'.*

Five vacancies in civil service, application minimum third level education, but third level education for young people here is as far away as China is. [Youth worker]

I just pissed about in school; I wasn't interested in work and then it wasn't until I left school and got into Tech, I got all my grades and stuff and knuckled down. [Young male aged 18-21]

Culture of alcohol and drugs and mental health issues

The third and final micro-level key inhibitor of education attainment in the Woodstock Ward was identified as the pervading culture of alcohol and drugs and its impact on the mental health of young people who are *'drawn into that lifestyle'.* Residents and community workers claimed that alcoholism, drug addiction, and mental health issues are not properly addressed in the community; and that some local people *'aren't living, they're existing'.* In respect of the misuse of alcohol, it was agreed by parents, residents and community workers that this has always been a problem in the area. It was also argued that this problem is so ingrained in the local culture that many young people assume it to be natural; and that some parents purchase alcohol for their underage children.

The culture in our area is drinking, partying, we're surrounded by public houses, so these kids watch their parents continuously be legless, and then they think, "I can't wait till I'm 15 and I can get drunk", and this just goes on and on and on. It's not just the drugs culture, it's the alcohol culture. [Community worker]

We went into certain off licences and challenged them about selling to our young ones and the answer we got was, "I can do nothing about it because his mother came in and bought him it". [Community worker]

In East Belfast, we still have corner street pubs that years ago were seen as the heart and soul of the community where people came to socialise, but it's not like that no more. Now local people are in debt to these pubs. [Community worker]

Similar concerns were raised in relation to the *'widespread'* use of drugs amongst young people in Woodstock. In a series of focus groups with community workers and recent school leavers, it was claimed that: *'the whole drugs thing didn't exist to the same scale years ago'*; that local communities '*can't get a handle on some of these kids who are out of their heads on drugs'* and that they simply *'don't know what to do with them'.* Two further important points were raised around the increasing prevalence of prescription drugs and the challenges of engaging with young people who, as a consequence of their drug use, are incapable of rational thought.

People are medicated out of existence; it's not illicit drugs it's prescription drugs. We used to talk about elderly people's homes and people being over medicated to keep them calm and sleeping all day. Now we have that in communities. [Community worker]

It's funny how we expect people to respond logically; reason is not something that comes into the equation; you're not dealing with logic anymore. [Community worker]

In these same discussions, other respondents spoke about: the *'devastating effect'* on the mental health of young men; the impact on the education of younger children; and the fact that many school-aged children were themselves using alcohol and drugs.

A lot of it comes down to mental health. Now you have young people, maybe not even 20, who are so intent on the drug culture that they're affecting their mental health, and I'm sure you're aware what drugs do to your mental health. So, then the next thing, you've got these 20-year olds running about that are psychotic, all through the drug culture, who are … not fit to run their own lives. [Youth worker]

6.9 Summary of the findings from the Woodstock Ward

The data show that there is a range of structural, school-level, and familial factors which impact on the learning and attainment of young people from Woodstock. Some of these factors are seen to enable academic achievement and others create significant barriers to such a goal. In terms of summarising these factors, it is important to note that there were substantially more barriers identified in the Woodstock data than there were enablers.

The structural (macro-level) drivers of educational attainment in Woodstock i.e. those related to policy inputs and the Ward's history and demography, appear to be limited to the improved learning environments which have been created by recent investment in new buildings and facilities in the schools which serve the Ward. The data here make clear that young people from Woodstock have responded very positively to such improvements and appear more willing to apply themselves in newer learning environments that are designed to meet their educational needs.

However, a far wider range of structural inhibitors to educational attainment in the Ward were apparent. Similar to the Duncairn findings, the complex interplay between Woodstock's recent history and their demographic trajectory seems to have had a negative impact. East Belfast's monotonous slide from industrial heartland to '*industrial wasteland'*, broader shifts to a more skills-centric economy, and the latest recession have, collectively, created sizable pockets of acute deprivation in the Ward. It is also clear that the economic cleavages both within Woodstock and between the Ward and its more affluent neighbours have created a *'tale of two cities'* microcosm.

The lives of many local young people and their families also continue to be affected by legacies of the conflict, such as: *'conflict-era'* political representation; a continuing paramilitary presence; ongoing inter-community tensions; and sporadic incidents of civil disorder, most notably evidenced during the recent 'flag protest'. These findings are in line with previous studies on educational underachievement in loyalist communities. For example, Purvis (2011) found that the 'impacts of these historical failings' around education and accelerated forms of deindustrialisation are routinely compounded by conflict legacies.

Of course, other studies (e.g. Shirlow & Murtagh, 2006)[59] have shown that a further pervasive legacy of the recent conflict for many working-class communities is the restricted spatial mobility of residents, particularly those who live in and around the interface communities which straddle Belfast's many peace-lines. The Woodstock data were littered with references to this phenomenon which was consistently described as one of the most debilitating features of the community.

Significant changes to the Ward's demographic profile have seen the Catholic population of the Ward increase three-fold from 6.2% in 2001 to 19.4% in 2011; the number of residents born outside the UK or Ireland increase to 14.7% (more than double the Northern Ireland average); and the percentage of privately rented housing rise 10% in the last decade to 28.3%, the highest in the ILiAD sample and nearly double the Northern Ireland average. Of course, such shifts are mirrored in many other areas of the UK with little local concern, particularly in terms of attainment levels. However, in (post-conflict) Woodstock they are, among some respondents, seen to represent unstoppable decline and a lost sense of community. These perceptions are reflected in contemporary demographic patterns across Belfast which depicts an aging and declining Protestant population and a young and expanding Catholic community. Moreover, these perceptions also mirror the literature around Protestant working class communities which suggests that these population changes

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[59] Shirlow, P. and Murtagh, B. (2006). *Belfast: Segregation, Violence and the City*. Dublin: Pluto Press.

tend to engender high levels of insularity which are reinforced by perceptions of fatalism, defeatism and demographic encroachment (McKay 2000;[60] Hall 2007).[61]

The policy of academic selection was widely seen as an important structural barrier to local attainment levels. It is clear from the Woodstock data that the grammar sector views selection as an opportunity for pupils with high ability (and a privileged background in terms of e.g. familial education norms) to leave school having achieved their potential. However, non-grammar sector respondents insisted that the same process, commonly, prevents pupils from less privileged backgrounds from doing likewise and, thus, simply reinforces pre-existing disadvantage. While it may be argued that academic selection is not the primary cause of social division in the Ward, these respondents concur with Purvis et al (2011)[62] in that it accentuates it.

Two further macro-level inhibitors related to demographic change in the Ward were identified. Firstly, the secondary schools attended by young people from Woodstock are located outside the Ward. In addition to creating logistical/transportation challenges for pupils and their parents, the invisibility of post-primary learning in the Ward has the predictable consequence of further supressing educational aspirations. Secondly, the reported *'influx'* of foreign nationals into the local primary sector has clearly created extra pressure for schools already struggling to mediate reduced budgets and resources.

In terms of the school-level factors which are seen to enable academic progress. The data make clear that several schools which serve the Ward have, in recent years: fostered new and improved relations between school, home and community; significantly raised both their expectations and standards of discipline; provided alternative measures of success and a wider range of vocational opportunities; and enhanced their provision of SEN, pastoral care, support during transition, and inter-active learning strategies. In addition, principals with visionary leadership qualities and a pupil-centred ethos have been seen to make a substantial difference, even in previously 'failing' schools; and a new generation of teachers in the schools which serve the Ward are seen to be markedly more empathetic and committed to the young people in their charge.

However, several meso-level barriers were apparent in the Woodstock data: many parents, for example, believe that the issue of low expectations on the part of some schools has not been completely resolved; and some young people continue to be inhibited by disruptive classmates and dissuasive peers. Moreover, and in all probability related to spatial detachment of schools from the communities they serve, high levels of absenteeism in the Ward remain a regular feature of the indices.

The most important micro-level influencer of local attainment levels is the level and consistency of parental support and encouragement. The data here confirm the long-established maxim that the most significant differentials in academic performance are commonly found outside of schools and classrooms. Many parents in Woodstock provide such support and thus increase their child's academic prospects. However, others, for a variety of reasons, do not and their children begin and progress through school with a distinct disadvantage. Many of this latter group, somewhat predictably, make up the significant proportion of local young people who, as the data here patently evidence, have become increasingly disaffected and are often bereft of aspiration or ambition.

[60] McKay, S. (2000) Northern Protestants: An Unsettled People, Belfast: Blackstaff Press.
[61] Hall, M. & Conflict Transformation Initiative (2007) Is There a Shared Ulster Heritage? Belfast: Island Publications.
[62] Purvis, Dawn; Shirlow, Peter; Langhammer, Mark (2011) Educational Underachievement and the Protestant Working Class: A Summary of Research, for Consultation (Belfast: Dawn Purvis MLA Office).

6.10 Social Capital in the Woodstock Ward

In terms of bonding social capital and the immediate factors which impact on local attainment levels, the data present mixed messages. The consistent provision of parental support for one section of the Ward's young people stands in stark contrast to the absence of familial support experienced by another. According to several community-level respondents, the incapacity of some parents in Woodstock (often due to poverty and their own unhappy and unproductive experience in the school system) to have a positive involvement in their child's education is perhaps the most significant inhibitor of academic achievement in the Ward. Similarly, but in a broader context, the Woodstock community clearly has substantial stocks of bonding capital as evidenced by innumerable examples of close-knit ties and local people sticking together during times of adversity. However, the data also indicate that many of these internal bonds were, to an extent, informed by the recent conflict and are thus, at least in part, based on suspicion and hostility towards outsiders.

Formations of bridging social capital are also problematic in the Ward. A range of positive school-level (meso) influences around improved relationships (with families and communities), a raising of standards, and the adoption of flexible and empathetic approaches have clearly encouraged many young people from Woodstock and their parents to take a greater interest in their education. However, weak linkages (and spatial distances) between some schools and the community were also commonly reported and it is clear that the task of addressing this sense of detachment is significantly hampered by historical norms, contemporary levels of absenteeism, and the future envisioning of many young people which supposes a pointless engagement in the labour market. In a broader community context, forming bridging ties with other communities is evidently inhibited by, for example, the (wider) area's sectarian geography.

In terms of linking social capital in Woodstock, a series of structural factors, primarily around demographic change and the recent conflict are seen to further inhibit academic achievement. As outlined earlier, the interplay between these factors has: made the community more insular; sustained intra and inter-community divisions; created tensions between the community and its political representatives; and engendered a host of negative role models and influences.

Looking at these three levels of social capital together, it is clear that in the Woodstock Ward there are: pockets of bonding capital which are, to an extent, diminished by limited parental capacity among sections of the Ward to support their children's education; an acute shortage of bridging social capital, notwithstanding recently improved school-level influences; and a near complete absence of linking capital, made infinitely more pronounced by the economic cleavages which are an increasing feature of the Ward. The broader social capital literature confirms that communities with high bonding capital and low bridging capital are commonly characterised by an appearance of internal cohesion and a persistent distrust in relation to external entities (Schuller, 2007)[63]. It is clear from the data that the recent conflict had the effect of cementing the bonds of solidarity within the Woodstock Ward by harnessing the commonalities of shared adversity and ethnic homogeneity. It is equally clear that Woodstock has, for a variety of reasons, been unable to create sufficient stocks of bridging capital or, indeed, adapt to broader social and demographic changes. According to Shirlow (2006)[64], working class communities with these characteristics are, as a consequence, more prone to isolation and detachment, particularly, if their residual structure remains connected to the trauma of violence.

The final element in the ILiAD social capital framework relates to the negative outcomes of the concept, which Portes (1998)[65] categorises as: the exclusion of outsiders; restrictions on individual freedoms; and a downward levelling of norms. It is clear that the internal bonds

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[63] Schuller, T. (2007) 'Reflections on the use of social capital', Review of Social Economy, 65: 1, 11 — 28

[64] Shirlow, P. (2006) 'Belfast: The 'post-conflict' city', Space and Polity, Vol. 10: 2: pp 99-107.

[65] Portes, A. (1998) 'Social capital: its origins and applications', Modern Sociology Annual Review of Sociology, Vol. 24: pp 1-24.

created in Woodstock during sustained periods of conflict and adversity has produced a 'bounded solidarity'. This has engendered, paradoxically, high levels of both community spirit and insularity in the Ward. For example, the exclusive nature of bonding in some sections of the Woodstock Ward has reinforced the importance of homogeneity at the very time that homogeneity is challenged by demographic change. It is also apparent from the data that an additional consequence of bounded solidarity in these areas of Woodstock is that many young people endure restrictions on their individual freedom. For example, young peoples' participation in the recent flag protests was, at least in part, driven by a desire to conform to community influences; and their (often acute) spatial mobility restrictions are, to an extent, similarly guided by neighbourhood demands.

However, the most salient examples of negative social capital relate to a downward levelling of norms. The Woodstock data are littered with references to this phenomenon where narratives and perceptions of oppression, besiegement, stigma and discrimination are seen to have two particularly negative impacts. This first of these concerns the influence of negative role models and their impact on young people in terms of aspiration. Some young people spoke about: individuals in the Ward who have failed at school, *'never worked'*, but, nonetheless, *'seem to survive'*; and others in the community who have achieved *'success'* via criminal enterprise. According to Rubio (1997: 810-812),[66] the signals which these survival strategies and 'successes' produce have a negative effect on the 'local reward structure'. This is clearly evident in Woodstock where some young people don't see the point in applying themselves at school because they see a route to survival/success which: (a) involves extra-legal activities; and/or (b) does not entail educational achievement. Therefore, the type of social capital they seek to build and invest in is informed by such pathways (ibid).

A second downward levelling of norms example relates to the limited ambition of many of the Ward's younger residents. The data have highlighted a host of factors which are seen to have depressed the aspirations and ambition amongst large sections of the Woodstock community. Moreover, the data attest that there are dissuasive forces at familial, peer, and community-level which sustain such tendencies. In terms of trying to understand these processes, Bourdieu's (1998)[67] conceptualisations of 'field' (social arena) and 'habitus' (an individual's subjective dispositions) are particularly useful. If we imagine the 'field' as the Woodstock community and its influences, and the 'habitus' as the personal inclinations of its residents, a central tenet of Bourdieu's thesis becomes apparent. Namely, that one of the field's most important effects on habitus is to 'limit the variation' between an individual's actions or choices and the 'constraining norms' of their own social group. In such ways, the bounded solidarity of a community contributes to a downward levelling of ambition among its members. In the context of Woodstock, the consequence of this process is that some young people absorb the 'field's' many 'pessimistic influences' (i.e. high unemployment, low attainment levels, and negative role models) and are persuaded to envision further or higher education or a successful engagement in the labour market as 'unattainable' and minimum-wage work, precarious zero-hour contracts or 'unemployment as inevitable'. In other words, 'their affected habitus dictates to them what is considered achievable and worth aspiring to' (Oliver and O'Reilly, 2010: 54-61).[68]

[66] Rubio, M. (1997) 'Perverse social capital – some evidence from Colombia', Journal of Economic Issues, 31 (3), 805-816.
[67] Bourdieu, P. (1998) Acts of Resistance: Against the New Myths of Our Time, (Translated by R. Nice), Cambridge: Polity Press.
[68] Oliver, C. and O'Reily, K. (2010) A Bourdieusian analysis of class and migration: habitus and the individualizing process. Sociology, 44: 49–65

7.1. Local Context

Deprivation Levels

The overall multiple deprivation score for Tullycarnet is the best in the ILiAD sample; it is placed 109th out of 582. The NINIS deprivation domains of proximity to services and crime and disorder in the area are better than average across all Wards in Northern Ireland, at 472 and 316 respectively; health deprivation and disability and employment deprivation are both just under average, at 187 and 172 respectively. The living environment and income deprivation domains are more concerning, with the Ward placed 95th for living environment and 125th for income deprivation, but it is the education and skills deprivation score in Tullycarnet that is a huge outlier amongst the other scores for the Ward – it is 14th (most deprived) in Northern Ireland. The rate of GCSE passes is also the worst in the ILiAD sample – in 2009/10, only 24.2% of young people achieved five or more passes at A*-C level; this rose to 43% in 2012/13, but the percentages must be treated with caution as the number of young people achieving at this level are small (17 in 2012/13).

Figure 7.1 shows a map of the Output areas within the Tullycarnet Ward, colour-coded by intensity of deprivation. The colours of the Output areas refer to the severity of deprivation, based on their multiple deprivation score (ranging from 1.5 to 81.73, with 81.73 being the most deprived) as calculated by NISRA (all statistics are based on the 2010 measures unless otherwise indicated).
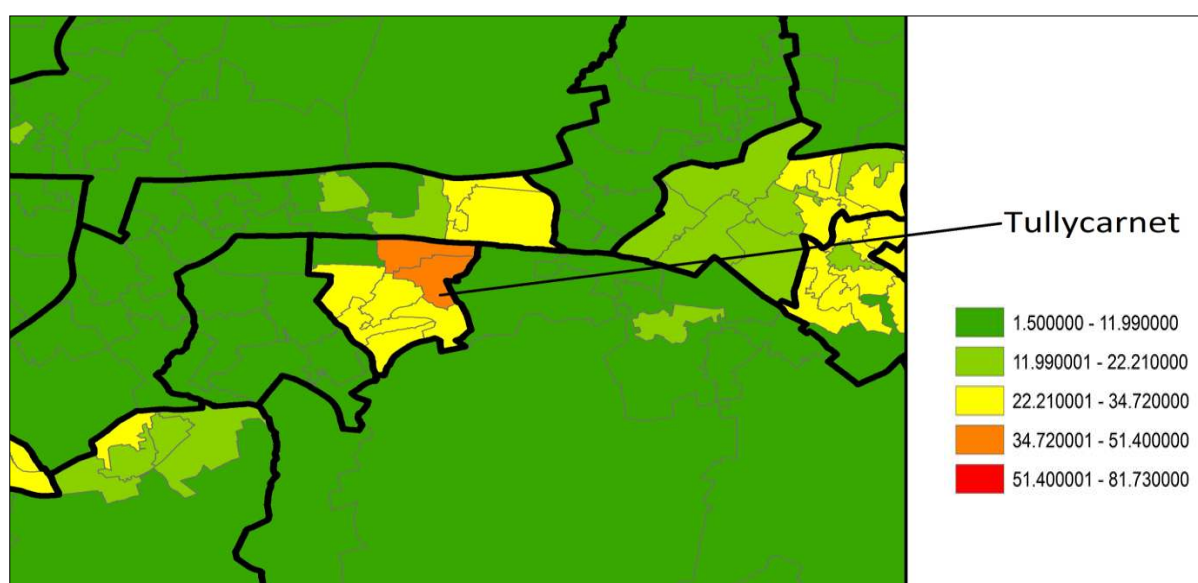
Figure 7.1: Multiple Deprivation in Output Areas: Tullycarnet Ward

Tullycarnet is an anomaly in terms of its geographical location; most of the Output areas within the Ward have average-moderate deprivation levels (yellow-orange) but it is almost completely surrounded by Output areas of very low deprivation (dark green). The Ward itself is split by the King's Road, which separates the yellow (average deprivation) Output area in the south of the Ward and the dark green (very low deprivation) Output area at the north-west of the Ward. These areas north and south of the King's Road are both residential, suggesting that there is perhaps a different sense of 'neighbourhood' on either side of the road. The orange Output areas to the north-east of the Ward include the area's youth centre, sports pitch, health centre, and a number of shops.

Demographics and Local Facilities

Tullycarnet is one of the predominantly Protestant Wards in the ILiAD research sample (93.3% according to the Census 2001 and 85.8% according to the Census 2011). The Ward has a lower than average percentage of residents who were born outside of the UK or the Republic of Ireland (2.1%, compared to the NI average of 7.1%) or born in EU ascension countries (0.4%, compared to the NI average of 2.1%). The population density within the Ward is 49.2 persons per hectare, which is the median density of all the Wards in the ILiAD sample. There is evidence of significant change in housing tenure within Tullycarnet between 2001 and 2011 (according to Census statistics). The percentage of owner/occupier housing rose slightly (from 48.5% in 2001 to 53.5% in 2011), and the percentage of privately rented housing more than doubled, from 2.8% to 7.2% (although this is still the lowest percentage of privately-rented housing amongst all the ILiAD Wards). The percentage of social rent housing decreased, from 48.3% to 35.8%.

Tullycarnet has one of the smallest populations of the sample of seven Wards, at 2419 persons (NISRA, 2011), less than one hundred more than the populations within The Diamond or Dunclug, but approximately half as many people as within Duncairn, Woodstock or Whiterock. The percentage of young people under the age of 15 is 21% according to the Census 2011, slightly more than the Northern Ireland average of 19.6%.

Tullycarnet is a Neighbourhood Renewal Area under the Department for Social Development. In 2012/13, the Department for Social Development invested £250,457.38 in supporting programmes in the Tullycarnet Neighbourhood Renewal area. In the Tullycarnet Ward there are also a range of organisations providing formal and informal education and support services to children, young people and families. For example:

- East Belfast Sure Start Programme for two-year olds, operating five mornings per week in Tullycarnet Primary School;[69]
- A number of uniformed organisations operating from churches in the area;
- First Steps Playgroup which is a 32-place pre-school playgroup operating five mornings per week in Tullycarnet Primary School;
- Kings Road Nursery which is a 52-place full-time nursery operated within Tullycarnet (Melfort Drive) by the SEELB;
- Tullycarnet Bytes programme which provides information technology training to young people in the area;
- Tullycarnet Healthy Neighbourhood Partnership promotes a healthy lifestyle through the engagement of community residents in a range of health-related programmes and activities offered at a community level. The target group identified by the project is all Tullycarnet residents with a particular focus which includes primary age children and youth;
- Tullycarnet Football Club which operates quite a few teams, across a range of agegroups, seeking to be a positive influence of children and young people through the medium of sport;
- Tullycarnet Family Project which is operated by Barnardos from Tullycarnet Primary School (approximately one third of the school is being used to house this project) and works with parents, children and local people to improve the quality of life for families in the area. A specific initiative operated by Barnardos and supported through funding from DSD is the Enhanced Nurture Group project which directly addresses education priorities under the theme of Social Renewal in the Neighbourhood Action Plan including:
  - Raising the value of education – improved engagement of parents/children and schools;
  - Improved education outcomes for children in the NRA; and

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[69] Tullycarnet Primary School closed in 2017.

o   Co-ordinated and accessible support for early years provision.
School Provision, Intake Characteristics, Achievement, Destinations and Absenteeism
Tullycarnet has one of the smallest numbers of pupils within post-primary schools out of all the Wards in the ILiAD study (109 pupils in 2011), with nine schools serving these young people in 2011 (see Table 7.1 below). That year, 19.3% of young people from the Ward attended grammar schools or schools with a grammar stream (the median of the seven ILiAD Wards) and 80.7% attended secondary schools. The research team decided to choose a geographical mid-point within each Ward area, and to map the distance from this point to the schools that serve each Ward area – all but one of the schools serving Tullycarnet are more than two miles from the Ward centre.

Table 7.1: Schools serving young people in Tullycarnet

Miles to school	% GCSE pass	Enrolment (2011)	
1.3	98	7	Bloomfield
2.3	68	12	Ashfield Boys' School
2.5	11	32	Dundonald High School
2.5	96	8	Grosvenor Grammar
2.6	22	11	Orangefield High School *(closed as of 2014)*
2.9	64	14	Ashfield Girls' High School
3.5	72	5	Lagan College *(has a grammar stream)*
4.3	42	40	Newtownbreda High School
4.5	91	6	Wellington College
Total Grammar enrolment		26	19.3%
Total Secondary enrolment		109	80.7%

Blue – Grammar schools Orange - Other schools

Looking at average GCSE achievement rates in Tullycarnet for the three years prior to the ILiAD research commencing (2008/2009/2010), 28.4% of school leavers achieved ≥5 GCSEs or GCSE equivalents (at Grade C or above). When considering 'pure' GCSEs only, this figure dropped very slightly, to 27.3% (the smallest variation of any of the Wards, indicating that there is not a high provision and/or uptake of GCSE equivalents with the Ward). The GCSE pass rate across the three-year period dropped to just 20.5% if English and Maths are included (again, this is the lowest variation of any of the ILiAD sample Wards, indicating that there is less choice of GCSE subjects for young people from Tullycarnet compared to other Wards). Looking specifically at female school leavers across these three years, 35.7% achieved any five GCSEs at A*-C, and 23.8% achieved five GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths. For males, the pass rate for any five GCSEs was 21.7%, dropping to 17.4% with the inclusion of English and Maths – the second lowest figure in the sample, after Duncairn.

Tullycarnet has the lowest percentage of school leavers entitled to free school meals (FSM) across the years 2008-2012 of all ILiAD sample Wards, at 24.7%. However, in terms of the achievement rates within the Ward of school leavers who are entitled/not entitled to Free School Meals (FSM), Tullycarnet shows one of the largest variations of all ILiAD sample Wards. For school leavers from 2008 – 2012, 36.1% of those not entitled to FSM achieved five or more GCSEs at A*-C, compared to 12.8% of school leavers who were entitled to FSM (in other words, a 23.3% variation). Numbers are too small for school leavers from Tullycarnet to look at FSM/non-FSM differences by gender.

What is notable about the intake characteristics of the secondary schools serving the Tullycarnet Ward area is the much higher than average percentages of pupils with any special educational need (SEN) compared with the Northern Ireland average. Figure 7.2

shows SEN and FSM rates against school and Northern Ireland averages for GCSE attainment (including Maths and English) across the years 2008-2012. In Newtownbreda High, 46% of pupils had any SEN, compared to the NI average of 30.8%; in Dundonald High, the percentage was 52.8%; and in Orangefield High, that figure was 58.4%, the highest of any school across the entire ILiAD sample. The average rate of FSM-eligibility was also higher than the NI average in Dundonald High and Orangefield High, at 36.2% and 51.6% respectively. Nonetheless, it is evident from Figure 7.3 that despite these high levels of disadvantage and additional needs, most young people from the schools enter further education or employment after leaving school; furthermore, Dundonald High saw its overall GCSE achievement rate (i.e., the percentage of pupils achieving any five GCSEs) double in the 2012-13 school year: 40% achieved this result, compared to 20% from the 2011-12 school year – it should be noted that Figure 7.2 below does not account for these most recent statistics.
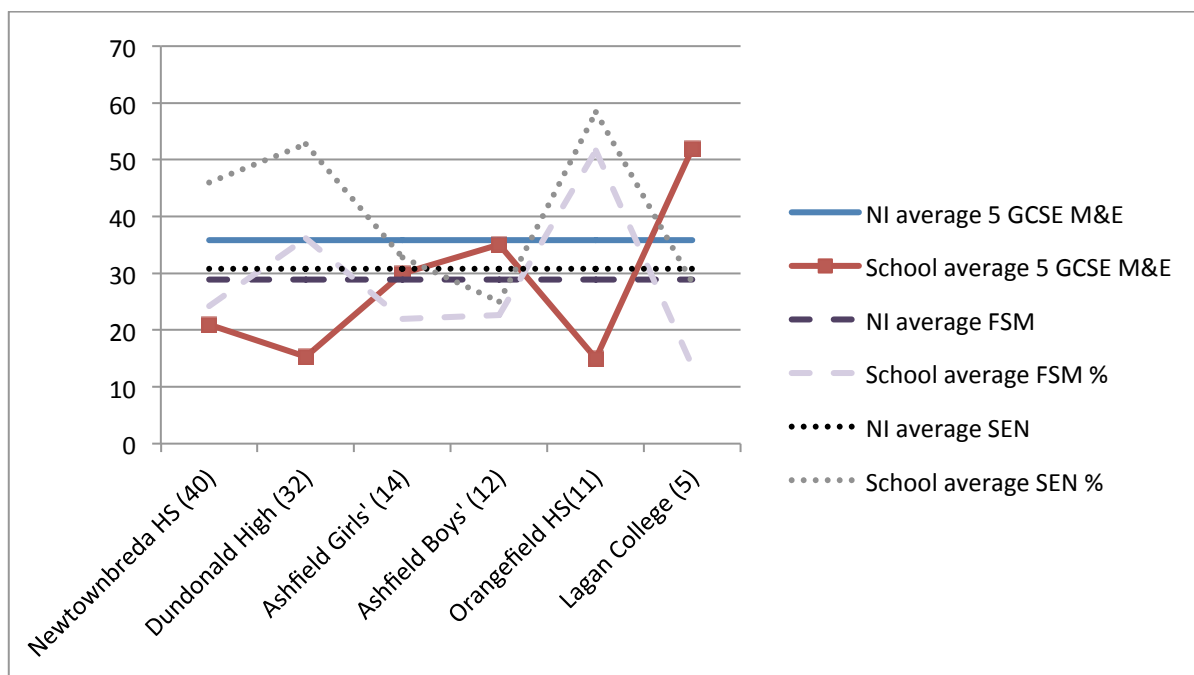
Figure 7.2: 2008-2012 average percentages of 5 GCSE (including Maths & English) attainment, Free School Meals eligibility, and pupils with any Special Educational Needs – Tullycarnet non-selective schools against NI secondary school averages

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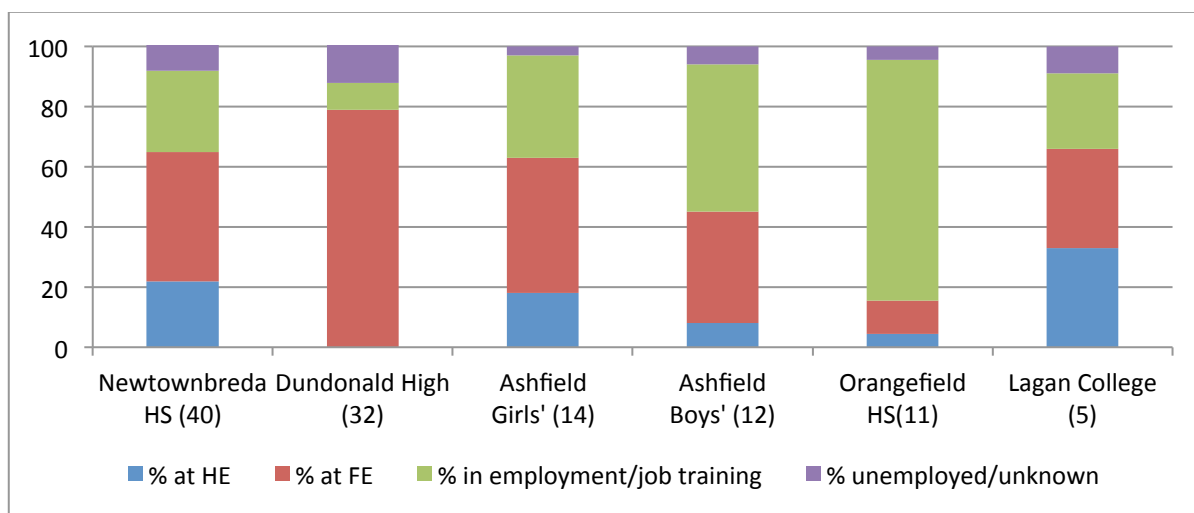
Figure 7.3: Destinations of School Leavers 2012 from secondary schools serving Tullycarnet Ward

Looking at the destinations of all school leavers in the Ward across the years 2008 – 2012, Tullycarnet has the lowest average rate of school leavers who entered higher education, at 12%. Entry into further education has been the second highest of all ILiAD Wards, at 44.6% across the 2008-2012 school years (after Dunclug). In terms of employment, Tullycarnet has had a similar average rate to the other Protestant Wards within the ILiAD sample (32%, compared to 33% in Duncairn and 34% in Woodstock). Lastly, 9.6% of school leavers from Tullycarnet have entered unemployment or an unknown destination on average between 2008-2012, the second-best rate in the ILiAD sample (after The Diamond).

The nine post-primary schools serving young people from Tullycarnet had an average high-absenteeism rate (defined as attendance below 85% during a school year) of 18.2% during 2012/13, ranging from 39.7% in Orangefield High to 2.0% in Grosvenor Grammar School (see Figure 7.4). This compares less favourably to the Catholic Wards within the ILiAD sample. Research suggests that absence tends to be higher in more disadvantaged areas where FSM provision is greatest, which in turn is likely to impact upon children's attainment levels (DENI, 2012). This is despite the Catholic Wards having the highest rates of FSM entitlement in the whole sample – this is evidence that the relationship between absenteeism and FSM entitlement is not perfectly aligned. The results do suggest that absenteeism must be factored into any explanation of why Catholic Wards of high deprivation are out-performing Protestant Wards of similarly high (or lower) deprivation. However, in general, absenteeism and FSM entitlement appear to be closely positively related in Tullycarnet – as the rate of FSM entitlement increases in a school, so does absenteeism. As stated previously, high absenteeism, high FSM entitlement rates, and high SEN rates also appear to be negatively related to GCSE attainment (including Maths and English), but there are other anomalies in the data that point to further investigation of other factors that could be negatively or positively impacting upon achievement. For example, Ashfield Boys' and Ashfield Girls' schools have similar levels of absenteeism and FSM entitlement (with Ashfield Boys' having slightly lower levels of pupils with SEN than Ashfield Girls'), but Ashfield Boys' school has a much greater rate of achievement of five GCSEs including Maths and English. Again, this may point to the need to take into account the SEN intake of schools when making comparisons regarding achievement, but it could also point to other particular influences within Ashfield Boys' school that are having a positive impact on achievement.

There are several schools that serve pupils from the Tullycarnet Ward that had high absenteeism rates of over 30% during 2012/13 - Newtownbreda High School (32.8%), Dundonald High School (36.5%), and Orangefield High School (39.7%). Newtownbreda performed the best out of these three schools in terms of achievement (even though 55% of pupils had any SEN – the same as Orangefield – and slightly more than Dundonald, which had 52% of pupils with any SEN). Newtownbreda did however have lower rates of pupils entitled to FSM (28%) than Orangefield (55%) or Dundonald (37%). However, it should be stated that achievement rates for all three schools were still low, at under 30%. Proportionately, Newtownbreda and Dundonald serve the greatest number of post-primary age pupils from the Tullycarnet Ward, so these data on high rates of absenteeism and SEN may be of great importance in explaining rates of achievement in the Ward.
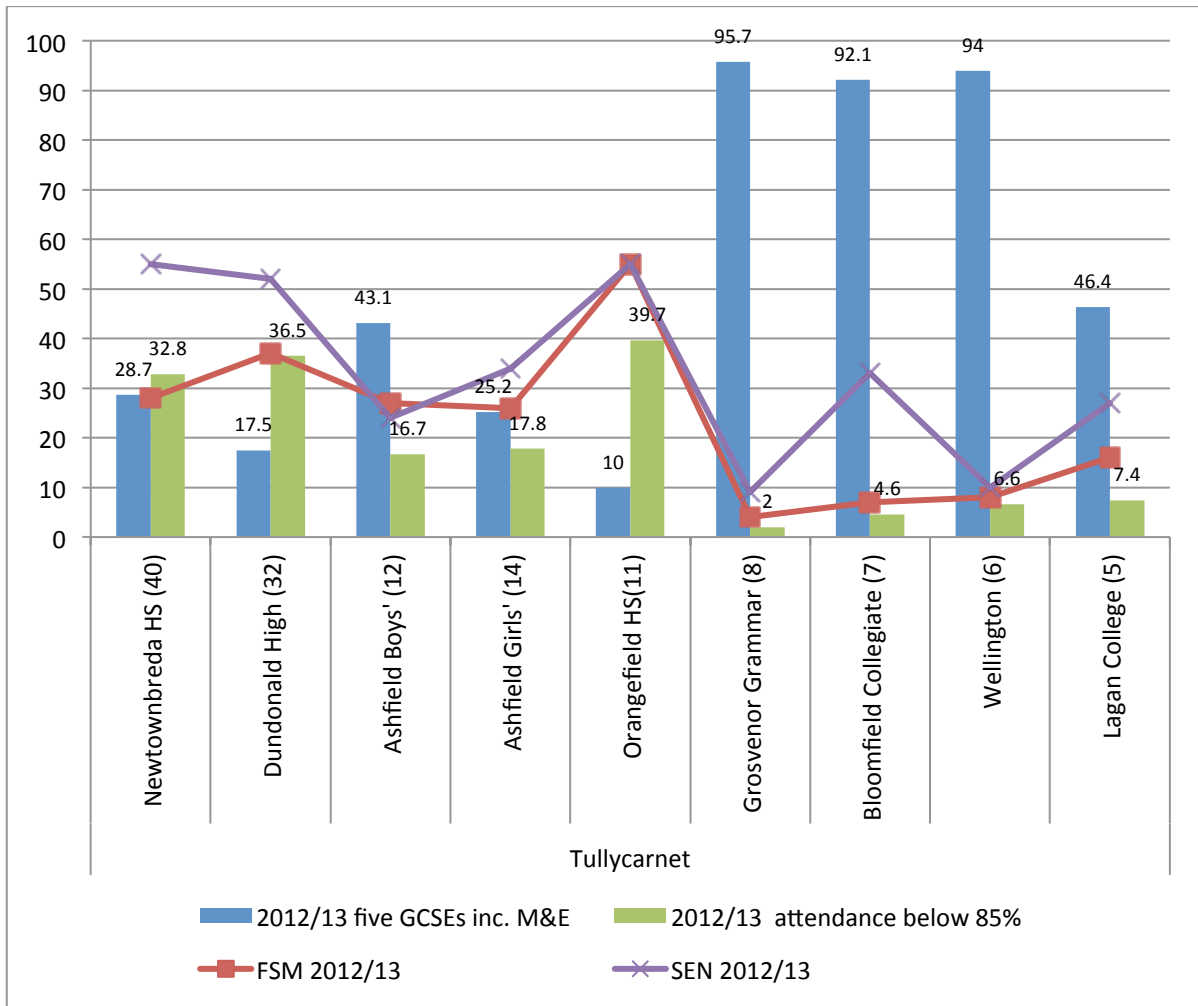
Figure 7.4: GCSE attainment, attendance, and average FSM entitlement rates – Tullycarnet

The following sections of this chapter will outline the key drivers and inhibitors of achievement in the Tullycarnet Ward as identified from document review, secondary data analysis of official statistics, and qualitative interviews with community and youth workers, Education Welfare Officers (EWOs), parents, residents and recent school leavers from the Ward, principals and teachers from the schools serving young people from the Ward, and young people themselves (see Table 7.2). The drivers and inhibitors will be presented as: macro-level (structural) factors to examine linking social capital; meso-level (school-level) factors in terms of bridging social capital; and micro-level (immediate/familial) factors, conceptualised here as bonding social capital.

Table 7.2: Profile of participants in Tullycarnet

School level	Community level
Nursery school principal interview x 1	Education welfare officer focus group x 1
Primary school principal interview x 1	Community worker interview x 4
Post-primary principal/teacher interview x 6	High achiever interview x 4
Primary pupil focus group x 1	Parent focus group x 1
Alternative education pupil interviews x 3	Neighbourhood forum focus group x 1

7.2. Force-field Analysis of drivers and inhibitors of achievement in Tullycarnet Ward

Drivers

Macro-level

a) Socially-mixed schools serving the area

Meso-level

a) Improved community-school links
b) Increasing levels of parental and familial engagement with schools
c) Strong school leadership and high expectations by the school
d) Staff commitment to local schools and community
e) Adaptation of school structures, policies and pedagogical styles to suit local pupil needs
f) Support for pupils during transitions
g) Broader conceptualisations of achievement (on the part of schools)

Micro-level

a) Parental support and encouragement
b) Individual resilience and self-motivation of high achievers against the odds
c) Close social networks and positive community influences

Inhibitors

Macro-level

a) Schools closures and falling enrolments
b) Spatial detachment of schools from the communities they serve
c) Unreliability and skewing effect of official statistics
d) Unsuitable facilities, lack of resources, and inadequate provision of Early Years
e) Lack of joined-up education strategy (i.e. between DE & CCEA)

Meso-level

a) Inappropriate teacher skill-set/negative teacher attitudes, behaviours and expectations
b) Inappropriate curriculum and learning strategies
c) Schools and other agencies working in silos

Micro-level

a) Lack of aspiration and sense of hopelessness amongst young people
b) Low parental expectations and engagement regarding education
c) Negative community norms
d) Mental and physical health issues

Present situation – 43% five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13); 109th Multiple Deprivation 2010

7.3. Macro-level drivers of attainment in Tullycarnet

Socially-mixed schools serving the area

According to the data, the socially mixed composition of schools serving the Tullycarnet community is the only significant structural driver of educational attainment. It was frequently claimed that providing opportunities for pupils from deprived areas to attend schools where there are also children from more affluent areas has potential benefits in terms of enhanced achievement. Several school-based respondents spoke about the aspirations of young people from Tullycarnet being raised as they are educated alongside *'kids with very high expectations'*. This view was supported by a local resident in one of the case study interviews who had gone on to gain two University degrees but who previously had *'achieved nothing'* throughout her schooling. This respondent argued that it was only as a teenager, when she began socialising with young adults from other (more affluent) areas, some of whom had just started University that she began to contemplate such a pathway for herself. Teachers and principals from the schools serving Tullycarnet claimed that mixing by socio-economic background and ability within schools both broadened young peoples' horizons and created a secure environment for pupils, particularly, if their home life was impacted by disruption and/or negative community influences.

They get here and mix with kids who have been abroad, have been to other areas ... the social mixing is good for them. [Teacher]

I have the full range of social background in intake profile. 94% of my pupils live within 4.5 miles of the school. It is a community school. The flag protest affected maybe 20 boys in my school. In here, they have a safe haven, they have a home. [Principal]

The principal of a primary school described how the percentage of children entitled to free school meals in the school had vastly increased over the previous five years because of new social housing being built near the school; and that there had also been an increase in the percentage of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in the enrolment. However, this principal also highlighted the value of a similar mix in terms of ability and capacity and maintained that the main drivers to achievement were: the quality of learning in a classroom; the level of interaction between pupils; and, more broadly, the inclusion of all children in various school activities to help them identify what their individual strengths were.

In the last two years, we were involved with the Lyric and did Dan Gordon's play on the Titanic. All our P7s did it, irrespective of ability ... it was absolutely superb, and it was streamed live around the world ... there's a boy who left here and went to Dundonald High School ... his life was changed by being one of the main actors. He had special needs, and his mum would say that his life has changed because of the play. That's what school is about ... giving children opportunities. [Principal]

7.4 Meso-level drivers of attainment in Tullycarnet

The Tullycarnet data identified a total of seven meso-level drivers of academic attainment in the Ward. Of these seven significant enablers, the four most frequently cited were: improved community-school links; increasing levels of parental and familial engagement with schools; strong school leadership and high expectations by the school; and staff commitment to local schools and community.

Improved community-school links

Recent improvements in terms of the relationships between schools and the Tullycarnet community were seen as an important meso-level driver of educational attainment in the

Ward. In the interviews with principals and teachers it was commonly claimed that these relationships have improved greatly in recent years, with schools and local community organisations coming together to tackle the issue of underachievement as well as other community problems, such as anti-social behaviour and drug use. They also claimed that the genesis for these improved school-community linkages was residents and community workers in Tullycarnet realising that: the local primary school was in imminent danger of closing; that the academic performance of local young people was *'unacceptable';* and that to address the problem, the community *'needed to galvanise more'.* This same source also argued that much of the credit for this coming together is due to the endeavours of the Tullycarnet Action Group Initiative Trust (TAGIT), who *'are working so hard to try and move things forward so that everybody is singing from the same hymn sheet.* The principal of one school highlighted the value of other community collaborations with agencies such as Barnardos and SureStart to address the inter-related issues of academic underachievement and limited parental support.

One aspect that we've done in partnership with Stranmillis is a programme for underachievement, with the interns ... we developed [the] model … using beginning teachers. The school would have Barnardos in there, the Family Project, and I would meet with them and the principal of the primary school and playgroup leaders from Surestart. The last thing anyone wants to do is go to a meeting, but I think it's important that the community see we are working together ... it's the same families we are trying to reach. [Principal]

Another principal also highlighted the contribution made by the TAGIT group and argued that the transformation in school-community relations within Tullycarnet since the late 1990s needs to be recognised, particularly given the very difficult local circumstances during the years of conflict and the fact that this recent collaborative engagement was very much a grass-roots initiative

Tullycarnet needs more recognition for what they have actually achieved, what they have been able to gel up there and by getting everyone together and all the community groups working to one common goal which is the betterment of Tullycarnet. This has been incredibly successful because Tullycarnet would have had a very bad reputation previously, and again it came down to just pockets of people who were doing their own thing and nobody actually bringing the plan together, so there was nothing holistic going on. [Principal]

Increasing levels of parental and familial engagement with schools
Related to the above outlined recent improvements in school-community links, the Tullycarnet data also indicate that the increasing level of parental engagement with schools is a further meso-level driver of educational attainment. Moreover, this engagement is seen to extend beyond parents to also include wider family members such as the grandparents and siblings of pupils. Principals of schools serving families from Tullycarnet spoke about effective and consistent engagement with families being an essential element of a good school and a vital part of their ethos. They also claimed that the setting of expectations and the communication of these expectations to a child's parents and wider family circle were equally important factors. Other principals also spoke of home-school links in terms of the direct positive impact it can have on young people's achievement. One stated that the school being seen as an extension of the community and having a positive reputation amongst parents and grandparents' results in the creation and maintenance of high aspirations.

It has been here since 1844, so it is very much the Dundonald school; the community's school. And grandparents and parents all went here. It has a strong academic reputation, and all the added extras – sport, drama, music – and that's why we're growing, because of our reputation. And parents from Ballybeen or from Tullycarnet come here because they have high aspirations for their children. [Principal]

Another principal spoke about how being able to engage with parents is a key way of teaching parents to interact with their children from an early age in ways conducive to their educational development. She also claimed that one of the most effective methods of achieving this goal was to give working class parents from communities such as Tullycarnet praise when they are seen to be having a positive impact and encouragement in areas where they may need guidance.

We have a lot of lovely families who are doing their best on very little. I think it's very important to encourage young mummies and parents, and I say "listen, whatever you are doing, keep it up you are doing a great job" and they say, "oh thank you"! All of us want to hear the positive, and if there is something to work on, and it's usually boys and listening skills, I say, "look, when you are talking to them, get them to look at you", as basic as that. Then they say, "Thanks very much, I hadn't thought of that". [Principal]

Furthermore, school engagement with parents in such ways was seen as a particularly effective method of helping children feel that their parents were interested in their education, and galvanised both children and parents feel a greater connection to their wider community. To evidence this point, another principal recalled the impact of the community-led campaign against the proposed closure of the local primary school.

Home-school links are very important for us with the accelerated learning, because if parents are engaged, well, then, the children are feeling like their parents are interested in what they're doing ... and the children achieve the goals that have been set for them. [Principal]

[Previously] we were seen to be failing the kids, and there were no community links, I mean, last November we held a parents' evening and I think the turnout for Year 12 was like 22% of parents showed up, now that's just shocking ... after [the community initiative to prevent closure of the school], and everybody was on board, the statistics really shot through the roof because parents were in and being very proactive. [Principal]

In terms of sustaining these improved home-school links, several principals highlighted a range of other methods of encouraging parental engagement such as: curriculum afternoons for the parents; twice yearly parent/teacher interviews and learning support interviews, which it was claimed were *'fully attended'*; and a 'Parents Matter' programme held at a local primary school, which encompasses workshops for parents on aspects of nursery, homework and essential skills support around maths and English.

Strong school leadership and high expectations by the school
Another important meso-level driver of educational achievement in Tullycarnet is effective school leadership and high expectations on the part of schools. The data here also suggest that, even in failing schools, the arrival of a new principal who has the necessary drive and commitment towards positive change can make a substantial difference. The consensus among the teachers and principals of the schools serving the Tullycarnet community was that: strong and visionary leadership in schools was *'vitally important'*, particularly in terms of expectations and *'setting the bar'* for post-primary level pupils; that in disruptive schools, there was a need for a *'motivated person'* to be appointed and say "*here's how it is now, we're not tolerating that type of behaviour ... this is our new structure*"; and that such new structures, if adopted throughout the whole school, will *'certainly lead to positive change'*.

The difference that a leader can make is stark. If somebody who has responsibility for the strategic direction of the school believes in change, expects their children to do well, that is a very, very powerful factor ... which filters all the way down. [Principal]
Two other examples from the data highlight: firstly, the impact a new principal, particularly one who *'lives in the local area'*, can make to a school whose future was in doubt due to *'a*

series of bad ETI reports and poor GCSE results'; and secondly, as cited by a parent, the contrasting levels of expectations between a grammar school and some secondary schools in the controlled sector.

[Named secondary school] has been under consideration for closure for a long time after. Numbers have been falling because parents started sending their children elsewhere. But now there is a new Principal who is a former pupil, taught there and the community love him ... he has already made a big difference. [Senior teacher]

At the grammar school where my kids go, if they see your child slacking they'll send a letter home straight away ... whereas in a high school they'll let a child slide or move down a class ... they're not really on the ball that way. [Parent]

Effective school leadership and higher expectations are also important drivers of educational attainment in the primary schools which serve young people from Tullycarnet. Most of the children from the Ward go to Gilnahirk Primary or Dundonald Primary (both of whom have strong reputations for achievement) rather than the local Tullycarnet Primary which (at the time of these interviews) has a total enrolment of only sixty pupils. In focus group discussions, several local parents spoke about the attraction of schools which have *'ambitious'* expectations for their pupils.

At [Named primary school] there's an expectation that all those children, whether they're from Tullycarnet or not, will achieve at Level 4 in Key Stage 2, because that is what is expected of them and that's what they'll be pushed to do and all the supports and resources will come in to make sure they do it. [Parent]

Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs) who engage with the schools attended by Tullycarnet's younger residents argued that: it was not difficult to differentiate between the schools where there was a presence or absence of positive leadership and high standards; and that an important indicator was the standard schools set in terms of pupil appearance.

There's a different vibe when you go into schools between the good ones and the ones that are just treading water. [EWO]

There are issues ... like pride in the uniform. There are lads turning up in school with hoodies on and girls wearing really thick make-up ... there is a big difference between the grammar schools and the best secondaries compared to the other secondaries. [EWO]

Finally, whilst acknowledging the role of good schools in pushing pupils towards academic achievement, one parent argued that this was often contingent on a child's (pre-existing) levels of intelligence and enthusiasm.

I think a lot of it has to do with the wee primary school they're at to begin with and the level of education they're getting there and they're pushed on ... and if they're found to be intelligent more so than the rest, you know, they'll be pushed on. [Parent]

This theme of differential expectations on the part of schools is evident in other sections of this chapter where, as apparent in other data, there is a suggestion that some schools will make an effort in support of pupils with ability and/or those who try but are perhaps content to allow those with less ability or energy for schooling to fall behind.

Staff commitment to local schools and community
In addition to the above outlined improved linkages between school, communities and families, strong leadership and raised expectations, a further driver of educational attainment

in Tullycarnet is staff commitment to local schools and the communities they serve. Perhaps the most salient example of this commitment relates to the case of one principal who had grown up in Dundonald, had been a past pupil of the school he worked in, and had always taught in the area. This principal spoke at length of how this personal experience (which was an anomaly amongst the school data) had influenced the way that he ran the school he was in charge of. He also believed that this background resulted in parents and others in the community feeling more able to approach him with their concerns about education; and claimed that the fact that he was '*a Dundonald boy*' was '*hugely important*'.

People here feel they own me, and I mean that in a nice way, they identify with me ... the fact that I came to the school, the fact that my reputation up until this point was that I was totally child-centred, that everything fun that happened in this school seemed to stem from me, and ... we were always trying to do things to get kids engaged, thinking outside the box. [Principal]

This same principal then recalled a discussion with a parent which succinctly highlights the benefits of all the previously mentioned meso-level drivers around leadership, school-community-home relations, and commitment to the local community. In this interaction, the combination of these factors had empowered a parent to approach him at a community event – not to discuss their child who had been a pupil at the school, but to ask about an educational issue that other family members were having, the solution to which is likely to assist others within the wider community.

[At] Ballybeen Men's Motivational Group Fun Day, a parent came up to me, he goes, "you used to teach my son [but] it's not about him I wanna talk to you, it's his brothers ... they can't pass their theory in their driving test, they don't have the skills to be able to, to actually, they know the answers to the questions but ... they don't have the literacy skills". So, what we're looking at now is going to offer a course to help kids like that ... there's going to be no reference to special needs, it's going to be, "are you struggling to pass your driving test theory?" and then to try and offer classes for that. [Principal]

More broadly, further examples of the value of staff being committed to the local community were offered by several young people themselves who argued that having fun learning opportunities and teachers who care was one of the main factors that helped them engage with learning and enjoy school.

My favourite teacher would be [name]. Because he's fun, and helps me loads. [Name] makes work fun ... teachers are really caring, they care for you, if you are ever stuck they would help you. [Female primary pupil]

In addition to these four meso-level drivers, a further three, albeit less prominent, enablers of educational attainment in Tullycarnet were identified relating to: adaptation of school structures, policies and pedagogical styles to suit local pupil needs; support for pupils during transitions; and broader conceptualisations of achievement (on the part of schools).

Adaptation of school structures, policies and pedagogical styles to suit local pupil needs

A key aspect of the above outlined staff commitment to young people, their families and wider community is the adoption of flexible policies around pupil monitoring, curricular development, accelerated learning units, and the structure of school day. Considered together, these factors were also seen as an important meso-level driver of educational attainment in the Tullycarnet data. All of the principals interviewed (both primary and post-primary) spoke about the importance of individual pupil monitoring, progression tracking systems as key enablers of achievement. The consensus here was that schools needed to: continually set targets for each pupil taken from baseline data; have in place mechanisms which allow timely identification of below-target performances; have similarly responsive

processes to initiate extended support work with teachers after school; and seek to also involve parents in such learning support packages.

We have a tracking system at GCSE, with intervention strategies available and a mentoring programme in year 12. We also use PIE and PIM [Progress in English/Maths to give baseline scores in year 8. [Principal]

We have four key dates for every student when their academic target attainment is assessed ... If pupils are below target, parents are brought in and structured learning support is provided. [Principal]

Another important aspect of pupil monitoring is processes of internal reflection on school data, including the use of a pupil survey on what was working well in terms of their learning. The consensus here was that it was particularly valuable for schools to be aware in a detailed and specific way of *'what was going on around the school'* and to identify areas where interventions were needed. In terms of developing flexible curricular, several principals argued that tailoring education to suit local pupils' needs was a key characteristic of a good school. Moreover, the adaptation of the curriculum around individual learning styles was an important element of: making pupils feel part of the school; identifying individual strengths; and establishing appropriate progression paths.

We want our students and their families to be a part of this school and community ... what can we do to make it work for you? We don't say: "Here's our school and you will damn well fit into it". We identify students' strengths and then provide packages and targets by which they will be able to achieve to the next level. [Principal]

We needed to look at what curriculum we were offering for the children, we needed to look at alternatives that would be helping a specific type of child, which we do have here, for them to get the best possible grades. So, I suppose it made us look at the curriculum and go, "what is successful for our kids?' The techniques employed teaching here, I think, helped to extract the best from the kids too. And that's exactly what had to happen because the type of child wasn't ever going to change. [Principal]

The value of such flexible approaches was highlighted by the principal and a senior teacher from a school serving the Tullycarnet Ward which has experienced a recent surge in its levels of GCSE achievement. These respondents spoke at length about how the implementation of tailored curricula, accessible pedagogical styles, and child/family-specific support packages had a significant and positive impact on pupils' learning. They then outlined a particularly salient example around the creation of an accelerated learning unit. This initiative proved so successful that many of the unit's methods were subsequently rolled-out to the wider school population. The central focus of the unit, they claimed, was to focus on the current learning styles of individual pupils and to introduce them to new ones. Selection for this unit is based on tests such as the NFER testing, Progress in English (PIE) and Progress in Maths (PIM). Although the unit took many years to develop, the initiative was seen as *'having great results',* primarily on account of a determined effort to ensure adequate reflection on the programmes' impact. More broadly, these same sources argued that increasing pupils' cognisance and application of different learning styles was 'ground-breaking' and that the programme itself was *'top quality'*.

We started this idea five years ago; it started in theory and then in practice; three years ago, we actually got things formulated to where it was ... this is how we're going to approach learning with this group of children. [Principal]
One of the things we had a problem with in this school was, people would come up with an idea and all of a sudden it would be, "right, let's all do it!" and it just wasn't working, it was too diluted, there wasn't enough reflection on what was good and what was bad ... we had

two years ... putting into practice these ideas ... and you know, this really is having an impact. [Senior teacher]

Three years ago, the accelerated learning class was put into place ... just looking at the children within that class, and their learning styles: interpersonal, musical, kinaesthetic, naturalistic, and linguistic ... there are a range of preferred styles for each child, so tapping into what's going to suit them best. [Principal]

Lastly, it is also clear from the data that adaptation of the structure of school day was a further enabler of academic achievement. Several principals who had initiated such changes claimed that, paradoxically, their adaptations were guided by an overarching desire to make the school day more consistent and routine. According to these sources: different classrooms often entailed (prior to these changes) different expectations, for example, in terms of uniforms and school ties; each class now begins by revisiting previous learning and communicating *'todays'* learning intention; and each class now ends by re-capping key aspects of the lesson.

Consistency's a big thing for kids, you know, and we had looked at our teaching and learning here and that classroom routines, we found, regularly kids were going to different rooms and there would be a different set of expectations being placed on them and, you know, they've enough to juggle with during the day than having to work out if "it will be ok if my tie's down a wee bit, sure that's acceptable". We now have these standards where ... uniforms are checked at the front of the room. [Principal]

The class will start with a learning intention on the board, then, that there will be a recap, recap is very important as we know "this is what we learnt last time; this is where we are continuing on it". Then at the end, recap on what you have actually been doing in the particular lesson ... and then kids stand up behind their chairs before they leave. Again, it's wee things, but it's just putting that routine in there. [Principal]

Support for pupils during transitions

Another meso-level driver of educational attainment in the Tullycarnet Ward to emerge from the data concern the effective provision of support during transitions. Although most of these data related to young peoples' transition from primary school environments to secondary schools, the value of such support was also apparent in responses around other important stages of a child's education such as transitions: from nursery to primary; from Key Stage 3 to GCSE level; and from post-primary into career paths. In terms of the nursery-primary transition, one young person from a local primary school described how her move to primary school was an enjoyable experience because they knew other children from nursery school who were in their new class

People that went to my nursery school came to here, so I had a few friends when I went into P1 ... I was so excited that when school finished I just couldn't wait to go back. On my first day of school I accidentally kicked my brother when I woke up because I was so excited! [Female primary pupil]

Another young person recalled that they were anxious about starting *'big school'* because of the large increase in the number of people who would be there. Her apprehensions were indicative of other views and demonstrate the need for schools attended by young people from Tullycarnet to provide additional support, particularly for pupils who: are daunted by the prospect of large class-sizes; did not attend nursery; or who don't already know some of their new classmates.

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In terms of primary to post-primary transitions, several principals and senior staff members of schools serving the Tullycarnet community described the range of measures they had in place to ease the transition for primary pupils moving into Year 8. These respondents also commonly cited: the importance of good relationships between teachers in feeder primary schools and teachers in post-primary schools; the need for secondary schools to be made aware of family or community circumstances which may impact on a young person's social and academic development; the benefits of including parents in the transition process; and the value of identifying potential peer-mentors and those pupils who may require mentoring.

We go out to the P7 feeders at Christmas and meet the kids and staff ... I'm the same person they meet at transfer test in November and at open day. Myself and senior leadership visit the primaries ... we speak to every individual child and every individual teacher and ask about the stuff they don't write down, family background, for example, if dad is in jail ... They see us in their school every year, so they know and trust us. [Principal]

We mix the pupils socially and academically and put all the info about them on postcards; here's a kid who needs support and is vulnerable; here's a child who has been identified as a peer mentor. Increasingly more schools do it, but we used to be the only one. It works ... in a year, we maybe move two kids now; we used to move much more because they had been placed inappropriately which led to bullying. [Principal]

They also come in with parents one night, then a full day. I'm there the whole time; they know my face, know I'm someone they can go to. Getting the info from the primary has made transition much easier; you know the child before they come. Whatever the issues are, you can be more sensitive in your language and they feel more included. [Principal]

Another principal claimed his school had a policy of assigning peer mentors to new (Year 8) pupils for their first (post-primary) two years as part of their transition support process.

We meet all the new year 8 pupils in their Primary Schools first, gather data, bring them into school for two days in June, then introductory days in August, with 6th form mentors (trained by PIPS and Childline) and a separate playground for the first months. Their mentors stay with them for two years. [Principal]

Transition support at GCSE level, such as the provision of additional revision time and technique practice, was regarded as particularly important for pupils who came from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. This was viewed by principals as an effective method for putting in place what more middle-class children take for granted during exam time.

Revision booklets [are] made for every child; we have revision clinics leading up to the GCSEs. The children don't get study time at home; in school, it is structured. [Principal]

Similarly, other principals and senior teachers spoke of the need for transition and career guidance to continue after a pupil leaves post-primary school. Again, this was seen as particularly necessary for young people from areas of high deprivation and/or those with limited levels of parental support.

One guy who was in talking to us, he was saying about how schools don't put in place the provision for children to be catered for once they leave school ... they're sort of very much on their own. That's where this school would definitely be different again because through working with the careers service, every child in this school gets their meeting with the careers advisor. [Principal]
It's getting them to think about the potentials. They haven't told me they want to be a pilot, but it might be because they've never even thought of it ... that's why it's important to show a full range of options. [Senior teacher]

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Broader conceptualisations of achievement (on the part of schools)

The final meso-level driver of educational attainment in Tullycarnet relates to schools which serve the Ward adopting broader conceptualisations of achievement. Several principals of these schools spoke of the importance of not only holding high expectations for achievement, but of also having a conceptualisation of achievement that went beyond the purely academic. The vast majority of these respondents, particularly those from the controlled sector, argued that, notwithstanding the *'pressure'* they felt from the inspectorate to strive for a high proportion of five A* to C grades with English and Maths, it was equally important to recognise other achievements such as: standards of uniform, punctuality, attendance, and making sure young people are developing self-esteem and motivation. It was also claimed that when schools *'fixate'* on the five GCSEs *'mantra'*, they neglect other achievements e.g. in sports or the performing arts; and fail to properly address the important aim of equipping young people for life after school.

Not everyone is academic, but it's our job to nurture them and see what they are good at, and give them the opportunities to excel; that's what school is about. Now, it's all about data, data, data, for the Department. [Principal]

Your definition of achievement can't simply be examination results, it must provide opportunities for the whole person ... our school has won the UK Rock School Challenge many times ... it's also about aspiration, that they believe, "I can". [Principal]

Under pressure from the Inspectorate, that's how we have been evaluating ourselves as a school. I disagree with that pressure ... we're trying to get that balance between the five A to C grades and being equipped for what they want to do next.* [Principal]

Another respondent, who himself many years previously failed the transfer test, recalled that: his mother bought him a watch because he had *'tried his best'*; that this reward for effort *'took the sting out of it';* and that this salutary lesson has informed his teaching practice ever since. However, a contrasting view was presented by a principal of a grammar school which serves children from Tullycarnet who articulated a more purely-academic definition of educational success.

I will always reward the kids, if you try your best, who can say you failed? Every child should leave here fulfilling their full potential and being ready for the world of work, and being able to contribute to society, and not being at a disadvantage because they came to this school. [Senior teacher]

Success is defined in terms of academic success ... we bring in high ability children and they must leave having achieved their potential ... we don't have weak children ... we have to add value. [Principal]

However, this more ridged definition of success was challenged by two principals from secondary schools in the controlled sector. These respondents conceded that there was a place for these orthodox measurements of academic success. However, because many young people in the controlled sector were unlikely to attain 5 GCSEs, it was important to ensure that they did not leave school *'with a sense of failure'.* More broadly, they also claimed that it was equally important to recognise and reward educational progression to the same extent as educational achievement.

For me, achievement is a pupil who comes in on, say a level 3, and leaves with 5 'E' grades. Other people don't grade that as achievement, but we have to get away from always walking the traditional route. It can't always be GCSE's. We have to find alternative routes. [Principal

Educational provision needs to meet the needs of all children ... We have all got our own skills ... I would explain to them, "if you're sitting predicted a 'G' and you get an 'E', that's fantastic". Similarly, "if you are sitting on a 'C' and you're predicted 'A', well, you're actually failing yourself, you're not actually achieving what you should". [Principal]

Lastly, and related to the earlier point about ensuring every young person leaves school with some measure of achievement, one principal described how, within the Tullycarnet community, there is nascent awakening around the value of academic qualifications and contrasted this with his own experience as a school pupil. At that time, he argued, it was: *'pretty much unheard of'* for local school-leavers to go on to further or higher education; not a prerequisite of attending technical college to have qualifications; and broadly accepted in those days that boys, in particular working-class boys, left school and attempted to enter the world of work with no qualifications.

At that time, it was just accepted that the boys would leave ... and get a job ... you didn't need to get your exams to get to tech ... you'd be going in and doing entry level ... they could get into with no qualifications. [Principal]

However, this same source conceded that such an outlook was '*wrong'* then and is infinitely more wrong now in the context of an increasingly skills-centric labour market. He then gave an example of how he encourages his pupils to see the life-long value of qualifications.

Now, I use my driving licence as the example for it, I would lift it out, and I show them it, and I go, "I will always have this unless I do something totally stupid. But your exams, you will always have them, no matter how many stupid things you do, you will always have that certificate. Nobody can ever take it away from you". And you can see the penny dropping with some of them, they think, "you know what? We will have that". [Principal]

7.5 Micro-level drivers of attainment in Tullycarnet

According to the data, there are three micro-level drivers of educational attainment in the Tullycarnet Ward. These relate to: parental support and encouragement; the individual resilience and self-motivation of high achievers; and close social networks and positive community influences.

Parental support and encouragement
According to the data, the most significant micro-level driver of educational attainment for young people in Tullycarnet relates to the levels of support and encouragement they receive from their parents. In a series of focus group discussions with parents from Tullycarnet, the consensus was that the most important factors in terms of a young person's academic progression were: whether or not their parents valued education; how much active support and encouragement parents gave their child(ren); and the levels of expectations parents had in terms of their child(ren)'s attainment.

The data also make clear that many parents in Tullycarnet, even those with few or no qualifications, still do their best to support their children's education. However, it was also conceded that, particularly for those parents with literacy and numeracy challenges, providing this support becomes increasingly more difficult when their children progress to post-primary level. Further indications of parental interest in young people's education were provided in a large focus group of 29 Tullycarnet parents. In a survey of these respondents, 72% of them wanted their child to do well at what they enjoy doing; 59% wanted their child to have a job that interests them and 48% wanted their child to come home from school feeling positive and engaged. 48% also wanted their child to get a job and to work. However, possibly related to historically low attainment levels in the Ward, only 17% indicated that they wanted their child to go on into higher education.

Although the latest indices indicate a significant improvement, the Tullycarnet Ward remains characterised by low-level educational attainment levels. Perhaps reflective of this recent improvement, the data from focus groups and individual interviews with parents evidence a host of examples of positive parental support and encouragement. According to these parents, the most effective ways of supporting their child's education was to: ensure homework was completed to a high standard; instil a sense of belief in their child; encourage their child to try their very best and take pride in their work; and take personal responsibility for their learning.

I suppose it's just about supporting them and always having an interest in their homework and making sure it's done and making sure it's the best they can possibly do. [Parent]

I say to my child go for it son ... you have the ability and if you put your mind to something you can achieve. [Parent]

I always say to my kids as long as you try your best at everything then at least you can walk away knowing that you've tried your very best and if you don't do really well you've nothing to regret. [Parent]

It's personal pride at the end of the day … that's why I say to my kids you're not doing these exams for anybody else but you … you're not doing them for me or your teachers or your daddy or anybody … they're for you and showing how well you can do. [Parent]

For several parents, simply ensuring that homework was done was not enough and that it was equally important that it was done to an acceptable standard. One parent with three children who attend grammar school outlined her role in maintaining such standards.

If they do their homework and I thought they hadn't put enough into it, I just score it out and say, "we'll start all over again ... that's not up to standard". It is hard work, it really is; especially with my kids at grammar school because they're coming in with so much ... I mean they're constantly being tested. [Parent]

This particular parent who was raised in Tullycarnet and still lives there got a D in her transfer test and went to secondary school. She is now the mother of five children three of whom are doing well at grammar school and two who are in the top reading group at primary school. When asked how she would explain her strong focus on her children's' education, when her own experience was quite negative and unproductive, her responses suggest that she was always very able but the peer norms were those of school having low importance.

It didn't really bother me in the slightest because I didn't want to go to grammar school ... we always looked at grammar school girls and said, "oh look at you, you're a wee snob", I didn't want to go. I had no interest; I wanted to go to [named secondary school] anyway. [Parent]

This parent claims she now more fully realises the value of education and says: *'if I could do it all over again I would've worked a lot harder'*. These types of accounts suggest that there is, or certainly was in the past, a social class dimension to educational achievement where some children from areas like Tullycarnet commonly associate grammar school attendance with middle class identifications and notions of *'snobbery'*.

Individual resilience and self-motivation of high achievers against the odds
Analysis of the Tullycarnet data reveal that a further micro-level driver of educational attainment in the Ward is the individual resilience and self-motivation of young people which encourages them to apply themselves in school and achieve academic success. In a focus

group of primary school pupils from Tullycarnet, young people spoke about the ones who do well in school being the individuals who try their best, strive for higher grades; want to be highly thought of in the school, and are naturally '*smart*'. These young respondents also felt that effort was more important than ability, because '*smart*' pupils who don't try are likely to fail but pupils with less ability can, nonetheless, succeed if they work hard. The following exchange with one primary school pupil from Tullycarnet evidences this point.

I: What things then go on in school that make you want to do well, or help you to do well?

R: I just want to get higher grades and a better reputation in the school.

I: Are there any other kinds of people who do well in school?

R: Yeah there's a girl in my class, and she's really smart.

I: Is it just the smart ones who do well, do you think?

R: No, there's people who didn't do the AQE, and they do well as well.

I: So, what is it about them that makes them do well?

R: The boy in my class [name], he just tries his best.

A further example from the case studies describes how a former school pupil from Tullycarnet went on to third level education. The mother of this young woman, who conceded that there was no previous history of academic achievement in her family, claimed that her daughter's success was a result of her own internal drive and self-motivation.

My mum and dad both left school at 14, I failed my 11+ and left school with one E grade GCSE. My husband left school with nothing so our daughter doesn't get it from either of us ... I think I found her because she's not like me in any shape or form! She's always been very driven though … at primary school, if she didn't get 20 out of 20 in a spelling test she was annoyed with herself ... she strives to get full marks at everything. She left grammar school with 3 A's at A level and is now at Queen's ... she's very motivated … she's kind of driven … a wee grafter. I never put any pressure on her ... my attitude to her was you'll go in and do your best … I wasn't saying to her "you have to get this" or "you have to get that" because there's no point … if she's going to do it she'll do it. [Parent]

Interestingly, there were several other examples of high educational attainment against the odds which related to individuals who achieved '*very little*' during their time at school but subsequently succeeded in further or higher education environments. A proportion of these individuals claimed they did not see themselves as '*able*' or '*capable*' during their time at school. However, it is clear from the data that there are perhaps many young people who gain very little from their school education even though they have considerable ability. This suggests that in Tullycarnet the full potential of residents is not been realised within mainstream education.

Two specific examples from the data around high academic achievement in FE and HE settings following low achievement in school settings evidence this point. The first relates to a young male from Tullycarnet who, following a '*disappointing*' time at school, left with only three GCSEs (two D grades and one E grade). Clearly, this respondent's primary and secondary school experience was unsuccessful in bringing out the best in him because it was only when he then went on to Further Education at the age of sixteen that he experienced achievement for the first time, gaining a City & Guilds Certificate with six distinctions and two credits. He also won an award for best construction student. Moreover,

this young resident of the Tullycarnet estate subsequently went on to achieve a 1st Class Honours degree, a Master of Science degree and is about to start a PhD.

I'd have been a very poor achiever at school ... you couldn't have picked me out of the crowd as someone who was ever going to achieve ... if anything you would probably have said I was stupid. [Male resident of Tullycarnet]

The second example of significant academic success following low attainment at school concerns a principal of a local school who described how, despite (or perhaps because of) his own negative experiences of school he was driven to become a teacher.

It's down to a mind-set, it's down to, and I'm a prime example of this, I mean, I didn't value my education when I was here one bit; I hated school, I became a teacher, in the long run, because I had such a negative experience at school, and in my head, I thought, "I can't let anybody else experience that". If I can do one thing, and that is to go into a school and make learning fun for kids. [Principal]

Close social networks and positive community influences

The third and final micro-level driver of educational attainment to emerge from the data concern the close social networks and positive community influences within the Tullycarnet estate. It was commonly cited in the interviews and focus group discussions that within the Ward there are: increasing levels of community cohesion; neighbours who routinely looked out for each other and socialised together; young people being encouraged to be more involved in the community; and, as highlighted in earlier sections, greatly improved linkages between the Tullycarnet community and the local schools. Several principals and teachers from schools with serve Tullycarnet claimed that the close social networks are a key characteristic of the estate and that this cohesion was a major factor in the Ward's recent and significantly improved attainment levels.

I find the people very friendly ... there would be a good sense of community in the sense that they would do things together, or that neighbours would be more like family to each other. The ones who are friendly would leave the kids to school and say, "come on over, the door is open". You would hear that a lot. [Principal]

Similarly, several local primary school children highlighted that they too feel the estate is welcoming, friendly, and a *'good place to live'*. In a focus group of local primary pupils, one young male spoke about his circle of friends and how Tullycarnet feels like *'home'*.

When I go out to play, all my friends, they always come ... we always go out together. We always call for each other. [Male primary pupil]

The data also make clear that an important aspect of Tullycarnet's close social networks and sense of cohesion is the range of positive community influences. It was frequently cited that there are many community and youth workers, most of whom are voluntary and unpaid, who are dedicated to the betterment of the estate and who are seen as positive role models for local young people. It was also claimed that the work of these individuals has increased levels participation and voluntary action on the part of residents. Relatedly, there are many examples of the community in Tullycarnet engaging in and benefitting from various projects, interventions and initiatives around issues like health, sport and recreation.

Positive benefits of this community cohesion include: *'excellent facilities'* such as the new £1.2m 3G soccer pitch which is part of the recently completed Hanwood recreation centre; and the community's access to significant funding streams to support youth and community development programmes. For example, several respondents highlighted the work of

Barnardos who have ran a family support project in the estate for eighteen years which provides a wide range of initiatives such as: Early Years; Family Learning programmes; and a Family Support project. However, although significant success has been achieved in relation to areas such as health, recreation, youth work and community development, the data make clear that, notwithstanding recent improvements, a similar emphasis needs to be placed on mobilising the community regarding educational achievement.

Tullycarnet is actually doing quite well ... because they have healthy neighbourhood projects running … but it's the education thing they need to drive rather than eating healthily ... there's a lot going on in Tullycarnet as regards sport and recreation ... and yet it doesn't seem to be impacting on education ... there needs to be something just specifically around education attainment. [Principal]

These views were supported by other school-based respondents who highlighted the potential benefits to be had if the Tullycarnet community continues to work together. The consensus here was that community groups, organisations, parents and families needed to further collaborate with each other and with the schools which serve the Ward to engender *'a real push'* towards raising local attainment levels.

It's not really about money ... it's about the will and the focus ... an expectation that we're all working towards getting these kids their GCSEs ... it is about focus, intention, belief ... everybody working for that common goal. [Principal]

7.6 Macro-level inhibitors of attainment in Tullycarnet

In terms of the structural factors which are seen as barriers to academic achievement in Tullycarnet, a total of six macro-level inhibitors were identified in the data and relate to: schools closures and falling enrolments; the spatial detachment of schools from the communities they serve; extant paramilitary influence; the unreliability and skewing effect of official statistics; unsuitable facilities, lack of resources, and inadequate provision of Early Years; and the lack of a joined-up education strategy (i.e. between DE & CCEA). These issues are now discussed in turn below.

Schools closures and falling enrolments
It is clear from the data that an important macro-level inhibitor of academic attainment in Tullycarnet concerns the inter-related themes of closures and falling enrolments in the schools which serve the Ward. It was frequently cited that the school closures that have already taken place and the omnipresent threat which pervades other schools *'earmarked for closure'* have caused significant anxiety in the local community. The data here also indicate that, in addition to limiting people's educational choices, these closures and the spectre of further ones, creates: significant logistical issues for parents and young people around transportation; and does little to reinforce the local community's connectedness with schools. However, another important aspect is the psychological and symbolic significance of these types of situations, as expressed candidly by a long-term resident of Tullycarnet.

This gives local people the message that education doesn't really matter and therefore we don't matter. [Resident]

In addition to such actual or proposed closures, the falling enrolments of some of the schools which serve Tullycarnet are also seen as an inhibitor of educational attainment. Perhaps the most notable example relates to the only primary school located in the estate which has seen its numbers steadily decrease in recent years. Several respondents claimed that many local people have historically looked upon this school as being a '*second-class primary school'.* As a consequence of this perception: many local parents have opted to send their

children to other primary schools in the surrounding area. The academic potential of many young people from Tullycarnet, it was thus argued, has been lessened because they now: have to travel further to go to other primary schools that their parents have chosen for them; and are commonly attending schools with large classes when many of them could have benefitted from smaller classes. Two extracts from the interview data, one from a principal and one from a local pupil evidence this point.

A lot of the children really need one-to-one tuition or small classes, and close adult support is best for them. But parents don't tend to see that as a positive thing. [Named school] would be the school that everybody wants to get into ... but they have classes of 30. Now, if you are a bright wee button, and you know to sit and look forward at the teacher talking, and listening ... however, there's not too many like that these days, especially boys. [Principal]

My mum didn't send me to [named primary school] because there was only 6 people in each class, she didn't like that school at all, because there was hardly any pupils in the class to teach. [Primary pupil]

However, another principal highlighted a nascent change in attitudes towards the local primary school (engendered, at least in part, by a community-inspired campaign) and expressed the hope that recent positive shifts in enrolment trends can be continued.

We know the great work that's going on in [named primary school] now, and the initiatives that are in place there to address the issues in that area. [Principal]

The falling enrolments in the post-primary schools which serve Tullycarnet were also commonly cited as an inhibitor of achievement. Several principals and teachers argued that, in addition to demographic factors, the historical negative reputation of some of these schools has contributed to decreasing rolls. They also claimed that as a consequence of falling enrolments: education has become viewed yet more negatively in the eyes of local people; and that this circular process has created a '*tipping point*' and a '*downward trend*'.

At that stage (late 1990s) the school had a good reputation, but it was starting to turn ... public opinion started to go against the school ... that was the start of the slippery slope ... intake numbers kept decreasing. We went from having year groups that would have had maybe 120 children to where year groups were dwindling down to 60. [Principal]

Another principal argued that two further consequences of falling enrolments in the secondary sector is that: students who would be better suited to a controlled sector education are being '*misplaced*' in grammar schools; and that non-grammar schools are losing pupils who would have been amongst their highest performers.

Of course, what we have is, because of the falling enrolments in schools, grammar schools creaming off the top, so they're able to fill their seats ... this is showing in the statistics. Grammar schools aren't as hot on the A*-C five or more than as what they used to be. The kids that would be failing in a grammar school would be the ones who would've been leaving here with the best grades. [Principal]

Spatial detachment of schools from the communities they serve

Clearly related to the school closures and falling enrolments as outlined above, a further inhibitor of academic attainment in Tullycarnet is the distances between the schools which serve Tullycarnet and the estate itself. From the data presented in Table 7.1 (see under Local Context section) a 'bubble' chart was then created in Excel to graphically represent the distance (in miles) of schools serving young people from Tullycarnet from the Ward centre (see Figure 7.5 below). This distance was placed against the GCSE pass rate of the schools

and the numbers of young people enrolled in each school, both grammar (in blue) and secondary (in orange). The bubble chart shows the stark differences between the attainment levels of young people who attend grammar schools serving Tullycarnet and young people who attend secondary schools - the bubbles within the chart lie both above and below the 50% pass mark (y-axis). It also shows that all the schools serving young people in the Ward are relatively far from the Ward centre, given that the bubbles in the chart are spread widely across the x-axis.
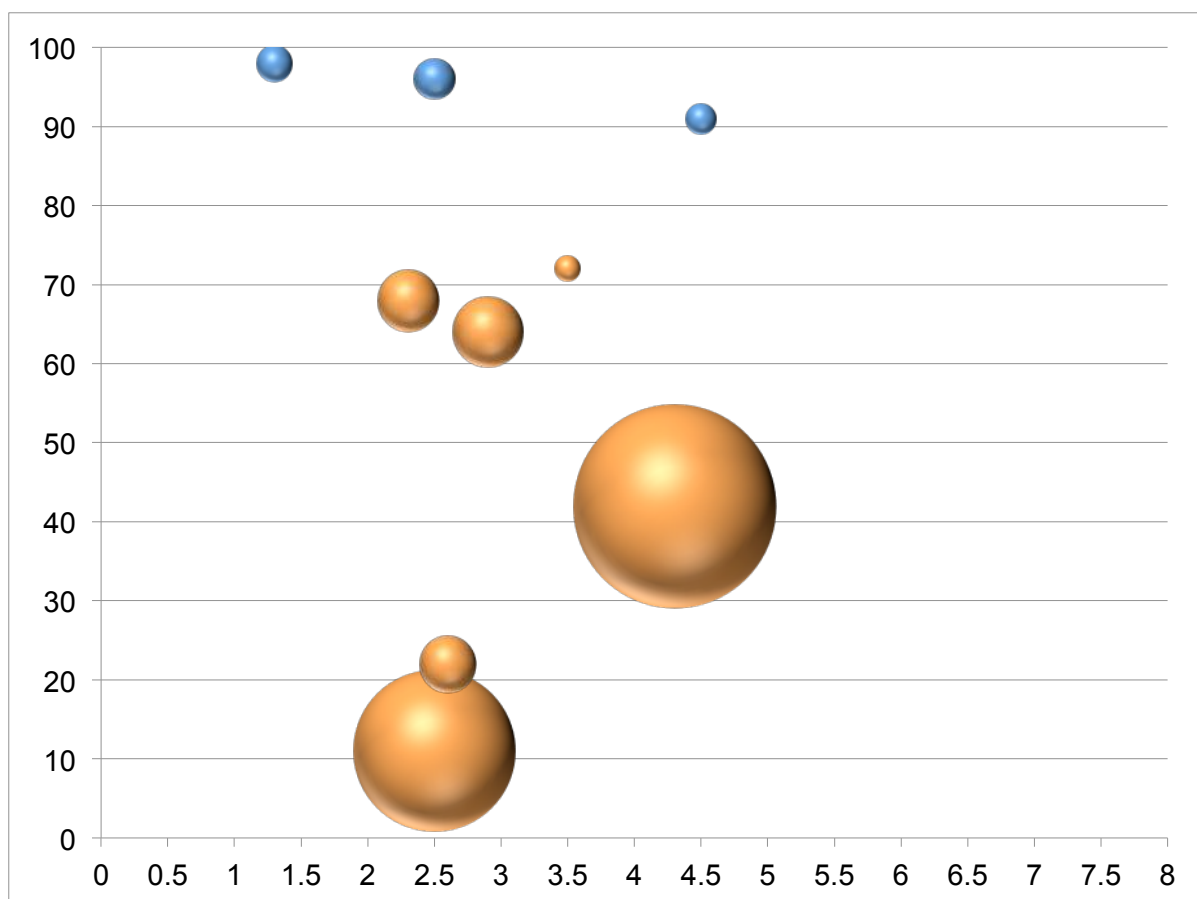
Figure 7.5: Schools in Tullycarnet GCSE Pass (A*-C) rates 2011 by miles from Ward centre and enrolment numbers. Blue – Grammar schools: Orange Other schools

Like Woodstock, there are two key secondary schools that cater for young people from the Tullycarnet area, Dundonald and Newtownbreda High Schools. However, they do not overshadow the enrolment numbers of the other secondary schools to the same extent as the two main secondary schools serving Woodstock. Young people from Tullycarnet also have to travel further to attend their two main secondary schools than young people from Woodstock – Dundonald High School is 2.5 miles away and Newtownbreda High School is 4.3 miles away. This reveals that schools are not highly visible or highly accessible to young people from the Ward; and attendance perhaps requires a bus journey or more. The commonly held view of principals and teachers interviewed was that this spatial disconnect has had a negative impact on local young people in terms of engagement and attendance.

A lot more of our school refusers would come from Tullycarnet ... and I think ... because of the distance ... it was easier to stay at home and not engage in education that to actually go to school. [Principal]

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Tullycarnet, unlike the other predominantly Unionist Wards in the ILiAD study (i.e. Woodstock and Duncairn), does not interface with nationalist communities and was, to an extent, detached from sectarian conflict which came to characterise much of urban Belfast during the 'Troubles'. However, the extant and historical influence of paramilitary groups in Tullycarnet was highlighted. These data, however, reveal contrasting views amongst local residents around the issue of paramilitary influence in Tullycarnet. Several residents argued that: this influence is *'diminishing',* particularly in terms of the impact on young people's behaviour; residents are more likely to approach the police in relation to community issues; that several ex-combatants are now positively involved in local community development; and that these *'shifts'* have *'probably been good for the community'.* However, other residents posited that paramilitary influence in Tullycarnet *'always lurks in the background'*; and that such influence is often directed towards self-gain rather than the betterment of the community.

There is a real paramilitary influence in Tullycarnet, albeit behind the scenes ... but the loyalist focus is very operational ... they have no big-picture strategy. [Resident]

In terms of the school-level data, several principals concurred with those residents who thought the influence of paramilitaries in the area was decreasing. For example, one principal, whilst acknowledging a continuing influence and the need for vigilance in terms of *'keeping it out of the school'*, argued that, '*thankfully,* this influence and attendant identifications are *'increasingly dying out'.*

I think it's very important for me as principal of this school to engage with everyone in this community ... you can't stick your head in the sand and say, 'oh that stuff [paramilitarism] doesn't happen', it does. It's very important that that stuff doesn't come in to this school. Back in the day, it used to be quite the opposite ... we would have had groups of kids who would have identified each other as being from different factions. [Principal]

There was also fairly wide agreement that one of the most negative local legacies of the conflict is that many fathers in Tullycarnet, often because of their association with paramilitary groups, neglected their own education. These fathers now seem to be at a distinct disadvantage in terms of their capacity to engage with and support their own children's (and indeed grandchildren's) education.

Dads were involved in paramilitary organisations and weren't interested in school. All they wanted to do as teenagers was join up to something as soon as they left school ... so they didn't achieve ... and now they're sitting there with no qualifications whatsoever and, if you ask them to help their child with their homework they won't know how to do homework … and they're nearly embarrassed to come forward. I know from my own experience that my husband is embarrassed to come forward and say, "I need help … can you show me how to do that". [Parent]

Unreliability and skewing effect of official statistics

A fourth macro-level inhibitor of educational attainment in Tullycarnet to emerge from the data concern the skewing effect of official statistics. Three specific examples of unreliable statistics were highlighted relating to: Department of Education statistics on Key Stage target levels; the neglect of value added and progression; and Free School Meals (FSM) as a measure of socio-economic need. In terms of Key Stage target levels statistics, several principals questioned both their usefulness to schools as a resource for improving achievement, and their general reliability. One principal argued that these assessment data *'are not really for schools'* but are actually only useful to the Department of Education, the

Public Accounts Committee, and audits. This same source also claimed that there are major issues over schools '*not being honest*' in terms of reporting. Thus, the data are '*not reliable*'.

They are not beneficial to us; they are certainly not beneficial to the secondary and grammar schools at Key Stage 3; they put them in the cupboards ... they are for the Department of Education. We know from talking to the staff in other schools and how they get their levels, that it is not reliable. It is not honest. [Principal]

A further problem regarding official statistics concerns the alleged neglect of pupil progression and the '*added value*' provided by schools. Several principals claimed that these issues are not being adequately captured in inspection reports or league tables. For example, one principal argued that it was important to recognise the progress between '*what you had in the beginning*' and '*where you got to in P7*'. While another principal said he has '*16 nationalities*' at his school and that this was not reflected in the official statistics on AQE or end of Key Stage results.

If we have a child coming in at P1 with ADHD, dyslexia, or autism, he may not get a Level 5 or a Level 4, but their progress is not shown in league tables or statistics. [Principal]

When I look at my P7s, I see 5 or 6 where English is not their first language ... but yet they are being assessed in English. That is one small thing that statistics don't reveal. [Principal]

Similarly, another principal claimed to have '*serious issues*' with Key Stage league tables because *it's not a level playing field.* He further argued that it was impossible to compare '*an affluent school in a leafy suburb, where all the children are tutored*' to schools attended by young people from working class backgrounds. He also highlighted that added value was routinely overlooked in favour of '*dry statistics*'.

You can't compare the two. But when you have league tables, they are. Also, you don't hear about the extra 'added value'. We were in the guard of honour at the opening of the Olympic Games ... not mentioned. Now, the Inspectorate knew about it, we told them about it, but it's all about GCSE data for the Department. [Principal]

Finally, it was also claimed that many families and schools are disadvantaged by the Free School Meals (FSM) measurement and criteria. One principal highlighted a key problem with FSM entitlement as a measure of socio-economic need, stating that this hides the needs of parents who are working, but who may, nonetheless, be in or close to poverty. Every child, this respondent concluded, should be treated equally, irrespective of background and that FSM was '*not the right way*' to measure or categorise socio-economic disadvantage.

We've a percentage of our parents who may not have high powered jobs, but they might work in Asda, so they don't qualify for free school meals. [Principal]

Unsuitable facilities, lack of resources, and inadequate provision of Early Years
The Tullycarnet data indicate that unsuitable facilities and a lack of resources in some of the schools which serve the Ward, in addition to inadequate local provision of Early Years are, considered together, a further significant inhibitor of academic attainment. Several principals of schools which are housed in older buildings reported the negative impact that this had on pupils' aspirations, and their subsequent achievement. One such principal articulated wider held views and claimed that: parts of his school were in a state of disrepair; interactive whiteboards and tablet technology were urgently required but he did not have the financial resources to pay for them; and that because nearly all his budget went on staff wages, it was impossible to '*take this school to the next level*'.

I would like to see more investment. Studies have shown that newer facilities raise motivation. [Principal]

Other principals from schools which have relocated to new buildings or have secured new facilities spoke about the positive impact that had on achievement in terms of expectations and standards of behaviour. One claimed that his school's recent move to a new build has led to *'vastly improved behaviour'* and that in four years, there has been *'zero vandalism'* because the young people *'see it as their school'*. However, among these same respondents there was some dismay at funding cuts which had resulted in not having enough teachers to fill the new facilities.

We lost 7 teachers last year. Due to funding cuts, we have this lovely building, but teachers are worked to death. That would have a bigger impact than the building. [Principal]

We are an over-subscribed school, but next year, I will have to make staff redundant, impacting staff and pupil morale. [Principal]

Another principal voiced frustration at not having the same funding as schools in North and West Belfast to encourage more home-school links in the area. These financial constraints, he concluded, prevented his school from providing support for low achieving students and parents with limited capacity to support their children's education.

We should be able to offer Full Service funding classes to parents in the evening for free ... I had a very successful course running for some of the lowest achieving girls that was making a profound impact upon them ... the funding has been removed. [Principal]

The final aspect of this inhibitor relates to the frequently cited claim that there are families in Tullycarnet who have little or no access to Early Years provision. The data make clear that many parents from the estate are unable to get children placed in an appropriate nursery school. According to local community workers and residents, demand patently outstrips local supply in this regard and although some parents have been offered places for their children further afield, these locations present significant transportation barriers. Moreover, in some cases, there is reluctance on the part of parents to send their children to nursery facilities outside of *'their community'*. This consequence of this supply-demand dichotomy is that the *'school-readiness'* of some young people is compromised. Indeed, one principal argued that a proportion of Tullycarnet's children are entering school ill-prepared and are thus '*not able to make good use of the learning opportunities'*.

Lack of joined-up education strategy (i.e. between DE & CCEA)
The final macro-level inhibitor of academic attainment in Tullycarnet concerns the alleged lack of *'joined up strategy'*, primarily, between the Department of Education and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA). Several principals from primary and post-primary schools which serve the Ward expressed their frustration at the perceived lack of strategic direction for education in Northern Ireland. One principal claimed that politicians need to properly engage with educationalists to discuss: the future of education in Northern Ireland; appropriate policy interventions; and how to develop a system that would be *'the pride of Europe'*. Similarly, another school principal argued that there was: a mismatch between education policy intentions and policy outcomes: a degree of confusion around expectations at Key Stages; and little evidence of '*joined up thinking'* between government departments.
There is an issue there in what's expected at Level 5 in P7, and what is expected in a secondary or grammar school. No joined-up thinking. I have to have a three-year development plan; but I haven't seen the Department's for Education's plan. [Principal]

7.7 Meso-level inhibitors of attainment in Tullycarnet

According to the Tullycarnet data, there are three significant inhibitors of educational attainment in the Ward. These barriers to academic progress relate to: inappropriate teacher skill-set/negative teacher attitudes, behaviours and expectations; inappropriate curriculum and learning strategies; and the accusation that schools and other agencies work in silos. These school-level inhibitors are now examined in turn below.

Inappropriate teacher skill-set/negative teacher attitudes, behaviours and expectations
According to the Tullycarnet data, the most significant meso-level inhibitor of educational attainment in the Ward concerns some teachers, who it was claimed, lack the necessary skill-set, display negative attitudes towards their pupils, or have low expectations for the young people in their charge. It was frequently mentioned in the community-level data that the interactions such teachers have with pupils can be counterproductive in terms of promoting learning. In terms of inadequate skill-sets, it was commonly reported that many teachers are unable to effectively engage with or relate pupils in secondary schools, particularly those from socially-deprived areas and/or families experiencing multiple stressors. The consensus here was that, alongside subject competence, the ability of teachers to form constructive relationships with pupils is an important enabler of learning. In other words, it is essential that teachers have, and explicitly demonstrate, the ability to establish a rapport and a sense of connectedness with those they seek to educate.

If the teachers show some respect and trust, the pupils often respond similarly. [Parent]

Some teachers need to redefine themselves as an enabler and facilitator rather than just a teacher. [Principal]

Other parents claimed that: they could *'count on the fingers of one hand'* the number of teachers that they had a meaningful relationship with; and that some teachers simply *'can't manage the kids' behaviour'* because they don't know how to build relationships with pupils. Moreover, it was also posited that if a pupil is asked what school subjects they like and why, they commonly begin by describing the teacher rather than the subject. This conceptualisation of educational enjoyment was evidenced in a focus group of local parents, some of whom also highlighted the long-term effect of teacher-pupil relationships.

My eldest boy is quite clever ... the teachers he doesn't engage with properly are the ones teaching the subjects in which he doesn't achieve highly. [Parent]

Teachers have a lot to answer for ... there's a lot to be said for understanding pupils, understanding their needs, knowing what motivates them and knowing what demotivates them … showing a sense of encouragement; having belief in them. I don't think they actually realise the impact they have on young people's lives from a very early age and this will ultimately lead to where they end up. [Parent]

Several principals and teachers concurred with these sentiments and further claimed that one of the most important aspects of a teacher's skill-set is their ability to understand the complexities of some pupils' home lives and how this can negatively impact on their capacity to learn. For example, some teachers choose to remove from the classroom disruptive pupils without actually knowing: what is causing that child to be disruptive; what his needs are; and why he is *'getting on like this'*. In contrast, when teachers have a relationship and properly understand the child's background, they are able to *'work with'* the young person and address the issue without excluding them from the lesson. Similarly, another principal

claimed that, previously, some teachers in his school '*constantly*' treated pupils *'as if they weren't good enough'.*

I know what is going on at home ... So, I say to them, "work with me here and we'll see what we can do to sort things out for you in school". [Teacher]

If I heard of any member of staff giving off to a child because they don't have a pen or something ... "give them the pen, that's a small battle". You don't know what a child's going through just to get to school. But these staff ... almost seemed to relish the fact that they could torture kids over not having equipment. [Principal]

To address the above outlined skill-set deficits amongst some teachers, two principals argued that for the requisite abilities to be developed, a degree of retraining for teachers (or perhaps a different emphasis in initial teacher training) may be required. One claimed that teacher training for secondary schools should be '*brought up to the level'* evident in the grammar sector. A second argued that teachers need to be able to improve their interactions with young people to create a *'nurturing environment'* where they feel valued and want to engage. In addition to a deficient skill-set among some teachers who work in secondary schools servicing Tullycarnet, it was also claimed that some display: overtly negative attitudes, undermining behaviours, and low expectations towards pupils. In the focus groups and individual interviews with local parents, several argued that: they remember *'vividly'* being told they would never make anything of themselves; and that such comments made them feel *'worthless'*. Indeed, one parent who subsequently went on to achieve postgraduate qualifications stated that she continues to harbour self-doubt over her academic ability. Similarly, another spoke about the long-term impact negative teacher attitudes have had on her husband and the arbitrary consequences of streaming processes.

The feeling I had at the time was that I can't achieve and, even now, sometimes I feel, if I'm honest, that I'm not good enough. [Parent]

My husband classes himself as stupid which obviously he's not in any way but he wouldn't be sort of academically intelligent but he's by no means stupid. I think he was just told that at school when he was young. It sticks. If you're not willing to learn then that's it ... they give up on you ... you're threw down into the class below. [Parent]

It was also reported that, previously, the learning challenges of young people from disadvantaged communities such as Tullycarnet were exacerbated by teachers who had low or no expectations of their pupils. This was seen as particularly common among some teachers who*: 'were not from the local area'; 'didn't really care';* were *'just there to put the day in;* and then *'drive out of the area as quickly as they can at half past three'.*

We used to have teachers who taught here who actually thought the kids here weren't good enough. They wouldn't have sent a dog to this school but it was alright for them to teach here ... If I'm being brutally honest, it's not just the community and the parents who were negative about education, the staff were too. [Principal]

Inappropriate curriculum and learning strategies
In addition to the above outlined deficient skill-sets, a further barrier to creating an effective learning environment in schools relates to the inappropriateness of the school curriculum and the teaching and learning strategies deployed. This was seen as particularly inhibiting for young people who already feel somewhat disaffected and who, for a variety of reasons, are struggling with school work. Some viewpoints arising from the data suggest that in some of the schools which serve Tullycarnet the pupil cohort is relatively small and, consequently, there are often restrictions on the breadth of subject choices available. It was frequently cited

that there was a need to revisit the curriculum content of these smaller schools because in larger schools there is a fuller range of subject options and *'wider expertise among the staff'*.

It is also clear from the Tullycarnet data that a perception exists among residents that schools which serve the Ward are disadvantaged when it comes to the menu of subjects available compared to some nationalist locations. For example, in a focus group of local people, residents argued that: the range of GCSEs on offer in the local schools is significantly narrower than other parts of Belfast; and that these contrasts were likely to have a skewing effect on Ward attainment rates.

In West Belfast, subjects like dance are GCSEs but things like that are not offered for Tullycarnet kids ... the GCSE rates in west Belfast may appear better because the young people have a broader range of subjects available to them, so they can choose the subjects that suit them best. [Resident]

In another focus group of community representatives, it was further argued that there are different ways of perceiving achievement. For example, one respondent claimed that *'you can get good qualifications without having the traditional five GCSEs'*. Whilst the fact is that the NINIS/DE annual school-leavers survey data on GCSE performance also included GCSE equivalents, it is nonetheless interesting that, within Tullycarnet, there is a view that *'GCSEs aren't the be-all and end-all'*.

Some of the Tullycarnet data also suggest that classroom learning is over-emphasised and that curriculum and learning strategies should be more flexible and supportive of pupils' needs. To evidence this point, a local community worker highlighted the need for making learning more practical.

Some young people who struggle with maths in school can do mental arithmetic when they're playing darts in a youth club ... and do it quickly and accurately with no problems ... they can learn and develop these skills when they feel motivated to do so ... but it's much harder for them in a classroom. [Community worker]

The final aspect of an inappropriate curriculum to emerge from the data was around inadequate careers information and advice for young people as they embark on the last stage of their schooling. Moreover, several residents and community workers argued that the *'poor quality'* of careers guidance and vocational opportunities provided by schools reinforces low expectations and aspirations among young people from the estate.

In Tullycarnet, no one will tell them what they need to do if they want to be an astronaut. The available placements are crap ... most girls will end up spending their week in hairdressers. [Resident]

Schools and other agencies working in silos
According to the data, a third meso-level inhibitor of educational attainment in Tullycarnet relates to some schools which serve the Ward and some external agencies *'working in silos'*. Local young people, it was claimed, are prevented from realising their full academic potential, at least in part, because of the lack of integrated and collaborative working practices. In some cases, this relates to inadequate liaison between schools but it also applies to the degree of contact and cooperation between relevant statutory bodies.

The Tullycarnet data make clear that many local families are characterised by pressing issues such as unemployment and poverty. It is also fair to say that, as evidenced in subsequent sections of this chapter, there are a number of families dealing with a range of

problems including domestic violence, drug use and alcohol addiction. Consequently, some parents are struggling to support their children's education as much as they would like.

Handling such a whole mess ... makes it very difficult to think about fractions, percentages and homework ... those things go way down the pile. [Parent]

It was commonly suggested that a young person from a chaotic family situation would likely be known not only to the school but also to other agencies including: Education Welfare Officers (EWOs), Educational Psychology Services (EPS), and youth justice. However, it was equally suggested that there may be very little (if any) communication or joint strategising between these bodies; and that the, somewhat predicable, consequence of this lack of collaboration is duplication of effort, partially informed remedial responses and poor outcomes. In terms of trying to locate a reason for this lack of cohesion between various agencies, several EWOs claimed that the *'real problem'* related to the chronic under-resourcing of educational support services. Although these EWOs engage with families and schools and can identify problems and potential solutions, their heavy caseloads and no additional resources mean that they *'can't to do any effective preventive work'*. Although it was reported that schools serving Tullycarnet are starting to work together, for example through the Extended Schools initiative, there was a feeling that the area is *'way behind other areas'* in terms of inter-agency engagement. These views were supported by local EWOs who claimed that there was a definite need for statutory bodies to collaborate more closely and to work *'further upstream'*.

Families that we are dealing with as EWOs are often the same families that Social Services are also working with. Tullycarnet happens to straddle two Health Trust areas and this doesn't help. [EWO}

Moreover, it seems that where inter-agency cooperation does take place in Tullycarnet it tends to be by default rather than as a result of strategic planning. For example, local community workers said that where there are effective professional partnerships, it is due to the inter-personal relationships *'we manage to develop with those colleagues rather than the system driving it'*. They also claimed that this lack of inter-agency cooperation was often compounded by similarly low levels of intra-agency knowledge exchange. Indeed, one worker from the statutory sector conceded that even within his own organisation, each department has their own targets and methods. This same source lamented that *'so much more'* could be achieved if there was *'a coherent approach to supporting families and pupils who are struggling'*. Other statutory professionals highlighted that these disjointed intra and inter-agency relationships should be seen in a wider context than Tullycarnet and believed that they were a feature of a structural deficiency in East Belfast. These respondents claimed that there is *'something going wrong'* in East Belfast around community fragmentation, a lack of cooperation, competition between community groups. They then concluded that this situation, particularly around education, is in *'stark contrast'* to what is happening in North and West Belfast.

There needs to be better improvement of collaboration at a higher level than just between individual schools and individual communities but also the Department of Education, the Boards, health … and that's just not happening in the East at all. [Statutory employee]

7.8 Micro-level inhibitors of attainment in Tullycarnet

The Tullycarnet data make clear that embedded deep within the local community psyche there seems to be a belief among some residents that achievement is anathema and something that only happens in other areas by other people. In other words, a proportion of the Ward imagine academic success as something that is beyond their grasp and therefore unattainable. Analyses of these data suggest a self-sustaining causal link between a lack of aspiration amongst Tullycarnet's school-aged residents and low levels of parental support and engagement in their education. Two further micro-level inhibitors of academic achievement were identified around negative community norms and mental / physical health issues. These four barriers to attainment in the Tullycarnet Ward are examined below.

Lack of aspiration and sense of hopelessness amongst young people

It was frequently suggested in both the community and school-level data that amongst many young people in Tullycarnet there is a pervading sense of hopelessness and a distinct lack of aspiration in terms of their education and labour market prospects. Several parents and community workers claimed that: there was a local *'culture'* that *'school's not cool';* that *'its cooler just to leave school with nothing, sit on the street corner or go onto benefits';* and that, *'it's just not in them to achieve ... that's filtered down and filtered down. The cycle needs to be broken somewhere'.* Other community-level respondents spoke about some young people routinely misbehaving in classrooms, not attending school, *'sitting up all night playing computer games'* and the fact that many of them have no interest or investment in their education.

The mind-set here is not one of progression. It's a case of I live here, I'll grow up here ... if I don't get a job, I'll go onto benefits ... that's fine; that's the way life is. [Parent]

One issue which can, arguably, be seen as both a cause and effect of these low aspirations is the suggestion that, for some young people from the Ward, being with friends is more important than school achievement. In other words, a bright Year 7 pupil with grammar school potential may prefer to underachieve because the majority (if not all) of their classmates are destined for secondary school. This point was evidenced by a parent who recalled that her son deliberately *'made a mess'* of his transfer test after she told him that if he got an 'A' he could go to a grammar school.

He then took that as "if I get an 'A' I'm not going to be with my friends" so he and got a C instead of an A and went to [named secondary school] with his friends. [Parent]

The views of these parents and community workers was supported by principals from schools which serve Tullycarnet who claimed that many young people have no aspirations and '*no dreams of anything'.* One principal argued that, boys in particular: have a very pessimistic outlook in terms of potential careers; find it difficult to identify pathways to work, because they lack confidence; and *'don't see that there's anything worth putting in the hard slog of school for'.* It was also suggested that these depressed aspirations were further lowered by the inter-generational transmission of education failure and the impact of the current financial crisis.

There has definitely been a rise in that (pessimism) since the recession, particularly among boys. [Principal]

Generationally, they see their parents doing nothing, and their parents failed at school, and the parents don't know how to support them and encourage them being in school. [Principal]

The Tullycarnet data indicate that there are three issues in particular which contribute to low levels of aspiration amongst local young people. The lack of parental support, as alluded to

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above, is examined separately in the following inhibitor. The two other key factors to emerge from the data were around: a lack of visible local role models and opportunities in terms of education and employment success; and a sense of 'disconnect' amongst Protestant working class boys.

There is little doubt that the dearth of positive role models and visible opportunities around education and employment has a discouraging effect on some young people from Tullycarnet. Several parents argued that the aspirations and expectations of local children are suppressed because success in schools and the labour market is not deemed, at either familial or community level as *'the norm'*. The consensus here was that young people *'don't chase it'* because, from an early age, they witness family members and neighbours: leave school with no qualifications; spending long periods out of work; and surviving on social security benefits. These young people that envision a similar future for themselves and think *'Ok, that's what I'll be doing when I get older'*. Moreover, many young people who do want to work question the value of education because: they believe education *'does not equate to jobs'*; see that *'all those Dundonald factories'* are closed now; and, more broadly, that there are simply *'far fewer jobs these days'*.

Lastly, several principals and teachers felt that a key factor behind underachievement and low aspirations in Tullycarnet was that: many Protestant working class boys feel very *'unconnected';* the recent flag protests have '*deepened that feeling';* and that this disconnect intensifies perceptions of *'inevitable underachievement'*.

Nobody cares about them, nobody cares at all ... they say that the politicians just don't listen to them. Don't know their problems. [Principal]

Low parental expectations and engagement regarding education
In addition to low levels of aspiration amongst young people as outlined above, the Tullycarnet data also make clear that many local parents have equally low levels of expectations and engagement in their children's education. Some parents in the area, it was claimed, don't seem to value education; have no real confidence in their own parenting; assume their child's education is '*somebody else's responsibility';* and are commonly *'frightened of or intimidated by statutory agencies'*. The principal of a local school argued that some parents take the view that '*kids around here don't get GCSEs ... that's just the way it is'*. This attitude, he further posited, *'reinforces itself as a self-fulfilling prophesy'*. Other principals spoke of the inter-generational cycle of educational failure where parents with negative experiences of their own time at school are dissuaded from adequately supporting their child's academic progress.

You have a lot of people who, because they hated school, think: "My life's OK and I'm fine; my child will be the same". [Principal]

Whilst there was evidence in the data that some local parents are beginning to pursue notions of achievement for their children at the KS1 & KS2 stage and to get their child into a *'good primary school'*, this was, invariably, not translated into similar engagement with post-primary attainment. One principal highlighted that these parents are *'getting half way there with their thinking but not the whole way there'*. Another claimed that although some parents from Tullycarnet were making the choice to send their children to primary schools with good reputations even if that entailed longer journey times, very few maintained these expectations at post-primary level and fewer still opted to send their children to a grammar school. In trying to understand why a proportion of local parents appear to have such low expectations, it was frequently highlighted that: many of them don't actually know how to be an effective player in their child's education; and that the primary reason for this was that many of them have had a negative experience of education themselves.

Parents who have had a bad experience of school do not necessarily want to re-engage with school with their own children. So, any interactions they have with the school can be negative ones rather than positive ones. [Principal]

This view was supported by an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who, while referring to the high level of school non-attendance in Tullycarnet, claimed that 90% of the parents of truanting children will say that they themselves had a very negative experience of school. This respondent went on to describe the, somewhat inevitable, effects of such experiences.

The parents need educated before the kids can be educated. Parents have kids coming in needing help with their homework and they don't know where to start. I've come across guys here who can't read. [EWO]

Other reasons to emerge from the data included the claims that many local parents: simply don't know what is expected of them in terms of supporting their children's learning; may be very young; may be single parents under a lot of pressure; or may have mental health problems. Moreover, there are clearly issues in the Ward around the non-participation of fathers in their children's education which, at least in part, tends to reflect quite gender-stereotyped perceptions of roles. This problem was highlighted by Barnardos staff working with fathers in Tullycarnet who claimed that there were *'big barriers'* and that it was *'hard work'* to persuade some local fathers to help with homework because their attitude is "*that's their ma's job; she does all that".* This point was developed by a nursery principal who also highlighted the problem of a lack of male role models at home and a lack of guidance on parenting which are having negative impacts on learning from the very beginning of children's educational journeys. This respondent argued that many children seem to *'struggle with routine or just doing what they are asked'.* Similarly, another locally stationed Barnardos worker outlined an important consequence of inadequate parental support

Free play is great, but when it is tidy up time … [the children would say] "No, I can't do that. My legs won't work. My tummy's sore". I would find their listening skills are poor ... I wonder is it about no male role models at home ... is it as basic as that? [Principal]

There's no reading to kids for example. We've taken kids away on residential and they're bringing their wee TVs things with them because they don't know what else to do ... it would never cross their mind to read a book before bed. [Barnardos worker]

Finally, it is also clear that a further inhibitor of parental aspirations for their children's education is the fact that many families are in situations of acute financial hardship. While the data here evidence that some parents simply don't believe that a good education for their child is important, others may be reluctant to opt for a grammar school and or consider supporting their child through University because of the financial commitments involved. Sending a child to grammar school, it was frequently claimed, has considerable financial implications in terms of special uniform requirements, sportswear that has to be in the school colours, rugby boots/hockey sticks etc. Indeed, a local principal acknowledged that, in post-primary schools in general and grammar schools in particular, *the purchase of uniforms is a 'big problem'* because *the uniform grant has not changed in 40 years, although the price of uniforms has multiplied.* This same source concluded that for many parents in Tullycarnet such expenditure may be *'out of their reach'.*

In terms of University costs, one young female graduate working in Tullycarnet stated that she left University *'up to my eyeballs'* in student loan debts. She then conceded that many local parents, who may already have financial problems, were unlikely to want to get into further debt.

Going on to uni is extremely expensive ... and maybe a lot of families already have a lot of debt ... and they can't afford to add to it ... maybe they're thinking, "sure the child can go out and get a job in McDonalds". [Resident]

Negative community norms

According to the data, a third inhibitor of academic attainment in Tullycarnet concerns the negative community norms which are internalised by young people and further dissuade them from applying themselves at school. Analysis of the transcripts from both school and community-level respondents suggests that there are four aspects to this inhibitor around: the *'stigma'* of being raised in a deprived social housing estate; high levels of insularity; the (seemingly) increasing prevalence of drugs; and *'regular'* incidents of anti-social behaviour.

Several residents, in their own ways, concurred with literature on peripheral housing estates (Hall, 1997;[70] O'Hara, 2006;[71] and Syrett and North, 2008)[72] which commonly claims that living in an area of spatially concentrated deprivation lowers people's ambition and makes them feel as though their destiny is pre-ordained. For example, one resident spoke about young people imagining themselves to be '*out of place*' in the neighbouring (and considerably more affluent) Dundonald Village let alone in a grammar school setting. Another resident, who herself is originally from Dundonald Village, recalled that her husband, who born and raised in Tullycarnet, thought the people who lived there were all '*snobs*'.

I definitely think it's to do with the area of their upbringing. I am totally different to my husband ... I went to grammar school ... my outlook (on education) is totally different to his ... because he has always lived in this estate. [Resident]

Of course, these perceptions speak to wider debates around the internalisation of negative community norms. For example, Hanley (2008)[73] developed the concept of the 'wall in the head' to describe the constraining effect on an individual's envisioned potential.

> "If you come from a council estate ... it's not so much that you get told that kids like you can't ever hope to achieve their full potential; it's just that the very idea of having lots of potential to fulfil isn't presented. You don't know what your potential is because no one has ever told you about it" (Hanley, 2008: 86).

Arguably related to the peripheral location of Tullycarnet and the recent conflict, it is clear that within the estate there is an insular community psyche. It was frequently cited that many residents of Tullycarnet feel uncomfortable about venturing too far away from home. In a focus group of local residents there was a fairly broad consensus that: the area was *'very polarised'*; many local people were *'very inward thinking'*; and that most people tend not to socialise outside of the estate. Consequently, many people from Tullycarnet are unable to visualise themselves, for example, in technical colleges or third level education.

They want to stay within their own boundaries, so even the thought of going to University ... that's in town ... What do you want to go there for? There's that sort of fear or apprehension around moving outside of the safety of your own area. [Resident]

It was further argued that these insular tendencies are compounded by perceptions that the Tullycarnet community has *'been in a rut'* for some time and that *'the people here have become very stagnant'.* Moreover, notwithstanding comments expressed in earlier sections,

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[70] Hall, P. (1997) 'Regeneration policies for peripheral housing estates: inward- and outward-looking approaches', *Urban Studies,* Vol. 34: pp 873-890

[71] O'Hara, G. (2006) From Dreams to Disillusionment: Economic and Social Planning in 1960s Britain, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

[72] Syrett, S. and North, D. (2008) *Renewing Deprived Neighbourhoods*, Bristol: Policy Press.

[73] Hanley, L (2008): Estates: in J. Johnson & C. DeSouza, *Understanding Health and Social Care* [2nd Edition]: London: Sage Publications.

some respondents identified a <u>lack</u> of community cohesiveness and linked this to the fragmented nature of Protestantism. It was commonly reported that many Protestant communities such as Tullycarnet are *'in drift'*, primarily, because of an absence of unifying factors such as the *'central connection of faith that binds people together'*.

There are so many Protestant churches ... the Catholic communities just have one which helps to hold people together. [Resident]

It is also clear from the data that a perception exists among residents and community workers that the use of drugs in the Tullycarnet estate is *'fairly widespread'* and *'increasing'*. Two principals from the schools which serve the Ward also highlighted the issue of drug use. One principal reported that between 5 and 10 years ago there was a *'huge drugs problem in this school'* which was a *'nightmare'* and gave the school a *'very negative reputation'*. However, this *'serious situation'* has been successfully addressed by the school through sustained and meaningful engagement with local youth workers and key influencers in the community including some ex-combatants.

That is sorted now ... that was something that I was able to sort out through working with the police and also with my links with the community ... .and being able to say to people, it really does need sorted and then word went out that this must stop. [Principal

However, a slightly contrasting view was presented by another principal who felt that the drugs issue was a growing one, not a historical problem. Moreover, he argued that the increasing prevalence of mental health issues such as depression and anxiety were, at least in part, due to young people using drugs including *'uppers and downers and legal highs'*.

I would worry about what pupils have to face in their communities. I'm concerned about the drug culture which is developing in some communities. [Principal]

The final aspect of negative community norms to emerge from the data concerned incidents of anti-social behaviour. In a focus group of primary school children, several respondents spoke about ongoing issues, particularly, in and around the local park. One recalled that on Friday and Saturday nights, it was common for older children and young adults to congregate there, drink heavily, make a lot of noise, and occasionally become involved in violent confrontations. Another claimed that her parents often forbid her from playing outside at night *'just in case people try to make me smoke and stuff'*. A third young person who lives close to the park recounted that on several occasions people who were drinking in the park would throw glass bottles *'over the fence into my mum's back garden'*. The consensus amongst these primary pupils was that such behaviour made them feel that they live *'somewhere that is not safe'*.

Mental and physical health issues
The final micro-level inhibitor to emerge from the data concern alarming trends around the physical and mental well-being of local young people. Principals from the nursery, primary and post-primary sectors all mentioned increasing problems with mental and physical health in Tullycarnet as factors which are having a negative impact on achievement in the area. They also agreed that local schools need to ensure they have the capacity to cope with issues around emotional and mental well-being. Several principals from the schools which serve Tullycarnet highlighted a worrying rise in the number of (teenage) suicides and self-harming and also mentioned the influence of social media because when such incidents occur, they are *'quickly communicated throughout the community'* and subsequently *'get brought into school'*.

Emotional health and well-being is the big issue ... we need to ... do more. [Principal]

Children in a primary school focus group also identified emotional difficulties as one of the key factors that would negatively impact attainment, as evidenced in the following exchange:

I: How would you describe someone who's not doing so well in school ... why do they not do well?

R: Maybe they are getting bullied or something; maybe they are having a hard time at home.

It was also frequently highlighted by school-level respondents that within the schools which serve the Tullycarnet Ward, there are increasing numbers of children with learning difficulties, ADHD and autism. The principal of one primary school spoke about these issues being *'the biggest challenge for our P1 teachers'.* She then went on to claim that these increases were not just a factor in her school and that in *'every primary school'* both the proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and the number of referrals have *'gone up dramatically'.* Another principal argued that these increasing needs were placing significant pressures on schools in terms of managing the school and delivering the curriculum to all children. She also claimed that in her school: speech and language issues were *'very pressing';* every year there was an increase in the number of new pupils with autism; and that more children than ever have asthma and rely on inhalers. She then outlined the scale of these increases in terms of her own school in terms of delivering the curriculum and managing the school.

It really impacts on the curriculum ... I feel the health side is getting more and more concerning ... There are 13 with speech and language, 10 with asthma, 3 with autism, 4 with behaviour issues, 3 with delayed development, 2 with medical needs, 3 had toileting issues, and 4 were on epi pens. Out of 52! And this is mainstream nursery ... I don't have any extra help ... one teacher and one assistant in the room. That is how you start the year, and you are trying to spin all those plates. [Nursery principal]

Notwithstanding the seriousness of the above outlined health and learning issues, another principal claimed that the general well-being of some young people from Tullycarnet was negatively impacted by poor diets and a lack of physical exercise. Too many primary and secondary pupils, he claimed, never play outside, and don't get any fresh air because they are so *'used to being couch potatoes'.*

7.9. Summary of findings from the Tullycarnet Ward

There are a range of factors which are seen to impact on educational attainment in the Tullycarnet Ward. The data here show that across micro, meso, and macro levels, there are a number of issues which are seen to enable academic achievement and others which create significant barriers.

In terms of the macro-level factors, i.e. those informed by policy and the Ward's history and demography, the only driver highlighted was the socially mixed composition of some of the schools which serve young people from the estate. This factor, it was claimed: (a) gave local young people the opportunity to learn alongside pupils from different social backgrounds; and (b) consequently, raised their aspiration levels and broadened their horizons. However, a number of macro-level inhibitors to educational attainment were also identified, primarily, related to the Ward's demographic realities. In 2011, it was reported that Tullycarnet had only 109 young people at post-primary schooling (one of the smallest in the ILiAD study). Similar to the other predominantly Protestant Wards in the study, these falling enrolments have: (a) heralded a spectre of school closures; and (b) accentuated the spatial detachment of schools which serve the Ward.

There are nine post-primary schools which serve the Ward and only one is located within two miles of the estate. Indeed, almost half of the 109 post-primary pupils in Tullycarnet attend Newtownbreda High School which is some 4.3 miles away. These distances serve to reinforce the idea that the education of local young people is not a priority and make it difficult for young people to feel 'their school' is in any way part of 'their community'. Moreover, it can also be argued that the significantly higher than average absenteeism levels at Newtownbreda (32.8%) and Dundonald High (36.5%) can, at least in part, be attributed to this spatial detachment and the, consequential, invisibility of post-primary education in the estate.

On a policy level, other inhibitors of educational attainment were identified around: (a) the unreliability and skewing effect of official statistics, for example: Key Stage target levels; the neglect of value added and progression; and the inappropriateness of Free School Meals (FSM) as a measure of socio-economic need; (b) lack of resources / inadequate provision of Early Years; and (c) an apparent lack of strategic collaboration between the Department of Education and the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA).

In terms of meso-level factors, several enablers were identified around the recent (community-inspired) *'transformation'* that has occurred in relation to improved triangular linkages between schools, the Tullycarnet community and local parents. The data make clear that two key factors in this transformation were, firstly, the *'wake-up call'* engendered by the proposed closure of the local primary school; and secondly, the role of the Tullycarnet Action Group Initiative Group (TAGIT). The campaign led by this group has clearly galvanised the wider community and increased levels of parental and familial engagement with schools. It is also apparent that the community's improved perception of education has been matched by the schools which serve the Ward in terms of: higher expectations; increased levels of commitment and empathy on the part of teachers; flexible policies and pedagogical styles; effective support during transition; and broader conceptualisations of achievement.

However, several school-level inhibitors of achievement were highlighted. Some schools which serve the Ward, it was claimed, continue to pursue inappropriate curriculum and learning strategies and retain a *'silo'* mentality in terms of engaging with external agencies. Similarly, some of the teachers working with young people from Tullycarnet occasionally display negative teacher attitudes, and hold low expectations for their pupils.

In terms of the micro-level factors which are seen to impact on attainment levels in Tullycarnet, three drivers were identified. Similar to several other Wards in the ILiAD study, the most important of these immediate enablers to academic achievement was the support and encouragement young people receive from their parents. It is also important to note here the cross-over between the meso factors and the micro factors. The TAGIT group has played a significant role in increasing both the local value placed on education and levels of engagement between schools and families. These improvements have, in turn: raised the confidence levels of local parents; addressed some of their essential skills deficits; made them more cognisant of their role in their child's education; and, thus, enabled them to provide effective support.

The second micro-level driver relates to the individual resilience and self-motivation of high achievers. The data make clear that, despite a range of barriers, several young people are seen to succeed at school. Amongst this group there was an important commonality – a perception that effort was more important than ability. In other words, these high-achievers concurred that someone with ability will nonetheless fail without effort but that someone with limited ability will nonetheless succeed with effort. The data also show that many residents who achieved very little at their time at school have subsequently gone on to succeed in further and higher education settings. It is clear, therefore, that the academic potential of a proportion of the Ward's population was not realised during their mainstream schooling. The

final micro-level driver of educational attainment is the close social networks and positive community influences that exist within the Tullycarnet estate. Notions of neighbourliness and *'pulling together'* were apparent throughout the data in addition to a host of accounts highlighting the contribution of positive role models such as voluntary youth workers and TAGIT committee members.

However, several micro-level inhibitors of educational attainment in Tullycarnet were also identified. Despite the aforementioned *'transformation'*, it is clear that an acute sense of pessimism pervades in sections of the Ward. The data are littered with references to a distinct lack of aspiration and sense of hopelessness among some young people. There are, it was claimed, two key contributing factors at play here. Firstly, many parents in the estate, primarily in account of their own unhappy experience at school, have little or no engagement with schools and equally low expectations for their children's education. Secondly, there remain, despite the best efforts of TAGIT and others, extant negative community norms around education and employment. Young people from Tullycarnet, it was frequently claimed, are *'surrounded'* and influenced by people who view school as alien, secure employment as unattainable and unemployment as inevitable.

Moreover, these perceptions are indicative of and reinforced by the indices which show that while Tullycarnet is the 109th most deprived Ward it is regarded as the 14th most deprived in terms of the education and employment domain. Similarly, across the seven Wards in the ILiAD study, Tullycarnet has the lowest rate of 5 GCSEs and the lowest percentage of young people who go on to Higher Education. In addition, the data also highlight the issue of mental health as a significant barrier to attainment in Tullycarnet. Self-harming, drug use and depression among teenagers is increasingly prevalent and it is clear that the community and several schools which serve the Ward are keen to secure increased provision of effective support mechanisms to address such problems. These schools also report that the number of pupils with SEN is rising year on year. These claims are clearly supported in the indices which show that Dundonald (52.8%), Newtownbreda (46%), and Orangefield (52.8%) have markedly higher SEN proportions than the Northern Ireland average of 30.8%.

7.10 Social Capital in Tullycarnet

The data make clear that within the Tullycarnet estate there are substantial stocks of bonding social capital as evidenced by micro-level conceptualisations of empowerment, infrastructure, and connectedness. There were innumerable examples in the transcripts of a cohesive, united community pulling together and affecting positive change through collective action. As Field (2003)[74] has argued, such social interactions enable residents to: build communities; commit themselves to each other; and create a cohesive social fabric. Perhaps the most salient example of this cohesion relates to the community inspired campaign against the proposed closure of the local primary school. Although this campaign was ultimately unsuccessful[75], this campaign seems to have galvanised the wider community to take a renewed interest in in education.

On a more individual level, this transformation translates into increased parental support and is seen to raise aspiration amongst local young people. However, it also needs to be noted that, in addition to these nascent changes, the data evidence that many young people from Tullycarnet are inhibited from realising their academic potential because they: (a) lack such parental support; (b) remain influenced by (historical) negative community norms around education; and (c) consequently, harbour a sense of hopelessness. These findings further highlight the long-established correlation between social capital and school success and are

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[74] Field, J. (2003). *Social Capital*, London: Routledge.
[75] Tullycarnet primary school was closed in 2017 – primarily because it filled only 46 of its available 552 places (2016-2017).

aligned to the broader literature. For example, the World Bank (1999)[76] claims that teachers are more committed, pupils attain higher grades, and better use is made of school facilities in communities where parents are actively engaged in the education of their children. Similarly, Putnam (2000)[77] has shown that local norms and networks have far reaching effects on young peoples' educational choices, behaviours, and development.

Bridging social capital in the framework designed for the ILiAD study refers to schools' levels of engagement, accessibility and innovation. The Tullycarnet data make clear that the schools which serve the Ward have sought to foster new and improved relationships with the community and local families. As evidenced in this and several other Wards, community perceptions of schools as *'middle class and detached'* are a significant barrier to such triangular relationships. It is equally apparent that to address this detachment schools and teachers need to explicitly and empathetically demonstrate an understanding of working class communities and families. For example, in recent years, a school serving young people from Tullycarnet appointed as principal a former pupil who continues to live locally. Under his leadership: parental engagement was increased; effective community linkages were established; and the proportion of their pupils attaining 5 GCSEs doubled in the space of two years.

In terms of linking social capital in Tullycarnet, it is clear that the Ward's history and demographic development has not engendered the same inter and intra-community divisions as the other predominantly Protestant Wards in the ILiAD study. Local legacies of the recent conflict and demographic change appear significantly less pronounced than in Duncairn or Woodstock. For example, although extant paramilitary influence was reported in Tullycarnet, this influence was seen as *'diminishing'*, and considerably *'less of an issue'* than in the other two Wards. Similarly, although these three Wards share a sense of spatial detachment: Tullycarnet does not interface with the 'other' community; sectarian violence is not a feature of the estate; and conflict-related spatial mobility restrictions are similarly absent. Moreover, three examples from the indices show that Tullycarnet appears to have a more settled demography and residential tenure. Firstly, unlike Duncairn and Woodstock, there is no sense of ethno-religious encroachment and the Ward remains predominantly (86%) Protestant. Secondly, only 2% were born outside the UK and Ireland which is less than a third of the Northern Ireland average. Thirdly, the percentage of private rented housing (7.2%) is the lowest amongst all the ILiAD Wards.

However, the Tullycarnet data evidence several structural factors which are seen to impact negatively on local attainment levels. Across all the Ward examinations in the ILiAD study, there is an attempt to identify and measure what Savage et al (2005)[78] have described as a community's Capitals, Assets and Resources (CARS). While the primary foci of these examinations were on relational, and often intangible, aspects of social capital such as empathetic teachers, parental capacity, and familial / community norms, it is also important to explore the impact of the more palpable factors. Indeed, a century ago, Hanifan (1916: 130)[79] first used the term social capital to refer to rural school community centres which he described as 'those tangible substances … that count for most in the daily lives of people'. Hanifan's views on tangibility are supported in the data from across the seven ILiAD Wards which show that the most significant of these 'tangible substances' relates to the visibility of quality schools located in the Ward. However, in Tullycarnet, there is no visible representation of primary or post-primary learning and young people are thus educated in establishments which, despite the best efforts of some schools, are neither seen as in or of the community they serve.

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[76] The World Bank (1999) 'What is Social Capital?' Available online at: http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/scapital/whatsc.htm
[77] Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling Alone. The collapse and revival of American community*, New York: Simon and Schuster.
[78] Savage, M., Warde, A. and Devine, F. (2005) 'Capitals, assets and resources: some critical issues, *The British Journal of Sociology,* Vol. 56 (1) pp 31–47.
[79] Hanifan, L. J. (1916). 'The rural school community center', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 67: 130-138.

In terms of the inter-play between bonding, bridging and linking social capital in Tullycarnet, several clear causal linkages are apparent. For example, the data attest a transformation has taken place amongst significant sections of the Ward around education. A host of community-inspired initiatives to address underachievement in the Ward have been developed and the role of the community sector in general and TAGIT in particular cannot be overstated. Here, social capital can be seen to produce virtuous circles across bonding, bridging, and linking levels. For example, the bonding capital which encourages local people at a micro-level to organise and become more engaged with local schools is further reinforced via the new (meso-level) fora and engagement processes thus produced. In turn, these initiatives create new (macro-level) structural linkages to decision making process.

As stated earlier, the recent conflict does not seem to have created the same formations of negative social capital as where apparent in Duncarin and Woodstock. The internal bonds in Tullycarnet appear more organically informed rather than shaped by a shared sense of adversity; there was little in the data to suggest that the community is untrusting and/or hostile towards outsiders; and respondents routinely highlighted the influence of positive role models (including ex-combatants) rather than the impact of negative ones. More broadly, the community perceives no external or internal threats and, as a consequence, has a confidence in its future which was noticeably absent in the other predominantly Protestant Wards. However, it is clear that deeply embedded community norms around education and its value continue to lower the ambition of many of the estate's younger residents.

Of course, this analysis of Tullycarnet is a snapshot in time and it is often more valuable to examine trajectories. The nascent attitudinal changes within the community regarding education are slowing being reflected in the most recent indices. Furthermore, even though the community-inspired campaign to retain the local primary school was ultimately unsuccessful, the galvanising effect of this campaign has encouraged the local community sector and parents to sustain their engagement and address the above- mentioned barriers to educational attainment in the Ward. It is clear that Tullycarnet has featured regularly in the lowest deciles of the education indices for some time. However, it is equally clear that the community is, perhaps more than ever, effectively marshalling the capitals, assets, and resources at its disposal. Moreover, the Tullycarnet data concur with the broader social capital literature and attests that when this is done and when these efforts are supported at the macro policy-level, such communities can begin to mobile the concept of social capital to example a more positive trajectory of change.

Queen's University Belfast

The Centre for Shared Education

SCHOOL OF Education

FINAL SUMMARY REPORT

(Volume 3)

Queen's University Belfast

The Executive Office

Research summary

In 2012, a team of researchers from Queen's University Belfast and Stranmillis University College was awarded funding for a three-year research project entitled 'Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation' (the ILiAD study).

- The ILiAD study aimed to understand some of the reasons for differential educational achievement within and between deprived areas in Northern Ireland (NI).

- Previous studies had concluded that there is a statistical relationship between deprivation and educational underachievement. As measures of deprivation and poverty increase, measures of educational underachievement also increase.

- Preliminary interrogation of secondary educational data sets for NI suggested that the factors involved in educational achievement within and between deprived areas may be more complex.

- This study aimed to plug this gap by exploring anomalies in educational performance among the most deprived Ward areas in NI.

- The ILiAD study is an in-depth, multi-level case study analysis of a sample of seven NI electoral Ward areas, selected on the basis of religious composition, measures of multiple deprivation and differentials in educational achievement.

- Findings obtained from the range of respondents within the seven Ward areas are supplemented by secondary data analysis of a variety of differential educational factors.

- Thematic findings associated with individual, home, community, school and structural factors are identified across the case sites that contribute towards understanding the dynamics and contributory factors to differential educational achievement for these seven Ward areas.

- Since qualitative, in-depth case study approach generates different kinds of insights from that of quantitative studies, no inferences or population-based recommendations can be made to Northern Ireland as a whole.

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Glossary

AEP	Alternative Education Provision
CCMS	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
DE	Department of Education
DE(NI)	Department of Education (Northern Ireland)
DSD	Department of Social Development
EA	Education Authority
EOTAS	Education Other Than At School
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
EWO	Education Welfare Officer
FSM	Free School Meals
FMSE	Free School Meals Entitlement
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
MDM	Multiple Deprivation Measure
NI	Northern Ireland
NIMDM	Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure
NINIS	Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency
PfG	Programme for Government (2016-2021)
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SOA	Super Output Area
T:BUC	Together Building a United Community

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- The children and young people, parents, community workers, youth workers, teachers, principals, educational welfare officers, education support staff, policymakers, and residents within the Electoral Ward areas sampled as part of this research study, who took part in interviews and focus groups for the qualitative element of the data collection and shared their knowledge, experience and views with us;

- The adult advisory group members, who provided invaluable insights and recommendations every six months during the process of the research, and advised on the content and format of the research methodology, agreed on ethical protocols, and provided interpretations of emergent data and findings;

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ILiAD Volumes

This report summarises the main findings of the project entitled: Investigating Links to Achievement and Deprivation (ILIAD).

Findings for the project are supported by two additional reports (Volume 1 and Volume 2), which are available online (through Queen's University Belfast – provide link)

Volume 1: ILIAD Main Technical Report provides a comprehensive account of the ILIAD study, including a full literature review, research rationale, methodology, sampling and analysis of the case study data.

Volume 2: ILiAD Case Studies of Seven Electoral Wards provides in-depth individual description and analysis for each of the seven case study electoral wards.

Volume 3: ILiAD Final Summary Report provides an overview of the key cross-cutting findings on patterns of differential achievement for the seven case study electoral wards.

Section 1: Key Findings

The aim of the *Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation* (ILiAD) study is to understand some of the patterns of educational achievement within and between deprived Ward areas in Northern Ireland (NI).

Abbreviated summary of key findings for the seven case study wards:
The *Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation* (ILiAD) is a qualitative case study of seven Ward areas that fall within the top 20% of high deprivation across Northern Ireland (NIMDM). These comprise Whiterock, The Diamond, Woodstock, Duncairn, Rosemount, Dunclug and Tullycarnet.

Findings from the study identify a number of immediate, school, and structural/policy level factors that are viewed as contributing to differential educational achievement (5 GCSE A*-C including English and Maths) in the seven Wards.

While each of the seven Wards was found to present a unique picture of influences on young people's educational achievement, a series of common factors were identified as enhancing and/or inhibiting educational outcomes.

1. Common factors that were identified as *enhancing* educational achievement across the seven Wards included:

At Immediate (individual-home-community) level

- Individual resilience
- Parental support and encouragement
- Sense of connectedness to local community
- Local youth and community input

At School level

- Visionary and collaborative leadership
- Effective school-community linkages and parental accessibility
- Provision of diverse curricula
- Positive teacher-pupil relationships
- Effective pastoral care and support for SEN pupils

At Structural/policy level

- Collaborative and proactive community services
- New and Improved school buildings and facilities
- High attainment performance of those that attend grammar school

2. Common factors that were identified as *inhibiting* educational achievement across the seven Wards included:

At Immediate (individual-home-community) level

- Young people's mental health issues
- Adverse home conditions and inadequate levels of parental support
- Inter-generational transmission of educational failure
- Low self-esteem and aspirations of some young people

At School level

- Low expectations on the part of some schools/ teachers
- Weak school-community linkages
- Perceptions of some schools as 'middle-class' and 'detached'
- High rates of absenteeism and exclusion in some schools
- Insufficient support for SEN and behavioural problems

At Structural/policy level

- Current economic climate
- Legacies of the recent conflict
- Spatial detachment of schools and the communities they serve
- Variability in availability of quality pre-school provision
- Academic selection - negative effects

3. In addition to the common factors identified (above), each of the seven Wards presents a unique interplay of immediate, school and structural/policy level influences that are seen as contributing to young people's educational outcomes and resulting in differential achievement patterns.

4. Profiles of educational achievement (5 GCSEs A*-C) alter considerably for Wards when the core subjects, Maths and English are included or excluded.

5. Variation across religious background, gender and FMSE provide some meaningful explanation of differentials in educational achievement between the case study Wards.

Headline Findings from the ILiAD Case Studies

Immediate (individual/home/community) factors

Immediate drivers of attainment

The educational attainment outcomes of young people in the seven case study Wards are enhanced in the presence of: adequate levels of parental or familial support and encouragement; their own personal resilience; a sense of connectedness to their community; and effective local youth and community work.

Parental support

Parental/familial support and encouragement are viewed as an important determiner of academic achievement and children who receive the greatest home support are most likely to succeed at school.

Individual resilience

Individual characteristics of resilience and self-determination are seen as key to educational achievement particularly for young people who live in adverse home conditions and/or those who have limited parental support.

Sense of connectedness to local community

Young people having a strong sense of connection to their local community have a positive impact on attainment and on their attitudes towards learning.

Local youth and community work

The case studies evidence the value of effective local youth and community work input in terms of encouraging attainment in these areas.

Immediate inhibitors of attainment

The attainment prospects of some young people in the seven case studies were viewed to be inhibited by: adverse home conditions and inadequate levels of parental support; the inter-generational transmission of educational failure; the low self-esteem of some young people; and increasing levels of mental ill-health identified amongst young people.

Adverse home conditions and inadequate parental support

The case study data evidence a section of young people whose attainment prospects are limited because they live in adverse home circumstances and/or have inadequate levels of parental support.

Intergenerational transmission of educational failure

Parental early experiences of educational failure were associated with children's fear of failure, low expectations and negative attitudes to schooling.

Low self-esteem and aspirations of some young people

A number of young people from areas of high deprivation suffer low self-esteem and lack aspiration as a result of negative community attitudes around education.

Young people's mental health

Increasing levels of mental ill-health identified amongst young people are having a negative impact on attainment and are creating additional pressures for schools.

School-level factors

School-level drivers of attainment

The most important school-level drivers of attainment in the case study Wards are: visionary and collaborative school leadership; effective school-community linkages and accessibility to parents; provision of diverse curricula; positive teacher-pupil relationships; inter-school and inter-agency collaboration and Extended Schools provision; effective pastoral care and support for pupils with SEN.

Visionary and collaborative school leadership

Visionary and collaborative school leadership can have a markedly positive impact on attainment.

Effective school-community linkages and accessibility to parents

Attainment is enhanced when schools develop effective links with local communities and are viewed as accessible by parents.

Provision of diverse curricula

The provision of diverse curricula was highlighted as an important driver of achievement. Participants across all Wards stressed the need for an inclusive system that afforded young people access to a broad-based education in which the value of different forms of knowledge and skills, not just those associated with academic achievement, was validated.

Positive teacher-pupil relationships

The case study data confirm the crucial importance of the quality of teacher interaction with pupils to significantly enhance the potential for achievement.

Collaborative schools, inter-agency working and Full Service programmes

Collaborative working between schools and locally-based groups and agencies and the provision of Full or Extended Schools programmes are viewed as an important enablers of attainment on young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Effective pastoral care and support for pupils with Special Education Needs (SEN)
Securing the social and emotional welfare of pupils was vital not only to help pupils effectively engage in learning through early detection and intervention but also to support a more holistic development of young people.

School-level inhibitors of attainment
Attainment in areas of deprivation is often inhibited by: low expectations on the part of some schools; a perception among some parents of schools as "middle class" and "detached"; the high rates of absenteeism and exclusion in some schools; and insufficient support for SEN.

Low expectations on the part of some schools
It was frequently argued in the data that low expectations on the part of some schools and teachers were an inhibitor of academic success. Several parents held the view that some schools and teachers "give up" on pupils if they don't see them "trying enough."

Perception among some parents of schools and teachers as 'middle class' and 'detached'
There was a perception amongst some parents (particularly in the Controlled sector) that some schools and teachers are "detached" and "middle class" and that this made it more difficult for these parents to play a fuller role in their children's education.

High rates of absenteeism and exclusion in some schools
In the case study Wards, the schools with higher rates of absenteeism achieved lower rates of attainment. The data also highlight higher school absenteeism rates within mainly Protestant Wards compared to the mainly Catholic Wards.

Insufficient support for SEN
Rates of young people registered with SEN were higher in non-selective schools across the Wards and concerns were raised about the adequacy of provision for educational support.

Structural/Policy-level factors
Structural/policy-level drivers of attainment
Across the seven case studies, the most significant structural/policy drivers of educational attainment were: collaborative and proactive community services; new and improved school buildings and facilities; and the high attainment performance of the Grammar sector.

Collaborative and proactive community services

Collaboration and interagency promotion of young people's engagement in and with education were identified as an important enabler of attainment in the case study Wards.

New and improved school buildings and facilities

It was also commonly claimed that new and improved school buildings and facilities have a positive impact on young people in terms of encouraging learning.

The high attainment performance of those who attend the Grammar sector

In the case study Wards, the high attainment performance of the Grammar schools is evident. The best performing schools in this study were Grammar schools; and the principals, teachers, parents and young people who attended Grammar schools were supportive of academic selection.

Structural/Policy-level inhibitors of attainment

The most significant policy/structural inhibitors of attainment in these disadvantaged communities were: the current economic climate; legacies of the recent conflict; the spatial detachment of schools and the communities they serve; variability of availability of quality pre-school provision; insufficient SEN and EWO support; and some of the negative processes associated with academic selection.

The current economic climate

The current economic climate, in particular the lack of employment opportunities, is having a detrimental effect in terms on educational aspiration for some young people.

Legacies of the recent conflict

In some communities, legacies of the recent conflict continue to have a negative impact on attainment levels and some young people's attitudes to school and education.

The spatial detachment of schools and the communities they serve

The spatial detachment of some schools from the communities they serve creates additional expense and logistical problems for parents, inhibits the engendering of close school-community relationships, and gives young people a sense that education is not something that is prioritised in their community.

Variability in availability of quality pre-school provision

The availability of quality pre-school provision was seen as an important enabler of attainment. However, this provision was found to vary between the Wards.

Academic selection (negative effects)

Notwithstanding the attainment performance of the grammar sector, some of the issues arising from academic selection were identified as inhibiting attainment among some young people in the case study Wards. Such issues were seen to include: the negative impact in terms of confidence levels and self-esteem of those pupils who fail or do not sit the transfer test; Grammar schools 'creaming' likely high achievers from non-selective schools – thus depriving pupils in the non-grammar sector of positive (peer) role models; and the ways in which the current system of selection favours those parents with the means to pay for private tuition.

Differentials across Wards

Attainment differentials across religious background

- There were marked differentials in educational achievement between predominantly Catholic (Whiterock, The Diamond and Rosemount) and predominantly Protestant Wards (Woodstock, Duncairn and Tullycarnet).

- The three predominantly Catholic Wards in the study (Whiterock, The Diamond and Rosemount) had higher levels of attainment in terms of five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13) than the three predominantly Protestant Wards (Duncairn, Woodstock and Tullycarnet).

- In the case study Wards, attainment differentials across religious background were associated with: the relative value placed on education; perceived levels of detachment or attachment of schools; varying levels of community cohesion; and variances in school absenteeism rates.

Attainment differentials across gender

- Out of the seven case study Wards, girls consistently outperformed boys at GCSE Grade A*-C in all but one Ward area (The Diamond Ward). The data here suggesting that such differentials are related to varying levels of value attached to education, cultural expectations around educational achievement, self-esteem and absenteeism rates.

Some Implications

Findings from the ILiAD case study Wards are not generalizable, nevertheless, common themes identified offer a number of potential implications for policy and practice consideration:

Immediate (Individual-Home-Community) issues suggest an important role for relevant agencies and policy makers with a responsibility for improving education and disadvantage to:

- Seek to build resilience in young people from these disadvantaged backgrounds from the earliest age by mitigating risk factors and actively supporting activities that engender higher levels of self-esteem and self-agency;

- Continue to support parents and caregivers to make a fuller contribution in the education of their children and to encourage high aspirations;

- Recognise and address the ongoing and complex learning needs of young people with mental health problems by properly resourcing services for young people with mental health problems; and

- Utilise and integrate the valuable assets (including the positive role models) of local youth and community work, which is directed towards encouraging learning and personal development in disadvantaged communities.

School issues highlight the need for schools, institutions and government departments with a responsibility for improving education and disadvantage in these Ward areas to:

- Facilitate visionary leadership in schools via capturing and sharing best practice models and ensuring that collaborative skills are integral to any review of headship qualifications;

- Acknowledge there is a need for schools in these disadvantaged Ward areas to work at having a 'presence' in the communities of the young people and families they serve. For example, where significant spatial distances exist (between schools and communities), schools need to increase their provision of outreach as appropriate;

- Support and encourage all schools continuously to monitor and evaluate (as part of school development planning) existing school-community and school-home linkages and make any necessary procedural changes to ensure that such linkages are as effective and accessible as possible;

- Induce and resource schools to network and engage collaboratively with each other, FE and HE and with external agencies in pursuance of shared, area-based learning/attainment goals, social mixing and reconciliation, and models of best practice around e.g. inclusive curriculum, pastoral care provision and support for SEN pupils;

- Support and mentor teachers who feel (or who are perceived as) 'detached' to find ways to increase their levels of understanding about social difference and improve connectedness with their school's pupils and the communities they come from;

- Recognise the strong pattern of relationship between attendance and attainment and properly resource the work of EWOs and other agencies in terms of early intervention and inter-agency support to address absenteeism.

Structural/policy issues highlight the need for institutions and government departments with a responsibility for improving education and disadvantage for these Ward areas to recognise:

- It is important to continue to reinforce the power of local community-based activity and the ethos of partnership that exists to benefit young people and families within these disadvantaged communities. Added to this, it is vital to encourage active citizenship, especially through youth engagement; and also for elected representatives to build strong relationships with these communities in order to represent more fully the issues of poverty and education;

- There is value in sustaining investment in new and improved school buildings and facilities. These investments have a significant and positive impact on young people from disadvantaged areas in terms of raising educational aspiration;

- Within some of the case study areas, legacies of the recent conflict are having a negative impact in terms of attainment. These communities require patient, proactive and ongoing support to help them mediate their post-conflict transitions;

- While access to a grammar school provides pupils from these Ward areas with distinct opportunities for success in terms of attainment, successful navigation of the academic selection process is often contingent on parents having the financial means to pay for private tuition, which remains an equity issue.

Section 2 ILiAD Study: Context and Approach

Introduction

This report presents summary findings from the *Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation* (ILiAD) research study, which was funded by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) between 2012 and 2015. Using a case study approach, the overarching aim of the study was to understand some of the patterns of differential educational achievement within and between a selected number of deprived Ward areas in Northern Ireland (NI).

Rationale

An extensive review of the literature identified relationships between poverty and educational under-achievement (see Appendix 1 for a summary) including individual, family, school and community factors. What this review told us clearly was that quantitative studies, carried out within the UK[1] and globally[2], demonstrate that there is a direct link between deprivation and educational underachievement. These studies show that as measures of deprivation increase, measures of educational success tend to decrease proportionately. For NI, a causal relationship between regional deprivation and school performance has been identified[3] at primary school level. Additionally, the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey (2012), which provides international benchmarks in mathematics, reading and science literacy, has demonstrated that the link between underachievement and socio-economic disadvantage is stronger in NI than in most other OECD countries[4].

In 2012, at the outset of the ILiAD study, we carried out a preliminary baseline analysis of Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS) data. This suggested that the factors involved in educational achievement within deprived areas in NI might be more complex than is suggested solely by statistical analysis. Patterns arising from this secondary data analysis indicated the existence of areas of high deprivation in NI, where achievement appeared to be higher (e.g. The Diamond) than in areas of less deprivation (e.g. Dunclug). Concomitantly, there were also areas of lesser deprivation (e.g. Tullycarnet) where achievement is lower than areas of high deprivation (e.g.

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[1] For example, Sosu E & Ellis, S (2014) Closing the attainment gap in Scottish education, Joseph Rowntree Foundation. URL https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/closing-attainment-gap-scottish-education

[2] For example,Chmielewski, A. K & Reardon, S. F (2016) State of the Union - The Poverty and Inequality Report 2016: Education; Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality; URL inequality.com/sotu

[3] Ferguson, N.T.N & Michaelsen, M M (2013) The Legacy of the Conflict: regional Deprivation and School Performance in Northern Ireland. HiCN Working Paper 151. University of Sussex..URL http://www.hicn.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/HiCN-WP-151.pdf

[4] https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/pisa-2013.pdf

Whiterock and Woodstock). This qualitative study was thus designed to explore the potential factors associated with such apparent deviations from the general trend. It did this by focusing on the educational performance and social and educational conditions of young people growing up in seven of the most deprived of the 582 Wards in NI. The unit of analysis we selected for the ILiAD study was larger electoral Ward[5] areas that we viewed as typifying more naturally occurring 'communities' in NI rather than the smaller, statistically comparable Super Output Areas (SOAs)[6].

Policy context

The ILiAD study identifies and explores some of the factors (immediate, school, and structural) that are seen as contributing to differential educational achievement in seven selected Ward areas of high deprivation within Northern Ireland (NI). The study has the potential to make a small yet significant contribution to underscoring the importance of the Northern Ireland Executive's draft strategic *Programme for Government* (PfG) (2016-2012) by providing some supporting evidence. This ILiAD summary report provides a number of spatially focused findings and insights relating to these seven Wards that are relevant to the stated outcomes and indicators that address underachievement arising from socio-economic disadvantage in NI. As part of the PfG Framework 2016-2012[7] (p13-14), the interrelated summary outcomes – 'Outcome 4: We enjoy long, healthy, active lives' and 'Outcome 5: We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential' - make specific mention of tackling issues related to deprivation and poverty and reducing educational inequality. These are associated with relevant indicators and outcome measures identified below in Table 1.

Indicator	Outcome Measure
11 Improve educational outcomes	% of school leavers achieving at level 2 or above including English and Math
12 Reduce educational inequality	Gap between % of school leavers and % of FSME school leavers achieving at level 2 or above including English and Maths
13 Improve quality of education	% of schools where provision for learning is good or better

Table 1: The Programme for Government Framework – Specific Indicators and Measures relevant to education and deprivation.

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[5] Wards are the smallest administrative unit in Northern Ireland and are set by the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner (n=582). Average population of 3,000 (range 700 to 9,500).

[6] Super Output Areas (SOAs) (n=8900 were created in 2011 to permit deprivation comparisons on a ward-by-ward basis taking into account measures of population size and mutual proximity. SOAs should have population counts that fall between a lower threshold of 1300 and an upper threshold of 2800, with a target size of circa 2000. (NISRA http://www.nisra.gov.uk/deprivation/super_output_areas.htm)

[7] https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/newnigov/draft-pfg-framework-2016-21.pdf

The findings also speak to the NI Executive's, *Delivering Social Change: Child Poverty Strategy* (2016),[8] which encourages joined-up working across departments and with those delivering programmes to mitigate the impact of poverty on children's lives and life chances. Additionally, aspects of the findings relate to another NI Executive strategy, The *Together: Building a United Community* (T:BUC) (2013), which outlines how government, community and individuals will work together to build a united community and achieve change and where one of the key priorities specifically refers to children and young people[9].

More specific to aspects of schooling, a number of issues arising from the findings resonate with and underscore the goals of the Department of Education's policy for school improvement, *Every School a Good School* (2011)[10] that is striving to improve educational achievement, tackle underachievement and improve equity of access.

Although not generalizable to the wider population or to other Wards, the summary findings may be of interest to those concerned with understanding and improving educational achievement in other areas of high deprivation by offering some lessons on how certain Ward areas, despite adverse conditions, are managing to defy statistical expectations and improve the educational chances of many of their young people.

Case Study Approach

The methodology for ILIAD, including the criteria and selection of the seven case study electoral wards, is summarised in **Appendix 2**. Fuller details are available in **Volume 1: ILIAD: Main Technical Report**. **Appendix 3** of this report summarises the case study Ward areas. Full case studies are presented in **Volume 2: Case Studies of Seven Electoral Wards.**

This ILiAD report represents the understandings derived from studying seven of the top 20% of deprived Wards (MDM) for NI. The seven case study sites selected for the ILiAD study are tabled below, according to their deprivation ranking on the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM)[11], where rank 1 represents the most deprived Ward and rank 582 represents the least deprived Ward in Northern Ireland. The ILiAD case sample of electoral Wards ranges from rank 1 (Whiterock) to rank 109

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[8] Department of Communities, The Child Poverty Strategy (March 2016) https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/child-poverty-strategy

[9] https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/articles/together-building-united-community

[10] Every School a Good School: A policy for school improvement (2011) https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/every-school-good-school-policy-school-improvement

[11] The NIMDM 2010 is made up from 52 indicators (2007-2009) grouped into 'domains' of deprivation: Income Deprivation; Employment Deprivation; Health Deprivation and Disability; Education, Skills and Training Deprivation: Proximity to Services; Living Environment and Crime and Disorder. The overall multiple deprivation measure comprises a weighted combination of these seven domains. Electoral Wards range from rank 1 (most deprived) to rank 582 (least deprived).
http://www.nisra.gov.uk/deprivation/archive/Updateof2005Measures/NIMDM_2010_Guidance_Leaflet.pdf

(Tullycarnet), thus, all seven fall within the top 20% of deprived wards in Northern Ireland.

Electoral Ward Area	NIMDM Deprivation Rank
Whiterock	1
The Diamond	12
Duncairn	14
Woodstock	39
Dunclug	44
Rosemount	83
Tullycarnet	109

Table 2: Seven case study electoral Wards selected across Northern Ireland by their deprivation ranking according to NIMDM.

The geographic locations of the seven case study Wards across NI are shown in Figure 1 below.
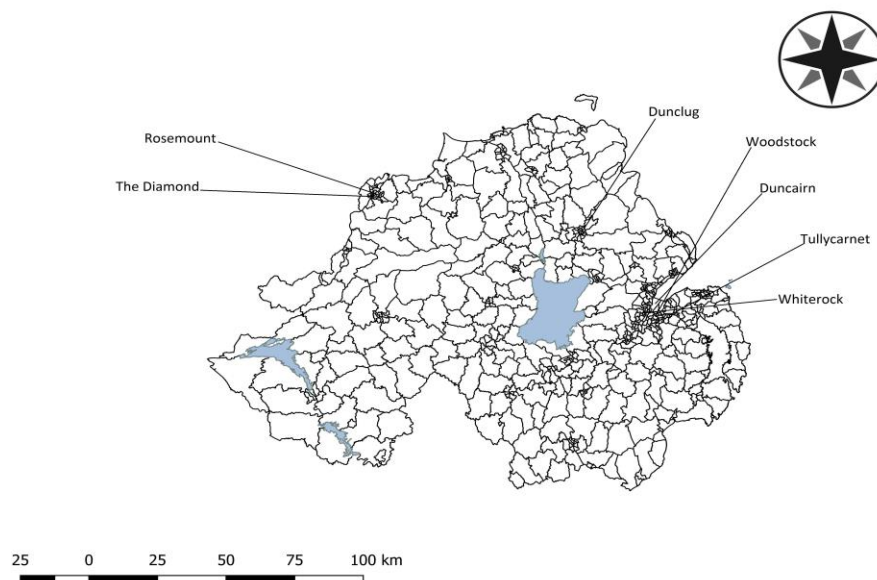
Figure 1: Location of the seven case study electoral Wards across Northern Ireland.

Figure 2 below presents a baseline summary of the differential patterns of relationship between the deprivation level (NIMDM ranking) and educational achievement, as measured

by the percentage of young people achieving five GCSEs grade A*-C for 2012-2013, for each of the seven case study Wards.

	Whiterock (1)	The Diamond (12)	Duncaim (14)	Woodstock (39)	Rosemount (44)	Dunclug (83)	Tullycamet (109)
■ Five GCSEs A*-C 2012/13	60	85	50	52	91	61	43

■ Predominantly Catholic ■ Predominantly Protestant ■ Mix of Catholic and Protestant
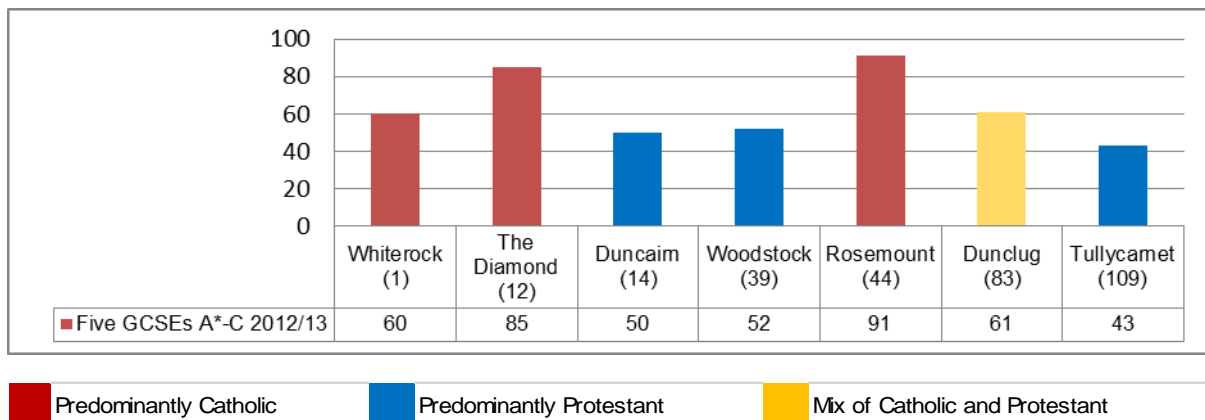
Figure 2: Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE passes at Grade A-C (2012/13) including English and Maths by Multiple Deprivation Ranking (MDM 2010)*

In terms of symmetry, 3 predominantly Catholic Wards (Whiterock, The Diamond , Rosemount), 3 predominantly Protestant Wards (Woodstock, Duncairn, Tulllycarnet) and 1 mixed (Catholic and Protestant) Ward (Dunclug) were chosen as the focus of the case studies.

Case study approach – strengths and limitations

The goal of the ILiAD study was to generate rich, detailed data that could contribute to in-depth understanding of each of the Ward contexts in relation to some of the patterns of differential educational achievement within and between these deprived areas in Northern Ireland (NI). Although supported by relevant secondary data, the research was largely qualitative in nature, with evidence being drawn from a range of stakeholder and participant interviews and focus groups within each of the Ward areas (see Appendix 2, Table 8 page 77 for details).

Case study research emphasises the value of understanding the dynamic relationship between various social and cultural factors as they occur in natural settings and, in this case, in order to seek to identify the factors that promote and inhibit educational achievement in each Ward context. The qualitative data were systematically analysed[12] to determine salient thematic issues, drawing on a force-field framework to illustrate the

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[12] Drawing on Attride-Stirling, J (2001) *Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research, Qualitative Research,* vol. 1(3): 385-405

key factors seen as enabling and inhibiting educational achievement at the different Immediate, School and Structural levels within and across Wards.

The strengths of the ILiAD study lie in the fact that it combines qualitative findings with statistical data over time and from a broad range of stakeholder representatives for each Ward. The triangulation of methods across multi-sites also adds to the robustness of the findings. Nevertheless, findings arising from the case study data cannot be generalised to other Wards or to the larger population of NI. Despite this limitation, it is hoped that the pattern of findings can contribute to a fuller understanding of the issues involved in the complex relationship between measures of educational achievement and multiple deprivation specifically as this pertains to these electoral Ward areas.

In the following section, the ILiAD case study qualitative findings are presented for the seven Wards. Enabling and inhibiting factors to educational attainment, derived from the qualitative data, are distinguished separately for the purposes of analysis and presentation of key findings at:
- Immediate level
- School level
- Structural/policy level.

In reality, however, the relationship and interdependence of these factors and levels is a dynamic one. The balance and profile for each of the Ward areas, in relation to these factors, is uniquely different. More holistic pictures of the Wards and the fluid, inter-relationship between these factors is presented in Ward case summaries in **Appendix 3** and more fully in **Volume2: ILiAD Case Studies of Seven Electoral Wards**.

Section 3 Case Study Qualitative Findings

The seven qualitative case studies examine the immediate (individual-home-community) level, school-level and structural-level (including policy) factors, which are identified as having a local impact on educational achievement.

Across these three levels, a series of 'drivers' and 'inhibitors' to academic achievement has been identified. Respondents present the most commonly identified themes supported by indicative comments from the interview and focus group transcripts. These are supplemented, where appropriate, by reference to secondary data for the Ward areas. Further case study analyses of drivers and inhibitors of educational achievement for each Ward are illustrated in **Appendix 3.**

The impact of Immediate level (individual-Home-Community) factors on attainment

This section presents a summary of findings on the main immediate (individual-home-community) factors that are viewed as acting as drivers and inhibitors to educational achievement across the seven Wards. These aim to illustrate the pattern of these drivers and inhibitors across the Wards as well as highlighting some of the unique features of individual, home, community characteristics that differentiate individual Wards.

Immediate (individual/home/community) Level Factors

Drivers	Inhibitors
Individual resilience	*Young people's mental health issues*
Parental support and encouragement	*Inter-generational transmission of educational failure*
Sense of connectedness to local community	*Low self-esteem and aspirations of some young people*
Local youth and community work input	*Adverse home conditions and inadequate parental support*

Table 3: Key drivers and inhibitors to educational achievement at Immediate (Individual-home-community) level.

Immediate (individual/home/community) factors

Immediate drivers of attainment

The educational attainment outcomes of young people in the seven case study Wards are enhanced in the presence of: adequate levels of parental or familial support and encouragement; their own personal resilience; a sense of connectedness to their community; and effective local youth and community work.

Parental support and encouragement

Parental/familial support and encouragement are viewed as an important determiner of academic achievement and children who receive the greatest home support are most likely to succeed at school.

In all seven case study Wards, the role of supportive parents in driving young people's educational aspirations was frequently cited. There was consensus among both school and community respondents that children with the most supportive home backgrounds were most likely to succeed in terms of attainment. For example, a principal argued that "supportive parents" were "the single most important factor" in terms of raising attainment; a parent spoke about "always having an interest in their homework and making sure it's done and making sure it's the best they can possibly do"; and a pupil claimed that she was motivated by wanting to "make my parents proud."

> "If you get an A*, I just love going home and telling my mummy and daddy." (Post-primary Pupil)

Parent respondents stressed a need to instill in their children a sense of belief in their own abilities, coupled with an appreciation of the rewards gained from hard work and the pursuit of high standards.

> "I always say to my kids as long as you try your best at everything then at least you can walk away knowing that you've tried your very best." (Parent)

> "We tell our kids every day, you can achieve what you want to achieve if you put your mind to it, you can be what you want to be … that's the difference, we believe in our kids and we believe in their future … and we'll not let nobody put our child down, no matter what". (Parent)

In terms of the nature of support provided, parents talked generally about the need to: ensure homework is done; provide help if required; ensure children eat and sleep well; get to school on time; and create a calm atmosphere in the home which is conducive to studying. More specifically, they spoke about the need for consistency in relation to homework routines and the associated setting of high standards.

> "The children come in from school, the first thing we do is we have a wee drink or whatever … and then the homework's done … they don't play on anything until the homework is done". (Parent)

Individual characteristics of resilience and self-determination are seen as key to educational achievement particularly for young people who live in adverse home conditions and/or those who have limited parental support.

Not all children living in these disadvantaged Wards were seen as sharing the same characteristics or experiences. Across five of the ILiAD wards (Tullycarnet, Duncairn, The Diamond, Whiterock and Rosemount), the role of individual resilience and self-determination as motivation for academic achievement were highlighted as vital for educational success by a range of community and education respondents. Characteristics associated with self-determination were also reflected in the other two Wards (Dunclug and Woodstock) but less frequently. Such personal drive and capacity were understood to enable some young people to achieve "against the odds". This individual resilience was viewed as the factor that distinguished them from fellow young people in the same or similar circumstances who fail to achieve the same degree of success. For example, a primary principal commented on the resilience of two pupils when undertaking the Transfer Test; and a post-primary principal recalled a former pupil who has achieved despite her "adverse home conditions."

> "We have one girl went to grammar last year and one this year … I have never seen such strength of character, in both of them. They are just so determined" (Principal)

> "I have one girl in a university in London … she got there on her own strength, there was nobody pushing her from home … all sorts of problems, but she made it." (Principal)

Young people themselves reinforced these claims and spoke about the importance of individual resilience, motivation and of the need to resist peer discouragement.

> "It was down to me, and they [parents] were never forceful or anything, I would just always go and do my homework, it was never a bother." (Post-primary pupil)

> "Believe it or not, you actually get slagged off for trying … but I just don't listen … I persist as I want to do well." (Post-primary pupil)

Sense of connectedness to local community

Young people having a strong sense of connection to their local community have a positive impact on attainment and on their attitudes towards learning.

Community connectedness, as manifested through community collaboration and good relationships within a Ward area, was associated with promoting young people's engagement in education. In a number of the case study Wards, there was evidence that perceptions of belonging to a mutually supportive community of people with shared interests and objectives can positively influence young people's drive and ability to achieve.

For example, several teachers and principals spoke about levels of social cohesion being important factors in terms of: "raising the value of education" in disadvantaged communities; improving links between schools and local communities; and giving young people a sense that "everyone is pulling in the same direction."

> "It is important for our young people to feel connected … to feel they are part of united community." (Principal)

> "How young people visualize themselves … in their social world … influences their attitude to school." (Teacher)

Similarly, young people from several Wards highlighted their sense of belonging to their local community as important referents in their outlook and identity. For example, one post-primary pupil spoke about being "proud to belong" to a community which was "welcoming, friendly, and a good place to live"; while another claimed that she felt "supported by everybody" in terms of her education.

However, it should be noted that in terms of this sense of connectedness there were variations between the case study Wards. For example, the qualitative data evidence variances in (perceived) levels of community cohesion between the predominantly-Catholic and predominantly-Protestant Wards. In general, two key reasons were cited for this variance: the unifying role of the Catholic Church in The Diamond, Rosemount and Whiterock Wards; and the occasionally fractured nature of community activity in the Woodstock and Duncairn Wards. These issues are more fully examined in the later section on attainment differentials across religious background.

Local youth and community work
The case studies evidence the value of effective local youth and community work input in terms of encouraging attainment in these areas.

Youth and community programmes, statutory and voluntary, which encourage learning and offer homework support were seen as particularly important for those young people with limited parent support and/or those in adverse home conditions.

Alongside community level support, the contribution of both statutory and voluntary local youth work input in terms of enhancing learning in disadvantaged communities was also seen as a significant driver of attainment in the case study Wards. Young people and youth workers also spoke about the value of trusting relationships and relaxed environments.

> "Lots of us come here to do our homework … the youth workers love it and make us feel welcome." (Post-primary pupil)

"It's warm, it's quiet, and it's always friendly … and a good place to study." (Youth worker)

"The main thing is contact … a relaxed environment where we have a chat and I find you do most of the opening up and most of the work … around the pool table or when you're making a cup of tea or coffee and it's just offering support at that age." (Youth worker)

The qualitative data from the case studies also evidence a number of instances highlighting schools and youth clubs working closely and collaboratively:

"It's a very good youth club … Part of it is just about keeping those young people engaged and away from the interface … We have identified those young people who are at risk … and we are trying … to come up with programmes … whether its revision programmes … where, instead of them staying here after school, we would talk to the youth leader and we would say, here is the particular programme that this guy needs to do, you do it with him. They prefer that environment to being in school." [Principal]

Community and youth workers, particularly those with a long-standing connection to the local community and viewed as 'achievers', were highly valued by young people as role models. They were seen as offering deep understanding of the learning needs of young people in the area, the barriers they face en route to achievement, and what is required, personally and practically, to overcome these barriers.

"(Named youth worker) has known us all since we were children so she knows the way we work and … she knows how to treat us." (Post-primary pupil)

However, the seven case studies also highlight a number of individual-home-community factors that are seen to inhibit attainment.

Immediate inhibitors of attainment
The attainment prospects of some young people in the seven case studies were viewed to be inhibited by: adverse home conditions and inadequate levels of parental support; the inter-generational transmission of educational failure; the low self-esteem of some young people; and increasing levels of mental ill-health identified amongst young people.

Adverse home conditions and inadequate parental support
The case study data evidence a section of young people whose attainment prospects are limited because they live in adverse home circumstances and/or have inadequate levels of parental support.

Across all seven ILiAD wards, adverse home circumstances, such as disadvantaged pupils living in "challenging environments" in "unhappy" and "unstable" homes, was consistently identified as one of the most important inhibitors of educational achievement. Educationists, community workers and EWOs highlighted that some

young people lived in home environments, which were "unfriendly" and "uncaring"; and associated the lack of a nurturing environment with a wide range of contributing factors. These included: domestic and community-level violence; a culture of drugs, alcohol and benefit dependency; absent fathers; acute financial hardship and poverty; parental mental and physical ill health; breakdown in parent relationships; and parents absent from the home because of working long hours.

> "You do have a lot of difficult family situations which impinge on kids' ability to work effectively and their esteem." (Principal)

> "Deprivation takes a variety of forms … and, often, love is in massively short supply." (Principal)

Several parents spoke about not being able to help their children with their homework. For example, one parent spoke about being embarrassed about her own limited literacy skills and expressed the hope that her daughter's school experience would be an infinitely happier one than her own.

> "You feel like an idiot! You go into the school and don't know a child's bloody homework. Half the time you don't want to go in because you're embarrassed with yourself. My number one hope is that it's going to be different for her." (Parent)

Young people themselves were also aware of the importance of their home and family environment to promoting or inhibiting academic achievement.

> "Being from disadvantaged areas … has less of an effect than what your parents' attitude is." (Post-primary pupil)

Intergenerational transmission of educational failure
Parental early experiences of educational failure were associated with children's fear of failure, low expectations and negative attitudes to schooling.

Parental experiences of educational failure were associated with children's fear of failure, low expectations and negative attitudes to schooling. In six of the ILiAD wards (The Diamond, Tullycarnet, Duncairn, Rosemount, Woodstock and Dunclug) intergenerational de-valuing of education was mentioned by respondents as having a profoundly negative impact on the potential of some young people to achieve. Parents' own experiences of educational failure were viewed as related to children's fear of failure, low expectations and negative attitudes to schooling through identification. This de-valuing of education was understood to be transmitted from parent to child through successive generations, such that it becomes an attitudinal and behavioural norm.

Several principals from schools which serve young people from these disadvantaged areas spoke about "families that haven't managed to break that cycle" and a "third generation of people that have suffered unemployment" seen as part consequence of this inter-generational transmission.

> "Generationally, they see their parents doing nothing, and their parents failed at school, and the parents don't know how to support them and encourage them being in school." (Principal)

> "You have a lot of people who, because they hated school, think: "My life's OK and I'm fine; my child will be the same". (Principal)

Community level respondents also frequently echoed these themes. For example: a parent claimed that she was "ashamed" about "not having a clue" how to help her child with schoolwork; and a youth worker spoke about the lack of employment opportunities and the impact on young people's attitude to schools and learning.

> "There are low aspirations and expectations due to two or three generations of underachievement and unemployment around here. What's the point trying at school if there are no jobs?" (Youth worker)

Low self-esteem and aspirations of some young people

A number of young people from areas of high deprivation suffer low self-esteem and lack aspiration as a result of negative community attitudes around education.

Across the seven case study Wards, patterns of low self-esteem and lack of aspiration among some young people were identified as significant inhibitors of attainment. Several school and community level respondents expressed the view that the attainment prospects of many young people are affected by negative attitudes towards learning and low levels of self-belief.

> "Some young people are bereft of aspiration and have no dreams of anything." (Principal)

> "We've so many coming in now with just no aspirations. It's quite scary. They have no dreams of anything. You are talking to them in careers, and you ask them, what do you want to be? 'Dunno'. What are you good at? 'Dunno'. It's like something's just been killed in them, before they even get here … They just don't think that they are good enough to do anything." (Senior teacher)

> "There is a section of young people who feel school is pointless because they don't believe they have the capacity to succeed." (Community worker)

The principal of a post-primary school gave a specific example of how the local-level norms and influences can effectively mitigate the (perceived) need for education:

> "That has been passed down to the children … when you've children coming in [and] their ambition is to be a taxi driver, because their daddy runs a taxi … there's nothing wrong with a taxi driver, but if that's the only ambition you have starting off, then there's not a lot of need for school and education." (Principal)

Young males were considered to be particularly vulnerable to pessimism and an inability, as well as lack of confidence, to identify pathways to employment. According to another post-primary principal, these traits persuaded some boys to lose interest in their education. Moreover, a youth worker argued that, among a section of young people from deprived areas, these traits were not uncommon.

> "They cannot see that there's anything worth putting in the hard slog of school for." (Principal)

> "Possibly 85% of young people I come into contact with have negative attitudes towards education." (Youth worker)

In such communities, this lack of aspiration was often associated with underlying local-level normative assumptions around employment prospects.

> "I've never heard of a child round here [saying] 'I want to be a fireman, a policeman or an ambulance man or doctor or nurse.'" (Resident)

> "When they leave school they think they're going to lie about and do nothing." (Parent)

> "I think it definitely comes from their parents … them thinking 'That's what my life's going to be, that's what my career path is'. It's really scary." (Teacher)

Young people's mental health
Increasing levels of mental ill-health identified amongst young people are having a negative impact on attainment and are creating additional pressures for schools.

EWOs and principals highlighted an increase in the numbers of children with mental health and learning difficulties across the case study areas. This is in line with evidence that show strong links between mental health problems in children and young people and social disadvantage in NI, with rates of problems on the rise.[13] Indeed, one principal claimed that 15% of his pupils have being referred to counselling for a range of issues such as physical abuse at home, social media bullying, self-harm and sexual orientation issues with associated with emotional problems. Moreover, a number of principals highlighted that, within some areas served by their school, suicide amongst young people had increased.

> "In the last few years, we see more and more children every single day in here that are referred to the … child mental health services … we've seen … mental health issues that children have risen considerably". (EWO)

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[13] http://www.refineni.com/mental-health-stats/4578563576

According to one principal, mental health issues among young people are placing "significant pressures" on schools in terms of "managing resources to be able to deliver the curriculum to all children."

The impact of School level factors on attainment

This section presents a summary of findings on the main school factors that are viewed as acting as drivers and inhibitors to educational achievement across the seven wards. These aim to illustrate the pattern of these drivers and inhibitors across the Wards as well as highlighting some of the unique features of schooling that differentiate individual Wards.

School Factors

Drivers	Inhibitors
Visionary and collaborative school leadership	*Low expectations on the part of some schools and teachers*
Effective school-community linkages and accessibility to parents	*Perception among some parents of schools as 'middle class' and 'detached'*
Collaborative schools, inter-agency working and Full Service programmes	*High rates of absenteeism and exclusion in some schools*
Provision of diverse curricula	*Insufficient support for SEN*
Positive teacher-pupil relationships	
Effective pastoral care and support for pupils with Special Education Needs (SEN)	

Table 4: Key drivers and inhibitors to educational achievement at school level

School-level drivers of attainment

The most important school-level drivers of attainment in the case study Wards are: visionary and collaborative school leadership; effective school-community linkages and accessibility to parents; provision of diverse curricula; positive teacher-pupil relationships; inter-school and inter-agency collaboration and Extended Schools provision; effective pastoral care and support for pupils with SEN.

Visionary and collaborative school leadership

Visionary and collaborative school leadership can have a markedly positive impact on attainment.

According to the case studies, visionary and collaborative school leadership commonly entails a principal having an active commitment to lead all staff to support, encourage and enable all pupils to maximise their potential, while at the same time building relationships with the communities that the school serve. According to one principal, leadership is about "setting the strategic direction of the school" and making sure this vision "filters all the way down." Other principals highlighted the importance of setting high standards in terms of attainment, discipline and personal development.

> "We've a huge emphasis here on discipline, appearance, behaviour and work." (Principal)

> "Our pupils … are very able children … they have a responsibility to use those talents … that's a huge part of our ethos." (Principal)

In the predominantly-Catholic Wards of The Diamond, Whitrock and Rosemount, there were well-established, collaborative learning communities, with Catholic maintained schools at the hub of these. It was clear that most Catholic maintained schools in this study were not stand-alone entities in the community – their leaders had enhanced the connectedness between the school and the community, with parents, schools and groups sharing responsibility for the academic progression of local young people.

> "I'm the principal of this school, but I believe I do have a contribution to education in the city, and I have gone on various fora throughout this city because I believe we have a contribution to make for all children … this is what I was employed to do, and I will do the best for my girls in this school, wherever they come from." (Principal)

Effective school-community linkages and accessibility to parents

Attainment is enhanced when schools develop effective links with local communities and are viewed as accessible by parents.

In all seven case studies, principals, teachers and community workers as important drivers to educational achievement highlighted effective school-community linkages.

"I have to say that there has been outstanding work done in the community with adult education … just to create a spark in the parents or those who have been disengaged." (Principal)

"There are benefits to be gained for schools by tapping into the capabilities and resources that exist in communities to actually produce young people with an appetite for learning and an ability to learn." (Community worker)

"Because the school opens so late at night, there's that opportunity for study because some people don't have the environment at home to study, and I think that's what works for me … staying in after school to study." (Post-primary pupil)

It was also clear from the data that when teachers develop good relationships over time with parents and grandparents, there is increased trust, confidence and openness between families and schools. These positive school-home relationships were frequently associated with: low staff turnover; the perceived attachment and commitment of staff to the school and to the children; and the investment that is put into the relationship between parents and school staff.

Several principals, teachers and EWOs spoke about the value of encouraging parental involvement by making schools as accessible as possible. These respondents also highlighted that, in some areas, parents were reluctant to engage with schools; and that new and innovative engagement methods had to be adopted to help parents (particularly those who themselves found formal education a struggle) to take a more pro-active role in the school lives of their children.

"Parents who have had a bad experience of school do not necessarily want to re-engage with school with their own children." (Principal)

"Some parents get a rush of bad feeling of their previous experience; worry that [by attending events such as parents' evenings] they're going to come under the spotlight; feel that they are incapable of presenting themselves in a positive light on behalf of their children; and, as a result 'they take the easy option and they don't go." (EWO)

"It's about getting parents to see that school is a welcoming place. We tried classes like alcohol and drugs awareness and that didn't work very well and then we thought 'let's try something different, a wee bit softer'. So we introduced Zumba classes to try and get them to come in … but it's a struggle. It really is." (Principal)

It should also be noted here that the case study data evidence a variance in terms levels of parental engagement with schools between the predominantly-Catholic and predominantly-Protestant Wards. These issues are more fully examined in the later section that outlines differentials across religious background.

The provision of diverse curricula was highlighted as an important driver of achievement. Participants across all Wards stressed the need for an inclusive system that afforded young people access to a broad-based education in which the value of different forms of knowledge and skills, not just those associated with academic achievement, was validated.

The need for pupils to "achieve something" was repeatedly stressed; and broadening out the range of subjects and GCSE equivalents on offer was seen as significantly increasing the possibilities for such achievement.

> "Fostering higher levels of achievement amongst our lower-achieving girls, we get fantastic results with the performing arts." (Principal)

> "A lot of the schools around here would do the double award BTEC options too, where they would come out with two GCSEs in the time it would take to do one GCSE, so there was a little bit of inflation … But I'm not criticising that … the children would have a sense of achievement and a sense of understanding that there is a worth in what they're doing, rather than being consistently met with failure." (Principal)

> "We have made huge changes to try and address boys' uptake at things like Home Economics, so now we're having boys going through and having A-levels in Home Economics and Health and Social Care because they're now more involved in the junior end of the school in how it gets delivered to them." (Senior Teacher)

> "Even our least academic group have the potential of coming out with up to 8 GCSEs or their equivalents, and that's where I talk about we've high expectations for everybody." (Vice-principal)

The vital need for the provision of vocational opportunities was confirmed by the data from both the education and community sectors. This need was routinely linked with the particular requirements of local boys who, it was argued, are more likely to engage in vocational than traditional school settings. Offering broad and diverse curricula was also viewed as crucial for those young people underachieving or in danger of being disengaged or excluded from school. Young people and teachers from EOTAS and the AEP sector schools serving these Wards talked positively of the highly diverse provision and the unique pedagogy on offer that suited differing individual learning styles, preferences and needs allowing pupils within these sectors to re-engage with education.

> "They just can't handle mainstream school. Their ways of learning are just different. They can't conform to the usual routine. It means they have some qualifications. OCN drugs and alcohol awareness, certificate in Excel. What this means is they might just leave with 5 GCSEs … as opposed to very little." (AEP teacher)

Positive teacher-pupil relationships

The case study data confirm the crucial importance of the quality of teacher interaction with pupils to significantly enhance the potential for achievement.

According to the data, positive, proactive teacher-pupil relationships are another important factor in encouraging attainment. In several focus groups with post-primary pupils, respondents described how friendly and empathetic teaching encouraged their learning:

> "Teachers that are nice to you and motivate you, you do the work more and put in harder working."

> "You get really close to the teachers … you're thinking, like, we're all a big family."

> "They do go out of their way if you don't understand something … they'll stay with you until you understand it." (Three young people aged 14-17)

Teachers and principals who highlighted the importance of the vocational aspect of their teaching practices supported these views:

> "You need to be feeling it and believing it … you need to be living it and breathing it for our kids." (Teacher)

> "I see my job in that traditional sense of vocation … the teaching staff here are similarly motivated and typically go the extra mile for pupils." (Principal)

The consensus from the data was that, alongside subject competence, the ability of teachers to form constructive relationships with pupils is an important enabler of learning. In other words, it is essential that teachers have and explicitly demonstrate the ability to establish a rapport and a sense of connectedness with those they seek to educate.

> "If the teachers show some respect and trust, the pupils often respond similarly." (Parent)

> "Teachers need to redefine themselves as an enabler and facilitator rather than just a teacher." (Principal)

Several principals and teachers concurred with these sentiments and further claimed that one of the most important aspects of a teacher's skill-set is their ability to understand the complexities of some pupils' home lives and how this can negatively impact on their capacity to learn. For example, one principal spoke about the need for teachers to understand "what is causing that child to be disruptive; what his needs are; and why he is getting on like this." Importantly, the accounts of young people also consistently articulated the same set of core attitudinal and behavioural qualities they associated with a "good teacher". These coalesced around an explicit demonstration of genuine concern and commitment through, for example, taking the time to talk, good-humoured "banter", kindness, patience, encouragement and a willingness to help.

Collaborative schools, inter-agency working and Full Service programmes

Collaborative working between schools and locally-based groups and agencies and the provision of Full or Extended Schools programmes are viewed as an important enablers of attainment on young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Collaborative working between schools and locally-based groups and agencies and Full Service provision were consistently found to play a critical role in supporting young people with limited parental support and/or those with adverse home conditions.

Inter-school and inter-agency collaborations were common features of the best performing schools in the study. Two important aspects of such collaboration were identified as: improved lines of communication i.e. between schools and social services, and during primary to post-primary transitions; and the inter-school sharing of learning resources such as making certain courses and subject specialisms available to pupils from other schools. EWOs highlighted what they saw as a "nascent shift on the part of some schools to adopt a more holistic approach" when addressing the needs of young people at risk of academic failure. Such an approach entailed school developing meaningful links and relationships with communities and families to ensure that: schools had a fuller understanding of the lives of their pupils; and parents and communities were more aware of school-based programmes and initiatives which seek to improve attainment in disadvantaged areas. This "more joined-up method", it was argued, gave parents and schools the chance to avail of the "widest possible range of support mechanisms."

In all seven wards, the data evidence the benefits of local-level, inter-agency working for educational achievement. Principals of schools serving these Wards were able to describe collaboration with a wide range of community-based groups and agencies including, for example, Save the Children, Sure Start, Small Steps, Save the Children - the 'Families and Schools Together' (FAST) programme and Barnardos.

Frequent reference was also made to the added value of Full Service programmes[14] set up to enhance the educational achievement of young people in the local community by providing a coherent and co-ordinated approach with schools, organisations and agencies addressing the specific needs of learners, their families and the local communities. Such programmes were highlighted as important factors in terms of raising attainment levels especially for "vulnerable learners." Several principals and teachers argued that such initiatives gave young people, without support, the extra help they need; furnished parents with the skill sets to better support their child's education; and had a positive impact on attendance levels. One principal claimed that the most

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[14] The Extended Schools policy document, *Extended Schools: schools, families, communities – working together* was published in 2006. https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/circular-2010-21-extended-schools-building-on-good-practice.pdf

important aspects of these interventions was the "equalising effect" between pupils who have '"fantastic support at home" and other young people who have "no place to study, no help at home and no family history of doing exams."

> "[Extended Schools provision] … acts as parents for them and tries to give them the same support as if they had a supportive household … we can get extra support out in the community." (Principal)

> "Since Extended Schools provision … was established in this school in 2007, attendance has increased from 86% to 89%." (Vice Principal)

> "FSES has contributed to transformation of the community through raising aspirations of pupils and parents … engaging pupils with realistic employment considerations and by bringing the "employer into the room" and providing more effective networks of medical and social support to address individual and family needs." (Principal)

Effective pastoral care and support for pupils with Special Education Needs (SEN)
Securing the social and emotional welfare of pupils was vital not only to help pupils effectively engage in learning through early detection and intervention but also to support a more holistic development of young people.

The case study data also suggest that attainment is influenced by how teachers attend to the social and emotional wellbeing of pupils to encourage effective learning through pastoral care. For example, one post-primary principal argued that a "powerful, efficient and fast-acting pastoral care system" in which intervention is "quick and continuous" is a precondition of a successful learning environment; another claimed that pastoral care in his school operated on both a formal and informal level.

> "We have a very strong pastoral system … But it's not about a system as such, it's about people, the teachers, noticing things, picking up on things, getting to know the young people … it's really about everyone being part of the pastoral team." (Principal)

The responses of parents and community workers confirmed the important contribution of consistent provision of Special Education Needs (SEN) support, as well as help for young people with difficulties related to social and emotional development.

> "There are quite a few of our own local children that would need extra help. I must say [name of school] is fantastic at providing support, and bringing [name of another school] … to give these children the extra help that they need". (Community worker)

> "In the [named secondary school] … there were schemes and mechanisms there for them [disruptive pupils] … and many people availed of them". (Parent)

Other common (school-level) drivers of attainment

Although less frequently cited in the data, the seven case studies also highlighted the following school-level drivers of attainment: support during transitions (nursery through to careers advice); the benefits of social mixing (i.e. having a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds in the classroom); and the provision of vocational opportunities (i.e. to ensure that all students leave school with a sense of achievement).

School-level inhibitors of attainment

Attainment in areas of deprivation is often inhibited by: low expectations on the part of some schools; a perception among some parents of schools as "middle class" and "detached"; the high rates of absenteeism and exclusion in some schools; and insufficient support for SEN.

Low expectations on the part of some schools

It was frequently argued in the data that low expectations on the part of some schools and teachers were an inhibitor of academic success. Several parents held the view that some schools and teachers "give up" on pupils if they don't see them "trying enough."

These views were supported by a range of pupils in some Wards.

> "I don't think they push them nearly hard enough … you are basically telling them they will not amount to much." (Parent)

> "The teachers just think … well, if they can't be bothered, why should I waste my time on them?' And if they're going to just mess around, then we're happy to let them." (Parent)

> "She doesn't even teach really, she just basically says "page whatever" and then she doesn't even explain it right … if you have a problem she just tells you that it's rude to come up and disturb her." [Young person aged 13]

> "They just want to do the absolute minimum, they don't care what results they get." (Young person aged 17)

Young people also identified how perceived negative and potentially humiliating behaviour inevitably impacts on pupils' self-confidence as both learners and individuals.

> "No matter what you achieve it's like you sort of feel a bit wick because you're being compared to somebody who has done better … it makes me really annoyed … It makes you feel like you're thick." (Post-primary pupil)

The above quotes highlight a theme running throughout young people's accounts, namely, that such 'bad' teachers were likely to discourage learning and limit aspirations.

Nevertheless, young people were clear that although academic achievement is related to the quality of teaching received, they were not naïve enough to dismiss the role also played by personal commitment and endeavour.

> "They tried their best but I just got to the stage where I wasn't bothered … It was more me than them. The school did their best … The school does help but like it's down to you too. Like the teachers are there for help but it's down to you, if you really want to go on and do it. (Young person)

Perception among some parents of schools and teachers as 'middle class' and 'detached'

There was a perception amongst some parents (particularly in the Controlled sector) that some schools and teachers are "detached" and "middle class" and that this made it more difficult for these parents to play a fuller role in their children's education.

Several parents spoke about some schools being detached from the realities of their pupils' lives, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The most frequently suggested reason for this detachment was that many teachers who work in such schools "come from a middle-class type background" and thus "it's totally impossible for them to relate to what's going on" in their homes or communities.

> "Look, most teachers come from a middle-class type background and haven't endured or lived the life that these kids have lived." (Parent)

It should be noted here that there was a noticeable difference between mainly-Catholic and mainly-Protestant Wards around perceived levels of detachment or attachment of schools to the areas they served. Moreover, school and community level respondents frequently claimed that such variances existed because, in comparison with some schools in the controlled sector, schools in the Catholic Maintained sector which serve disadvantage communities are more commonly populated by: principals who had grown up in and/or continued to live in the local community; and teachers who are "nearly all" working class (a fuller examination of this variance is presented in the later section on differentials across religious background).

> "When you go into schools … you get a sense of those teachers … they're generally locals … they have a real sense of investment in the kids … For others, a school like [named school] may be their first step in their career and as soon as they get an opportunity to get out of it they will." (Community worker)

It was also suggested that some schools have little or no connection to the communities they serve. Several parents, particularly in those communities where the school is situated several miles away, argued that schools do not do enough to mediate the

impact of these spatial detachments; and spoke about the need for such schools to gain a better understanding of disadvantaged areas.

> "Well, his secondary school is more than four miles away … may as well be a million miles away … they just don't engage with this estate." (Parent)

> "Maybe if they could see where their pupils were actually living … they might be able to relate to them better." (Parent)

High rates of absenteeism and exclusion in some schools
In the case study Wards, the schools with higher rates of absenteeism achieved lower rates of attainment. The data also highlight higher school absenteeism rates within mainly Protestant Wards compared to the mainly Catholic Wards.

The secondary data support the qualitative data and confirm the importance of attendance in terms of subsequent attainment and show that the schools with higher rates of absenteeism achieve lower rates of attainment. For example, the three Wards with the highest levels of absenteeism Tullycarnet (39.7%), Woodstock (39.7%) and Duncairn (27%) had the lowest attainment as measured by Grades A*-C across all subjects. Similarly, the three best performing Wards in terms of attainment (Rosemount, The Diamond and Whiterock) had the lowest rates of absenteeism – 21.1%, 22.2% and 23.7% respectively. However, absenteeism and exclusion rates and adequate responses to these remain a concern more broadly for all the Wards. This secondary data, thus, point to higher school absenteeism rates within mainly-Protestant areas compared to the mainly Catholic Wards (these variances are further explored in the later section on differentials across religious background).

Additionally, the pressure of school league tables to achieve targets, and otherwise demonstrate their added value, was understood by some participants to promote a culture in which it became acceptable to "sacrifice" the wellbeing of individual, typically problematic, pupils. A tendency to expel pupils was considered to be compounded by the lack of resources available to some schools to support those pupils experiencing problems. In their absence, and faced with these pressures, the likelihood of "difficult pupils" being expelled was understood to increase.

> "There are certain schools … that are very quick to expel, in my opinion … their attitude towards it is, we can't deal with them so let's get rid of them … that is an impact upon their educational outcome because they will attain less … some of the children that have been expelled from schools … could be addressed within the school but they don't seem to have the wherefore or the maybe the staffing to deal with it as they used to." (EWO)

Rates of young people registered with SEN were higher in non-selective schools across the Wards and concerns were raised about the adequacy of provision for educational support.

In terms of the secondary data analysis (for 2012/13), with few exceptions, schools serving each of the seven Wards showed a clear relationship between patterns of SEN rates and FSM entitlement (and indeed absenteeism) with non-selective schools, including those from the integrated sector, having the highest rates of SEN as compared to the grammar schools. Schools hosting high rates of children with SEN (in conjunction with high percentages of young people on FSM entitlement) across the Wards had lower percentages of young people achieving 5 GCSE grade A*-C (including English and Maths). The qualitative data reflected a range of related concerns about the speed of response and adequacy of provision for children and young people with SEN in some Wards.

Although several excellent examples of effective school SEN, Educational Psychology and EWO provision were highlighted, several parents, EWOs and community workers claimed that in their areas, this provision was "patchy" and "inconsistent". The two most common concerns were: failings around the early identification of learning barriers; and a significant "backlog" in terms of referrals.

> "It took them too long to discover there was a problem and even longer to put in place proper support for his dyslexia." (Parent)

> "There's a failure in the education system to identify early … learning issues, emotional issues and specific ASD issues or even ADHD … there's a bottleneck of resources and a lot of children and young people fall through the net." (EWO)

According to community workers, there is an issue with some young people transferring from a primary school setting to secondary level having never been properly assessed or having had their individual learning needs addressed. These respondents stressed that this can have a direct impact on that young person and ultimately impact their "chances at school"; and highlighted a lack of funding as "part of the problem."

> "For a lot of the young people we're working with there's underlying health issues … there hasn't been the proper screening or testing and there's some learning difficulties that maybe hasn't been picked up." (Community worker)

> "I think there needs to be an ethos of young people getting the proper help in first year and the proper assessments done in primary school so that when they do go onto the secondary setting these issues are identified." (Community worker)

> "I think that's going to get worse because they're cutting back on classroom assistants … in schools." (Community worker)

Other school-level inhibitors of attainment

In addition to the school-level inhibitors as listed above, the following, less frequently cited inhibitors were also identified: weak school-home and school-community linkage; pupils being declared ineligible for inclusion in Year 12 statistics by some schools; disruptive classmates (who it was claimed by one parent take up a "disproportionate amounts of the teachers' time"); and a silo mentality on the part of some schools in terms of inter-agency and inter-school collaboration.

The impact of Structural/policy level factors on attainment

This section presents a summary of findings on the main structural and policy-related factors that are viewed as acting as drivers and inhibitors to educational achievement across the seven Wards. These aim to illustrate the pattern of these drivers and inhibitors across the Wards as well as highlighting some of the unique structural and policy-related features that differentiate individual Wards.

Structural/policy Level Factors

Drivers	Inhibitors
Collaborative and proactive community services	*The current economic climate*
New and improved school buildings and facilities	*Legacies of the recent conflict*
The high attainment performance of the Grammar sector	*The spatial detachment of schools and the communities they serve*
	Variability in availability of quality pre-school provision
	Negative effects of academic selection for those who do not achieve selection to a grammar school

Table 5: Key drivers and inhibitors to educational achievement at structural/policy level

Structural/policy-level drivers of attainment

Across the seven case studies, the most significant structural/policy drivers of educational attainment were: collaborative and proactive community services; new and improved school buildings and facilities; and the high attainment performance of the Grammar sector.

Collaborative and proactive community services

Collaboration and interagency promotion of young people's engagement in and with education were identified as an important enabler of attainment in the case study Wards.

There was evidence of a legacy of people working together to support and improve their local communities, although the impact of this was somewhat variable across the Wards. Where additional non-mandatory services (external to and outside of schools) worked coherently and were visibly available to support youth and families within the Ward areas, these were seen as beneficial and added to a sense of, "wrap-around" community. These included: early years services and mother and toddler groups; women's groups; men's groups; cross-community links and activities; intergenerational/youth engagement in the community activities; recreational activities; work training and skills support services; other education support, such as after-schools programmes, mentoring, and homework clubs; further education providers; alternative education providers; mental health/drug and alcohol/emotional support services; and homelessness support/accommodation services.

This interconnected support was also associated with increasing levels of collaborative, proactive community activity leading to discernible community gain. Positive examples included advocacy, lobbying and, collaborating to obtain funding for local projects and youth initiatives. The best examples seemed to centre on the inclusion of and active participation by local young people, including the more marginalized, to identify services, and seek support to address the difficulties they face, including in relation to educational attainment.

> "We are trying to build the whole pupil and we are trying to … use the young people to transform their areas…we are trying to tap into this whole notion of build from the bottom up … we don't want them to be the most deprived in the next 5 to 10 years, we want them to come away from that." (Teacher).

New and improved school buildings and facilities

Improvements and renewals of school premises were seen to have effected positive change and confirmed that young people are more likely to succeed if their learning environment reflects aspiration and not decline.

It was commonly claimed in the case study data that new and improved school buildings and facilities have a positive impact on young people in terms of encouraging learning. Several teachers and principals spoke about the "transformation" in pupils' attitudes

when their learning takes place in environments which are "high-tech", "modern" and "fresh."

> "The new building is fantastic … the children love it … it has raised everyone's standards and expectations." (Principal)

> "It makes such a difference when young people are taught in a learning environment which is new and gives them the chance to use the latest technology." (Teacher)

> "Our new build has led to vastly improved behavior … it has been designed to have 70% more light than any other school in Northern Ireland. In four years, we have had no vandalism … zero. They see it as their school. It has created a security for them." (Principal)

Where such investment was stimulated as part of FSES provision, not only was impact upon pupils and families recognized but also impact upon the whole community.

> "These new schools have fantastic facilities that are available for use by all sectors of the community." (Community Worker)

By contrast, several principals, of schools housed in older buildings, reported the negative impact that this had on pupils' aspirations, and their subsequent achievement. One such principal claimed that: parts of his school were in a state of disrepair; and that interactive whiteboards and tablet technology were urgently required but he did not have the financial resources to pay for them.

> "I would like to see more investment. Studies have shown that newer facilities raise motivation." (Principal)

The high attainment performance of the Grammar sector

In the case study Wards, the high attainment performance of the Grammar schools is evident. The best performing schools in this study were Grammar schools; and principals, teachers, parents and young people who attended Grammar schools were supportive of academic selection.

The qualitative data from interviews with principals, teachers and parents in the grammar sector evidence widespread support for academic selection and the view that the current system gives young people from disadvantaged communities the opportunity to "get a first-class education."

These respondents also argued that attainment performance of the grammar sector, in the words of one teacher, "speaks for itself". Similarly, the principal of one grammar school argued that the current system was inclusive of all sections of society; and another grammar school principal that in the absence of grammar schools, "bright" children from disadvantaged areas would be deprived of a "unique opportunity."

> "My own view is that academic selection gives an opportunity to children from any social strata, once they get into the school; I think it benefits them enormously." (Principal)

> "I'm from West Belfast and from a deprived background and to me it gives a unique opportunity for upward mobility for children who live in areas of deprivation because, let's face it, back to the point I was making earlier, if the motivation for the majority of people in an area is not to go an academic way, then those children could get lost, the ones that are very bright could get lost." (Principal)

The grammar school pupils who took part in the focus groups were also very supportive of academic selection and felt that they were receiving the "best education possible." These respondents also: highlighted the support they received from their primary schools in preparation for the transfer test; argued that those who did not sit the test simply lacked self-belief; and claimed that grammar school pupils were "motivated" and that this allowed teaching to be more effective.

> "They have wee miniature tests, relating to the transfer test … everybody was dedicated to doing it. There was a transfer club and stuff, so you'd go to that and they would help you with it."

> "We had a test after school club, and then at the weekend they gave you a Maths test one week and an English test the next week, and then they would give you a Maths and English homework every night, so we had stacks to do … and we spent like hours going over them."

> "So having an academically selected school where everybody that's there is motivated to do the work just means the teachers can do a better job."

> "People would say to you, 'oh you're doing your 11+, I could never do that.' And you're like, 'but you've never tried' … some people just think they are not good enough for it." (Grammar school pupils aged 12-15)

Structural/Policy-level inhibitors of attainment

The most significant structural/policy inhibitors of attainment in these disadvantaged communities were: the current economic climate; legacies of the recent conflict; the spatial detachment of schools and the communities they serve; variability of availability of quality pre-school provision; and some of the negative processes associated with academic selection.

The current economic climate

The current economic climate, in particular the lack of employment opportunities, is having a detrimental effect in terms on educational aspiration for some young people.

Principals, teachers, parents and young people in all seven case study Wards claimed that the impact of the current economic climate was discouraging learning in some disadvantaged communities.

> "Young people in the most disadvantaged communities see long-term worklessness as normal … so it can be difficult to keep them motivated in their learning." (Teacher)

> "You ask them to do their homework and study hard … but they just go: 'What's the point? There are no jobs anyway.'" (Parent)

> "If there are no jobs, why should young people bother at school?" (Young person aged 17)

Additionally, current economic conditions within the Ward areas were identified as putting many local families under acute financial pressures.

> "The job situation and the economy seem to lead to more stresses and break-ups in families." (Principal)

> "The reality is deprivation is rife, poverty is rife. We are not living on the edge of poverty no more, we are actually in poverty. We call ourselves working class communities and nobody works. It is now becoming a social underclass. The working class is above us now. This is what we are actually dealing with. Young people are feeling the effects of deprivation." (Community Worker)

Similarly, a post-primary principal claimed that many young people feel obligated to work a number of part-time jobs during term-time because their modest incomes are "contributing to the family budget."

However, there were instances where it was claimed that the current economic climate, in particular, the lack of employment opportunities, sometimes had the effect of increasing determination in young people to have ambition to go on to achieve at A-level and access Further or Higher Education.

Legacies of the recent conflict
In some communities, legacies of the recent conflict continue to have a negative impact on attainment levels and some young people's attitudes to school and education.

In the Woodstock and Duncairn Wards, legacies of the recent conflict were reported as barriers to attainment. Such legacies were said to include spatial mobility challenges (e.g. where accessing the city centre of Belfast entails transiting through the 'other' community), which, it was argued, has a limiting effect on these young people's capacity to adjoin wider social networks. Additionally, high levels of ethno-cultural insularity were reported in these Wards alongside accounts of the impact of the 'flags protest', which it was claimed by one principal had "disrupted the schooling of some young people."

"Living in this estate is like living in a prison … you can't go anywhere … it's just not safe." (Young person aged 15)

"In Tigers Bay, they have about 4 or 5 streets they can run about … that's really the only places they feel safe … it's a very small World for them." (Youth worker)

"I think the "Troubles" have made some of these communities very inward looking and distrustful of outsiders." (Community worker)

"Some of our boys were caught up in and around the flag protests … we got some of our older students to speak to the younger ones about keeping safe and out of trouble." (Principal)

The spatial detachment of schools and the communities they serve

The spatial detachment of some schools from the communities they serve creates additional expense and logistical problems for parents, inhibits the engendering of close school-community relationships, and gives young people a sense that education is not something that is prioritised in their community.

Across the seven case studies, principals, teachers, parents and community workers claimed that the visibility of schools in disadvantaged communities was an important driver of attainment. The consensus here was that young people and parents are more easily encouraged to engage with schools if the schools are seen as part of the community.

"We are a permanent reminder that education is a priority in this area." (Principal)

"Being so centrally located means that we are part of the community fabric. It's easier for our pupils to attend school and parents to come to our events." (Teacher)

"No buses needed … most of them walk to school … no one seems to mitch off." (Parent)

However, in three of the seven case study Wards (Woodstock, The Diamond and Tullycarnet), the relatively long distances between schools and the communities they serve was identified as an inhibitor of attainment by principals, teachers, parents and community workers.

"This (spatial detachment) detracts from parents' ability to understand the role that they can play in supporting the education of their children … If the school is just down the road, you feel a connection … we tried to run things in the evenings, but it's too far for people to come." (Principal)

"I think that visibility is crucial and if schools are not visible then how can they be relevant?" (Community worker)

"My son's school is miles away … so his school is not part of his everyday life." (Parent)

"It's trying to get those parents who are disengaged with school … It's about getting them to see that school is a welcoming place … but it's a struggle. It really is. Let's face it we are just too far away." (Principal)

Variability in availability of quality pre-school provision

The availability of quality pre-school provision was seen as an important enabler of attainment. However, this provision was found to vary between the Wards.

Research is well-established [15] that early education counters socio- economic disadvantage by enhancing educational outcomes of under-achieving groups. Since the quality of pre-school is associated with more positive outcomes, concerns were expressed across the case study Wards about how the provision could meet the increasing needs. Some families in the case study Wards claimed that: they have little or no access to Early Years provision; and that they are unable to get their children placed in an appropriate nursery school. According to local community workers and residents, demand patently outstrips local supply and, although some parents have been offered places for their children further afield, these locations present significant transportation barriers. Moreover, in some cases, there is reluctance on the part of parents to send their children to nursery facilities outside of "their community". This consequence of this supply-demand dichotomy is that the "school-readiness" of some young people is compromised. Indeed, one principal argued that some children are entering school ill-prepared and are thus "not able to make good use of the learning opportunities."

Several pre-school principals referred to demands associated with responding to increasing levels of physical health problems and special medical needs that young children from these areas are exhibiting that influenced the quality of provision.

''Out of an enrolment of 52 children, I've had 10 children with asthma, three with Autism, four with behaviour issues, three with delayed development, two with medical needs, three with toileting issues, and four were on EpiPens." (Principal)

"This is my twelfth year and we have been oversubscribed since we went to 2 full time sessions (for pre-school) … because we had a higher level of FSM … (the Department) granted us the full-time sessions to offer dinner to everybody, and since that, we've always been oversubscribed." (Principal)

'It's frustrating because you feel, if I had extra staff, I could take time with the parents ... Because parents are looking for guidance." (Principal)

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[15] For example, Centre for Research in Early Childhood (2013), OfSTED. http://www.crec.co.uk/docs/Access.pdf

These respondents also perceived an increase in cases of suspected autism and behavioural needs alongside the observation that children's speech and language delays, at entry to preschool, were observably increasing, thereby requiring specialist help in their classrooms. However, since nursery year is usually the year when special needs are formally assessed, additional support is not always readily available to help with the education of these children.

In terms of addressing these challenges, several principals highlighted various forms of external support for the parents of children in their schools. This support included parent activity co-ordinators/facilitators and external agencies who run parenting courses for the early years. These principals viewed this support as extremely helpful in terms of encouraging parental involvement in the school and raising parents' awareness about the levels of social and cognitive development that their child should be reaching at different ages – but this did not allay the difficulties for those who could not access good provision for their children.

Academic selection (negative effects)

Notwithstanding the attainment performance of the grammar sector, some of the issues arising from academic selection were identified as inhibiting attainment among some young people in the case study Wards. Such issues were seen to include: the negative impact in terms of confidence levels and self-esteem of those pupils who fail or do not sit the transfer test; Grammar schools 'creaming' likely high achievers from non-selective schools – thus depriving pupils in the non-grammar sector of positive (peer) role models; and the ways in which the current system of selection favours those parents with the means to pay for private tuition.

Although, as highlighted above, there was support for academic selection from respondents in the grammar sector, the issue of selection was widely viewed as an inhibitor of attainment. Forty-four per cent of pupils attend a grammar school in NI. Data retrieved for the seven case study Wards (2011-12) showed that predominantly Catholic Wards, The Diamond (12th MDM) and Rosemount (44th MDM) had 30% (or over) of post-primary age pupil attending grammar schools. Duncairn (a predominantly-Protestant Ward) had the lowest percentage (11.7%) followed by Whiterock (14.1%), Dunclug (17.5%), Tullycarnet (19.3%) and Woodstock (20.4%).

Principals, teachers, community workers, parents and EWOs largely connected to the non-grammar sector, argued that academic selection: deflates the confidence of those who either fail or do not sit the test; tests children at too young an age; deprives schools in the non-grammar sector of likely high achievers; and is most beneficial to those children whose parents can afford to hire private tutors for their children around subject specialisms and transfer test preparation.

A range of respondents highlighted negative impacts of the selection process for some year seven pupils, such as, the impact that 'failure' had on young people's confidence in their learning, and the time it took to rebuild their self-esteem:

> "Most of the young people come to us feeling a bit deflated having come through a transfer system that has labelled them as under-achievers and certainly not on a par with some of their peers. So, we do an awful lot when they first come to us to try to restore their confidence." (Principal)

> "It takes us quite a while to hammer home … that you are not second best because you didn't get the 11+ or because you didn't go for a selection test and didn't get into a grammar school. It takes me two or three years to say you are as good as any other pupil in any other school now believe in yourself." (Principal)

> "The ones that fail … it's a big blow to their self-esteem." (EWO)

> "At 11, the level of maturity (in terms of preparing for and sitting the transfer test) is just not there." (Teacher)

> "I think it is a lot of pressure for a child of that age." (Parent)

Moreover, principals and teachers in the non-grammar sector claimed that, due to falling enrolments, grammar schools are depriving non-grammar schools of likely high-achieving pupils.

> "Because grammars still take the numbers they always did, our school has lost all of our role models in terms of likely high-achieving pupils … those who would be leaders in this school." (Principal)

It was also frequently claimed by a range of respondents that the current system of academic selection favours those parents with the financial means to pay for private tutors to help their children prepare for the transfer test.

> "The current system favours those with the means to pay for private tuition." (Teacher)

> "Where would I find the money (to pay for private tutors)?" (Parent)

> "If you're from a working class background … it wouldn't occur to them to think of a tutor. I mean, let's face it, middle class people nearly all get their children tutored, whether they're able or whether they're not, that's just what they do." (Principal)

Differentials in attainment between and within Wards: Towards an explanation

The previous section showed the main cross-cutting issues that were found to enable and inhibit educational attainment across the seven case study Wards. This section presents some of the secondary and qualitative data that challenge standard (commonly-held) notions of the relationship between (statistical) measures of deprivation and educational achievement. It begins by examining how patterns of attainment change across the Wards when core subjects and equivalents are included/excluded into Ward attainment profiles. Finally, the section closes with some of the factors that go some way to illustrating and explaining differential attainment patterns between Wards at GCSE by examining patterns associated with religious background, gender and rates of absenteeism, FSM and SEN.

Differentials between Wards with and without core subjects

The percentage GCSE pass rate (Grade A*-C) for some Wards is significantly influenced by students GCSE pass rates that include GCSE equivalents.

The percentage GCSE pass rate (Grade A*-C) for some Wards is significantly influenced by GCSE pass rates that include the core subjects English and Maths.

Case study Wards were found to vary quite significantly depending on whether or not GCSE equivalents and core subjects were included. For instance, Whiterock, the most deprived Ward, dropped its 'educational achievement' ranking when core subjects were included in the measure whereas the difference for Tullycarnet was negligible. Across all seven Wards higher percentage of pupils are succeeding at school when equivalents are included than the percentage of school leavers who completed GCSE subjects only. In every case, educational achievement is lower if only pure GCSE subject passes are included. Thus, comparisons across and between Wards on the general benchmark measure of GCSE passes Grace A*-C are more nuanced than at first glance, and suggestive of varying strategies by non-selective schools serving these Wards.

During the period 2008-2011, there were 868 school leavers, across the seven Wards. Of these, the minority (38.1%) passed GCSE subjects only (without equivalents), with 431 pupils passing subjects that included GCSE equivalents (such as BTEC/NVQ).
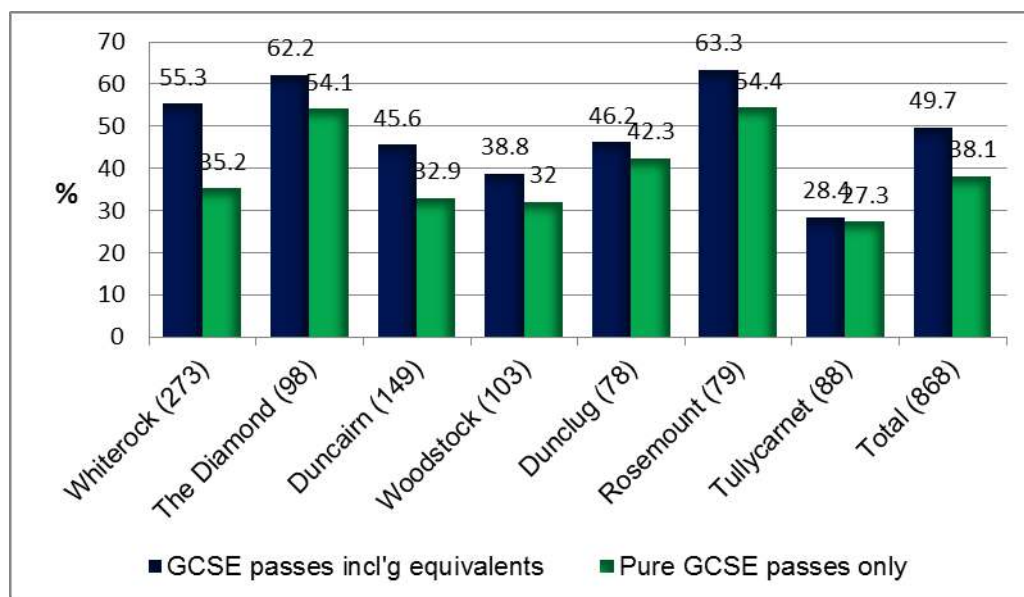
Figure 3: Percentage GCSE A*-C with/without GCSE equivalents across seven case study Wards.

Across the seven Wards, a higher percentage of pupils appear to be succeeding at school when equivalents are included than the percentage of school leavers who complete only GCSE subjects. In every case, educational achievement is lower if only pure GCSE subject passes are included.

The percentage GCSE pass rate for some Wards was being significantly influenced by students being entered for GCSE equivalents. For Tullycarnet, there was very little difference in achievement levels when equivalents were/were not included (1.1% variation). By contrast, for Whiterock, there was a 20.1% variation in the results pattern within the Ward. This brings educational achievement levels closer to that of Tullycarnet (and also of Duncairn) if 'pure' GCSE passes is the educational measure adopted.

Whiterock and Woodstock were much more closely matched (35.3% and 32.0% respectively) in contrast to their relative achievement profiles if equivalents were included. With equivalents included in the measure, Whiterock outperforms Woodstock with 16.5% difference.

A comparison of Duncairn and Woodstock (as two predominantly Protestant areas) showed very little difference in performance when pure GCSEs were examined (32.9% and 32.0% respectively). When equivalents were included, the achievement pattern is much wider (Duncairn 45.6%; Woodstock 38.8%).

The percentage GCSE pass rate (Grade A*-C) for some Wards is significantly influenced by GCSE pass rates that include the core subjects English and Maths.

A notable shift in the patterns of educational achievement across the seven Ward areas was identified when the core subjects, English and Maths, were included. The variation in performance for the most deprived Ward, Whiterock, was found to be the greatest out

of all seven Wards.
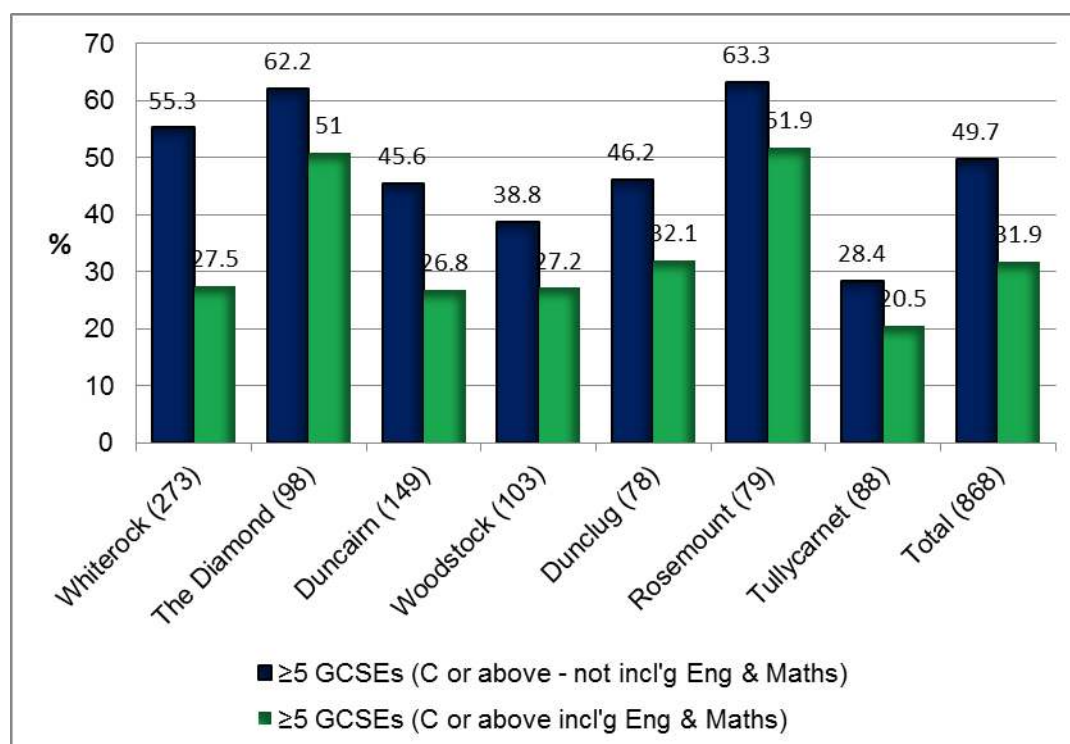
Figure 4: Percentage GCSE Grade A*-C with/without English and Maths across seven case study Wards.

The findings add to the ongoing debate about how we assure a quality curriculum and qualifications framework for young people that both centralises the importance of English and Maths as core subjects, while at the same time engaging those, who have broader interests and talents, including vocational ones. Offering diverse curricula with associated qualifications is the strategy adopted by some of the schools in the case study sample illustrating instances of increasing numbers of their young people obtaining 5 or more GCSEs (A*-C) – but without the core subjects. Alongside this, the qualitative data suggest that teachers and pupils see this strategy as improving educational attainment because these lead to classrooms in which pupils are more highly engaged, motivated and successful and this is especially, but not solely the case, for young people in EOTAS and AEP. While engaging some young people in Maths and English can often feel like an uphill struggle, the challenge is nevertheless to finds ways to reinforce the value to many of English and Maths skills as essential building blocks for any further study and career.

Attainment differentials across religious background

There were marked differentials in educational achievement between predominantly Catholic (Whiterock, The Diamond and Rosemount) and predominantly Protestant Wards (Woodstock, Duncairn and Tullycarnet).

The three predominantly Catholic Wards in the study (Whiterock, The Diamond and Rosemount) had higher levels of attainment in terms of five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13) than the three predominantly Protestant Wards (Duncairn, Woodstock and Tullycarnet).

In the case study Wards, attainment differentials across religious background were associated with: the relative value placed on education; perceived levels of detachment or attachment of schools; varying levels of community cohesion; and variances in school absenteeism rates.

Further details are available in Appendix 3 and Volume 2: ILiAD Case Studies of Seven Electoral Wards provides in-depth individual description and analysis for each of the seven case study electoral wards

Relative value placed on education

In general, the qualitative data evidence a higher value placed on education in the predominantly-Catholic case study Wards than was found in the predominantly-Protestant Wards. The data suggest that these variances are related to:

- Historical experiences of discrimination in the Catholic community in terms of the industrial labour market;
- The value of education being championed by nationalist politicians;
- The role of the Catholic ethos in terms of encouraging learning in disadvantaged communities; and
- Negative socio-cultural norms in some working class Protestant communities around education.

"Even in the 1970's, when it came to poverty the way out of it in the Catholic sector was they pushed their kids to go onto University ... here (in the Controlled sector), they didn't need to because they were jobs for them. It was only when the jobs dried up that the Controlled side cottoned on to the fact that education really matters." (Principal)

"One of the key legacies (of the Education Act 1947) is a very strong belief in the Catholic community in Derry that, as John Hume would have said: "Education tackles poverty; education is what will end poverty." (Principal)

"The Catholic ethos of this school helps pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds know that they are valued, they are talented and they are part of a community." (Senior teacher)

Several respondents in the predominantly Protestant case study Wards highlighted the contrasting value placed on education in the Protestant and Catholic communities.

"There seems to be a real apathy sometimes with some of our parents … maybe they themselves didn't have a good experience of school. School and education maybe aren't viewed as important in the Protestant community." (Principal)

By contrast, a youth worker recalled that during the times of exams, almost no Catholic children attend his cross-community youth club; and a principal spoke about the inter-generational transmission of negative attitudes around school and education.

> "… because their parents have them in the home; they're studying, they're revising; and their parents are being supportive." (Youth worker)

Perceived levels of detachment or attachment of schools

As outlined above in the section on school-level factors, perceived levels of detachment or attachment of schools were important determiners of attainment. These data also show that such perceptions were commonly informed by: the strength and efficacy school-home and school-community relationships; how the schools and teachers relate to the realities of working class families; and the visibility of schools in local communities – i.e. schools being seen as part of the community fabric.

Although there were examples in all the case study Wards of schools creating and sustaining effective relationships with local communities and families, it would appear that many Catholic schools have prioritised these triangular relationships more effectively than some of their controlled school counterparts. Indeed, many of these Catholic schools are seen as integral to the local community and families in such schools are encouraged to be active participants in their children's education to a greater extent than was found in many schools in the controlled sector.

> "We would try to work with the families at home to help support them … that all encompasses within that caring, Catholic ethos we have." (Senior teacher)

> "The relationships with parents are good, we would have a parent-teacher night for every year group ... out of a group of 200, you might have ten parents not there." (Principal)

According to the qualitative data, an important factor in these positive relationships between schools and local families and communities in the predominantly Catholic wards is that many teachers in the schools serving Whiterock, Rosemount and The Diamond were born and continue to live locally.

> "There's teachers here that are former pupils … and send their kids here too … that's important." (Parent)

> "I was born and reared just beside here. I know the community completely ... I've a fuller understanding of the community background, of where the families and children are coming from ... I'm not saying it's absolutely necessary, but it's been very beneficial for me going forward ... the support that you get as a result of that is very good ... people believe in the school and believe in what you're doing." (Principal)

In the predominantly-Protestant case study Wards there were accounts from some parents, which paid tribute to the principals and teachers who have worked hard to

improve levels of attachment between their schools and the communities they serve. In Tullycarnet, for example, there was evidence of a reciprocal and proactive engagement between the local post-primary school and the local community in recent years stimulated by a threat of closure that has led to a mutual commitment to improve educational outcomes for pupils.

> "We want to have our children go to our local school and we understood much better when he (the Principal) came out to us to talk about it." (Parent)

However, other parents, pupils and community workers in the predominantly-Protestant Wards claimed that many teachers in the controlled sector did not necessarily aim to have the same connection or long-term commitment to the community than is commonly found among teachers in the Catholic Maintained sector.

> "Some of the teachers are middle class … know nothing about the home lives of their pupils and … just don't care about kids from disadvantaged areas." (Parent)

> "It would not matter if they were from a nationalist background, but it would have been better if they were from a working class area." (Post-primary pupil)

> "A lot of the teachers are middle class, pretty detached … and it's totally impossible for them to relate to what's going on in their communities." (Community worker)

As outlined earlier, a further important aspect of perceived levels of attachment or detachment of schools is their visibility in local communities. In the predominantly Catholic Wards of Whiterock, Rosemount and The Diamond the fact that there are so many quality schools, literally, within walking distance from pupils' homes has important and positive consequences such as: (a) these schools being seen as assets of the community; (b) young people having a constant reminder that education is an integral part of their lives and living environment; (c) schools being accessible to parents and more able to also involve the community in events and initiatives; and (d) reduced transportation costs and journey times for pupils thus encouraging higher levels of attendance.

For example, in the Whiterock case study, more than half of the Ward's school-age population attend schools less than one mile away; and out of a total secondary enrolment of 572, only 15 pupils attend a school which is three miles away. However, in the predominantly-Protestant Wards of Duncairn, Woodstock and Tullycarnet the fact that many young people attend schools which are more than four miles from their homes was highlighted as an important inhibitor of attainment and increased the sense of detachment between schools and the families and communities they serve.

> "I think that visibility thing is crucial and if … schools are not visible then how can they be relevant; so there's something about how do you create visibility for education in places." (Community worker)

> "(Named school) where my daughter attends is almost five mile from where she lives … so they can't really say they're part of this community." (Parent)

Varying levels of community cohesion

The case studies also highlight varying levels of community cohesion in the predominantly-Catholic and predominantly-Protestant Wards which these data suggest are related to:

- Changes in demographics, a certain level of 'fracturing' and a subsequent lack of community cohesiveness within predominantly-Protestant Wards;

- Positive psycho-social connections in predominantly-Catholic Wards engendered by e.g. the Catholic Church and the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA); and

- Perceptions that communities in the predominantly-Catholic case study Wards in the study have mediated their post-conflict transitions more successfully than communities in the predominantly-Protestant Wards.

The secondary data from the case study Wards confirm contemporary demographic patterns which depict an aging and declining Protestant population and a young and expanding Catholic population. Moreover, the recent arrival of ethnic minorities also appears to have created more challenges for working class Protestant communities and schools than Catholic ones. It is also clear that the rapidly increasing private rented sector has caused difficulties in the Duncairn and Woodstock Wards, where transitory tenures and perceptions of community as a "dumping ground" have done little to enhance community cohesion in these areas.

The case studies also evidence levels of "fracturing" and a lack of cohesion in the predominantly-Protestant Wards that contrasts with the positive psycho-social connections which were seen as a feature of the predominantly-Catholic Wards.

> "There's a long-standing perception within loyalist communities, which tends to be about victimhood, feeling hard done by and having their identity erased." (Community worker)

> "There is no community here … just loads of immigrants and private lets." (Youth worker)

> "Unifying factors such as the Catholic Church and other shared associations such as the GAA have helped to create a sense of community cohesion." (Principal)

> "In the Catholic community … there is a clearer vision about why you're doing things … an overarching ideology that underpins almost everything." (Community worker)

> "Protestant communities are in drift … there is no central connection to a faith that binds people together because there are so many Protestant churches ... the Catholic communities just have one which helps to hold people together." (Senior teacher)

It was also suggested in the case studies that these perceptions of higher levels of community cohesion in the predominantly-Catholic Wards were related to communities in these Wards having mediated their post-conflict transitions more successfully than

communities in the predominantly-Protestant Wards. For example, legacies of the recent conflict such as spatial mobility restrictions, insular attitudes and conflict-era politics were commonly cited in the Duncairn and Woodstock data as inhibitors of attainment.

> "Tigers Bay is only situated five minutes walking distance from Belfast city center … but there is no safe passage. They have got half a dozen streets that they can run about in, that they can say "these are my streets." It's a very, very small world. But these kids feel safe there, that's the only place that they feel that." (Youth worker)

> "The level of conflict related insularity in some of these working class Protestant communities … I am sure … has a debilitating impact on … [local young people's] social horizons." (Teacher)

> "Local politicians are more concerned with conflict-era disputes than they are about the social or educational wellbeing of the residents." (Parent)

However, these accounts contrast with findings from the predominantly-Catholic case study Wards where conflict-related spatial mobility restrictions did not, to any extent, feature in the data; comparable levels of insularity were similarly absent; and there was no sense of defeatism, abandonment, or perceived demographic encroachment.

Differentials in school absenteeism and school exclusion rates

As outlined earlier, the secondary data around differential levels of absenteeism must also be factored into any explanation of why the predominantly-Catholic Wards in the case studies had higher levels of attainment than the predominantly-Protestant Wards of similarly high (or lower) deprivation.

In relation to absenteeism, notable differences were identified between the Wards.

Indices show that the three predominantly-Protestant Wards in the ILiAD study, which had the lowest attainment as measured by percentage Grades A*-C across all subjects, also had the highest rates of absenteeism (2012-2013):

- The Protestant Wards had the highest rates of absenteeism – ranging from 27% in Duncairn to 39.7% in Tullycarnet and Woodstock;
- Dunclug, the mixed-religion Ward had the lowest rates of absenteeism;
- The Catholic Wards' rates were: The Diamond, 22.2%, Rosemount, 21.1%, and Whiterock 23.7%, despite the fact that these three Wards also had the highest rates of FSM entitlement in the ILiAD sample.

Attainment differentials across gender

Out of the seven case study Wards, girls consistently outperformed boys at GCSE Grade A*-C in all but one Ward area (The Diamond Ward). The data here suggesting that such differentials are related to varying levels of value attached

to education, cultural expectations around educational achievement, self-esteem and absenteeism rates.
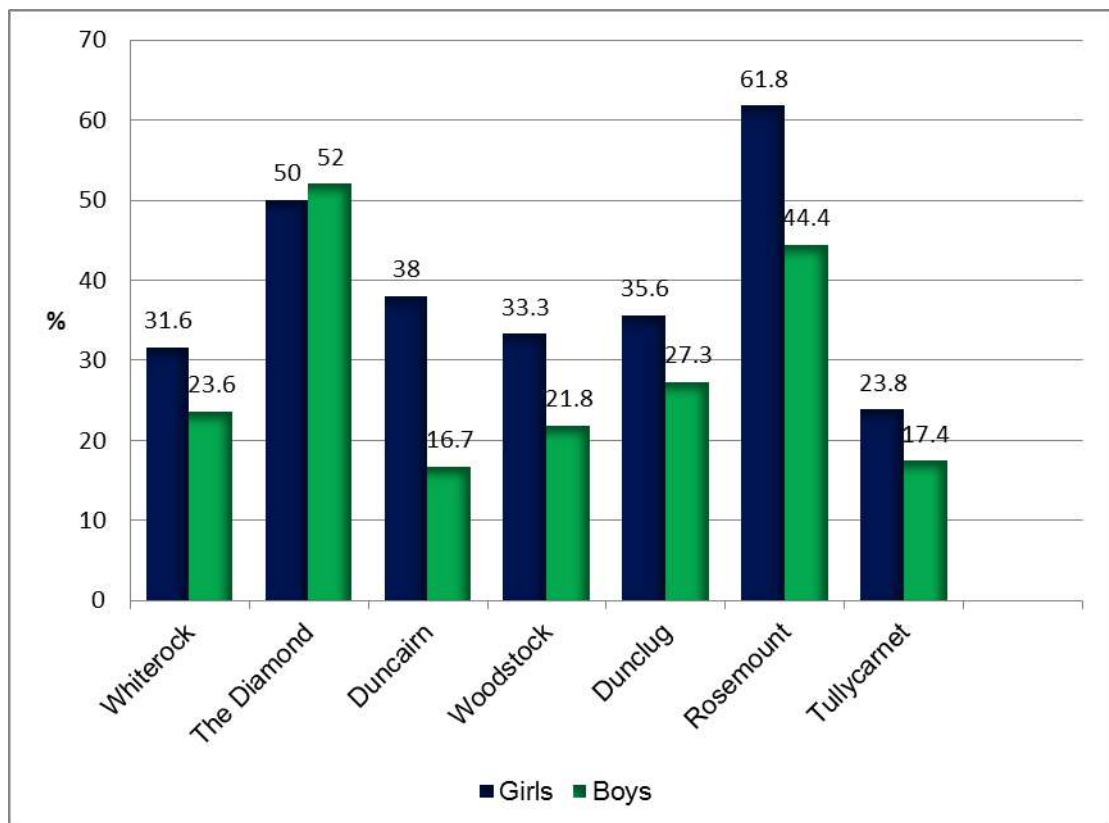
Figure 5: Percentage of GCSE GradeA*-C, including English and Maths, by gender and Ward

The overall trend in Figure shows girls out-performing boys. The greatest difference between boys' and girls' performance at GCSE, including English and Maths, was in Duncairn. The only inconsistency in this pattern occurred in The Diamond, where boys' performance was slightly better than that of girls by two percentage points at GCSE Grade A*-C. The data suggest a number of factors, which help explain the higher achievement of females in the case studies, such as:

- Gender divisions in the way that education is perceived and valued;
- Differences in cultural expectations and learning styles between males and females;
- The impact of low self-esteem and a lack of local positive role model for some young males; and
- Higher absenteeism rates in all-boys schools serving the Ward areas of high deprivation in comparison to all-girls schools.

A commonly cited view in the seven case studies was that girls were more likely to value education and see attainment as something worth aspiring to than boys were. Similarly, it was frequently claimed that, particularly in disadvantaged communities, the

learning styles of girls were more conducive to academic achievement than the learning styles of boys.

> "Being in an all-girls school, when you have female teachers … it's good to look up to them and see them as strong independent women." (Post-primary female pupil)

> "Girls study because they are told to and boys study because they need to. Boys are, commonly, more selective when it comes to directing their attention and energy and are likely to say 'so what part do I need of this?' and if I don't need it, I won't do it.'" (Principal)

> "Many boys find it difficult to be engaged by very academic type subjects such as English literature or additional Maths." (Teacher)

> "If a boy doesn't see why it's relevant he doesn't see why he should work at it." (Vice principal)

> "Girls generally, take information in quicker, are more focused … boys develop slower and mature slower … they're still evolving intellectually ... they're still years behind girls ... they're still growing up." (EWO)

Respondents in the case study interviews and focus groups also argued that low levels of self-esteem among a section of young males and a lack of positive role models had a negative impact on their attitude to schools and learning.

> "The working class boys here, increasingly, are so disengaged they are just lacking such motivation." (Senior teacher)

> "One of the problems, I think, is that they (boys from disadvantaged communities) have no one to look up to … no one who they can aspire to be." (Youth worker)

Finally, the secondary data from the case study Wards shows that high rates of absenteeism were more prevalent within all-boys schools than were found in the all-girls schools. Given the already established link (DE, 2015)[16] between absenteeism lower levels of attainment at the end of KS2 and KS4, these rates of high absenteeism need some further consideration in relation to the attainment differentials across gender that these case studies have highlighted.

Differential rates of absenteeism, FSM and SEN

Case study pupils within schools with higher rates of absenteeism,[17], higher percentages of FSM and SEN did not achieve as well at GCSE Grade A*-C

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[16] Department of Education (UK) The Link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4. Research Report, February 2015
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/412638/The_link_between_absence_and_attainment_at_KS2_and_KS4.pdf

(including English & Maths).

Strong relationships between FSM entitlements in schools, the proportion of children with SEN in a school, and high absenteeism rates, were observed from secondary data analysis. As these factors increased, attainment rates at GCSE were generally found to decrease.
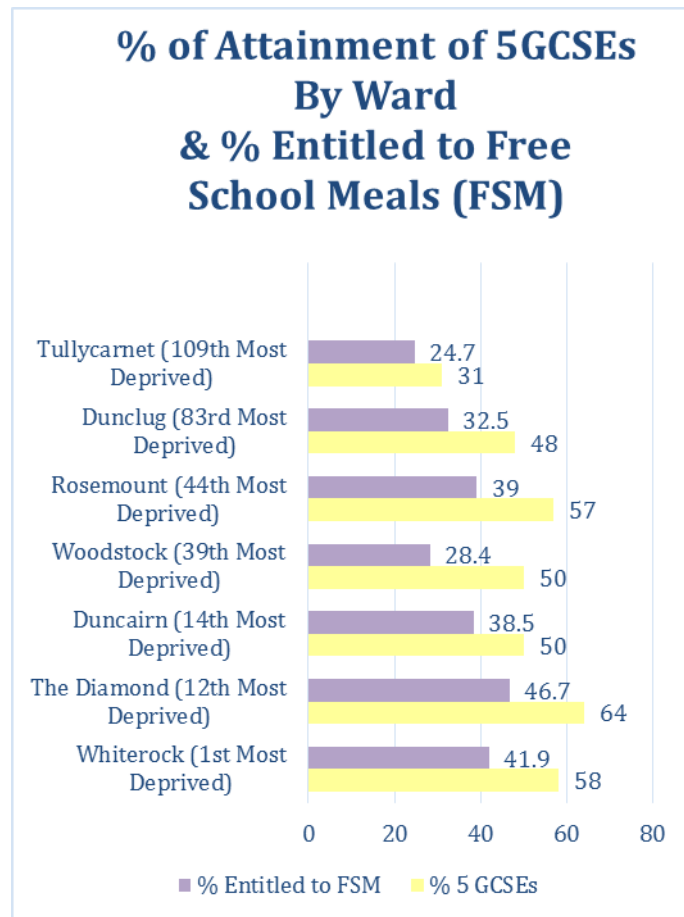
Figure 6. Percentage of GCSE (A*-C) and percentage of FSME by Ward

The grammar schools serving all seven Wards showed consistently the lowest rates for absenteeism, FSM, and SEN, in contrast to other non-selective schools, and they had the highest rates of GCSE passes at grades A*-C. Differences in achievement rates between schools with similar characteristics were also observed – in many of these cases, the proportion of pupils with SEN in a school was the only observable difference.

Section 4 - Towards policy and practice - some considerations

The following section provides summaries of key aspects of young people's experiences that can help or hinder their educational pathway and point to some implications for policy and practice for these Wards.

Only by understanding the various immediate, school and structural/policy factors influencing differences in education outcomes at local levels will it be possible to design effective responses in policy and practice that improve the educational outcomes for all young people in these deprived Wards.

The following section provides summaries of key aspects of young people's experiences that can help or hinder their educational pathway. Given the qualitative nature of the ILiAD study, there is no suggestion that the factors identified are in any way causal but rather, taken in the round, they illustrate the delicate balance of interrelated factors seen to persist for many young people in these areas. Supporting and investing in the aspects that are viewed as enhancing educational success and reducing or minimising the negative impact of those that delimit educational possibilities, may shift the balance of opportunity in a positive direction but only with a view to the local context. Thus, the hope is that the summaries may hold some implications for policy and practice for these Wards.

Immediate (Individual-Home-School) Level Factors

Across the seven case study Wards, factors that are seen as positively influencing and improving educational outcomes and that ought to be encouraged, include: the positive impact of a young person's resilience, which refers to their capacity to do well and bounce back despite adverse experience[18]; where parents or caregivers offer support and encouragement for education within the home; in local communities where young people feel a strong sense of connectedness and where there is good youth and community provision which supports and encourages learning and development, particularly for those who might otherwise fall through the gaps.

Counter to these supportive elements, factors that are viewed as detracting from educational attainment in these Wards include: increasing concerns about levels of young people's mental ill-health, coupled with adverse home situations that reflect inadequate parental support for education; inter-generational transmission of educational failure from parent to child through successive generations such that failure

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[18] Gilligan, R. (2000) Adversity, Resilience and Young People: the Protective Value of Positive School and Spare Time Experiences CHILDREN & SOCIETY VOLUME 14, pp. 37-47

becomes a norm and where some young people display significantly poor self-esteem with associated low educational aspirations.

In terms of these immediate influences on attainment, the case study data suggests an important role for relevant agencies and policy makers in terms of capturing best practice and further supporting initiatives for these Ward areas, which:

- Seek to build resilience in young people from these disadvantaged backgrounds from the earliest age by mitigating risk factors and actively supporting activities that engender higher levels of self-esteem and self-agency;
- Continue to support parents and caregivers to make a fuller contribution in the education of their children and encourage high aspirations;
- Recognize and address the ongoing and complex learning needs of young people with mental health problems by properly resourcing services for young people with mental health problems; and
- Utilize and integrate the valuable assets (including the positive role models) of local youth and community work input, which is directed towards encouraging learning in disadvantaged communities.

School Level Factors

The argument that schools make a difference was a key message conveyed across the Wards - but they do so differentially. Factors that were seen to make positive differences and where good practice ought to be extended included: the importance of school leaders who held a vision and who saw the value of collaboration both inside and outside; schools that develop effective links with local communities and are viewed as accessible and welcoming by parents; where inter-school and inter-agency collaborations are common features; a diverse and inclusive curriculum that encourages attainment; teachers who engender respectful, proactive relationships that motivate and enable learning; and where there is effective pastoral care provision and support for SEN pupils and those with behavioral problems.

Conversely, school factors associated with inhibiting educational achievement and where improvement may be required included: low expectations on the part of some schools and teachers; where there were weak school-community linkages; with some schools being perceived as "middle-class and detached" by parents and pupils: schools with high rates of absenteeism and exclusion and where there were was insufficient support or resources for children with SEN.

The school level issues which were raised in the case studies highlight the need for schools, institutions and government departments with a responsibility for education for these areas to design and implement policies which:

- Facilitate visionary leadership in schools via the capturing and sharing of best practice models and ensuring that collaborative skills are integral to any review of headship qualifications;

- Acknowledge that, notwithstanding demographic and geographical realities, there is a need for schools in these disadvantaged Ward areas to work at having a 'presence' in the communities of the young people and families they serve. For example, where significant spatial distances exist (between schools and communities), schools need to increase their provision of outreach as appropriate;

- Support and encourage all schools to continuously monitor and evaluate (as part of school development planning) existing school-community and school-home linkages and make any necessary procedural changes to ensure that such linkages are as effective and accessible as possible;

- Induce and resource schools to network and engage collaboratively with each other, FE and HE and with external agencies in pursuance of shared, area-based learning/ attainment goals, social mixing and reconciliation, and models of best practice around e.g. inclusive curriculum, pastoral care provision and support for SEN pupils;

- Support and mentor teachers who feel (or who are perceived as) 'detached' to find ways to increase their levels of understanding about social difference and improve connectedness with their school's pupils and the communities they come from;

- Recognise the strong pattern of relationship between attendance and attainment and properly resource the work of EWOs and other agencies in terms of early intervention and inter-agency support to address absenteeism.

Structural/Policy Level Factors

Factors that are seen to influence and improve educational outcomes at a structural level and, where attention should be paid, include: the positive ways communities and agencies increasingly interact and cooperate to promote education and support pupils, parents and families more broadly; where there are new and improved school buildings that act as a visible commitment to education; the existence of high-performing schools located in the community that support high quality teaching and learning and act as a source of pride and a practical resource for the pupils, teachers and community; and, the positive impact on attainment performance for those young people who attend grammar schools serving these areas.

By contrast, structural and policy factors that were identified as inhibiting educational attainment and which need to be considered and addressed include: the impact of the current economic climate; the toll of legacies of the recent conflict; the spatial detachment of schools and the communities they serve; the variability in availability of quality pre-school provision; and areas with insufficient SEN and EWO support. Additionally, some of the processes arising from academic selection that were identified as inhibiting attainment need addressed, such as the negative impact on those pupils who fail or do not sit the transfer test and the inequities of private tutoring for economically poor families.

The structural/policy level issues as highlighted above and more fully examined in this report make clear for these Wards that:

- It is important to continue to recognise the power of local community-based activity and the ethos of partnership that exists to benefit young people and families within these disadvantaged communities. Added to this it is vital to encourage active citizenship, especially through youth engagement; and also for elected representatives to build strong relationships with these communities in order to represent more fully the issues of poverty and education;

- There is value in sustaining investment in new and improved school buildings and facilities that have a significant and positive impact on young people from disadvantaged areas in terms of raising educational aspiration;

- Within some of the case study areas, legacies of the recent conflict are having a negative impact in terms of attainment. These communities require patient, proactive and ongoing support to help them mediate their post-conflict transitions;

- Policy makers are minded to acknowledge that while access to a grammar school provides pupils from these Ward areas with a distinct advantage, in terms of attainment prospects, successful navigation of the academic selection process is often contingent on parents having the financial means to pay for private tuition.

Concluding thoughts

Some influences affecting educational achievement in these Wards are seen to reside within the young person themselves, some are locally driven within the home and the local environment; others occur inside the school and the classroom settings, while still others are exerted through structural and policy conditions and constraints.

More broadly, the evidence from the ILiAD research highlights that promoting educational achievement for these disadvantaged Wards cannot rely solely on the roll-out of generic policy and models of practice. Rather, policy and/or practice must address the multiple factors identified that interact to affect young people's lives and outcomes at a local level in these Wards, while paying attention to the 'bigger picture'. Thus, in terms of responding to the challenges associated with educational achievement in such disadvantaged Wards, what the ILiAD study best illustrates, overall, is the importance of:

- **Thinking locally and planning systemically:** This means that any change in policy or practice ought to take close account of the unique context of each local Ward. Any proposals for change should take cognisance of the distinctive balance and interdependence that exists between the complex interplay of structural, school-level and immediate factors that contribute to conditions for educational attainment in that area;
- **Cross-cutting issues:** There is value in considering the range of cross-cutting themes identified across the seven Wards and consulting on these more widely across NI Wards. Notwithstanding the unique profile of features represented by each Ward, and the fact that, although the findings cannot be generalised, there was sufficient frequency and consistency in the issues identified, such that these issues may have resonance for other disadvantaged communities in NI;
- **No 'quick fix' solutions:** Given the complexity illustrated within each Ward case study, simply diagnosing one element as 'the problem' (e.g. the child or the school or the home or the neighbourhood) and offering 'quick fixes' to underachievement is unlikely to work. Investing in and collaborating to identify sustainable longer-term solutions for the improvement of educational attainment, by involving all community members as partners, and building on strengths, is likely to more fruitful.
- **Bonded versus bounded**: Those interviewed from these Ward areas tended to view their community positively when they experienced a sense of connectedness based on strong networks of formal and informal relationships that were trusting and promoted a range of benefits, in which children and young people were a priority. This sense of bond seemed best exemplified when it was inclusive and benefits were shared within the Ward across people at different parts of any hierarchy. However, it also seems significant that these areas are encouraged and supported never to become community silos but rather for boundaries to remain fluid, where local people and stakeholders are open and willing to link and network beyond their home community to garner resources and share experience on how best to close the achievement gap.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Literature Review: Outline

An extensive literature review was conducted by the ILiAD research team that encompassed key perspectives on the issue of educational achievement and the types of factors, which tend to make a difference with regard to students' attainment and deprivation or poverty. Additionally, the literature review informed the design of research instruments and helped operationalise key constructs of the study.

The review considered factors associated with:

- Individual
- Family
- School
- Community[19]

Potential factors re differential educational achievement

- Resilience
- Identity
- Self-esteem
- Self-efficacy/locus of control
- Motivation
- Mental health
- Experience of trauma
- Level of ability

Individual factors

Aspirations & expectations

Social and community factors

- Social capital
- Cohesion
- Infrastructure
- Community safety/ paramilitary input
- Peer influence
- Environment
- Population movement
- +ve/-ve role models

Attitudes & beliefs

Individual educational achievement

Attitudes & beliefs

- Leadership & governance
- Teaching quality
- Home/school links
- Early years provision
- Teacher stress/burn-out
- Dull, irrelevant curriculum
- School environment
- Quality of information, guidance & advice (e.g. re pathways)

School factors

Family factors

Aspirations & expectations

- Stability/continuity/ security
- Degree of support/ encouragement
- Parents' experience of education/confidence
- Cynicism/negativity re employment prospects
- Resources/stimulation
- Wider family networks
- Benefit dependency
- Drug & alcohol use
- Patterns of communication
- Mental health

Figure 7: Mapping of potential factors influencing differential educational achievement in existing research literature

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[19] A complete analysis of the theoretical frameworks (including Social Capital) used is not presented in this report but is available elsewhere in **Volume 1: ILIAD: Main Technical Report.**

Individual factors

(a) Individual pupil background measures, such as family and socio-economic status (SES) and gender have been found to account for only a very small percentage of the total variation in pupil attainment (approximately 11%);

(b) The factor that makes the biggest difference in terms of disadvantaged students who succeed and those that do not, is resilience, defined as when students experience competence and success despite adversity and disadvantage;

(c) Students have the potential to overcome their economic and social disadvantage and to perform at levels similar to their more advantaged peers; socio-economic disadvantage can be overcome with the right set of circumstances and incentives.

Familial factors

(a) Parental aspirations and expectations for their children's achievements have a strong impact on children's school results;

(b) Parents' own experience of education, educational self-confidence, contact and engagement with teachers and schools, parental beliefs and attitudes about the value and utility of education are all important predictors of children's school attainment;

(c) Some parents in disadvantaged areas are resistant to engage with their children's schools by feeling "put down" by schools and teachers.

School-level factors

(a) The impact of schools, known as 'school effect', on pupil attainment practically (as well as statistically) has been shown to be significant, and is related to a consistent set of factors influencing pupil outcomes. These include teacher behaviour, which has been found to explain up to 75% of the variance between classes in schools.

(b) Positive teacher reinforcement, higher-order questioning techniques, and productive approaches to teaching that include a supportive classroom environment, inclusivity, and a sense of connectedness of learning to the outside world can facilitate student achievement.

(c) School leaders need to be politically informed leaders as well as educators, who can adjust, adapt and deal with the changing socio-economic conditions their students face.

(d) Involving community members in school improvement decisions has also been shown to lead to lasting transformation.

(e) The benefits of schools that provide a range of services and activities to help meet the needs of pupils, their families and the wider community have been shown to improve student engagement and attainment.

Community factors

(a) Strong networks in families and communities are found to act as 'social glue' and can lead to positive outcomes for children and young people and links between communities can aid social cooperation across communities and groups of people.

(b) Local community is a powerful influence and plays a major role in shaping what happens in schools because school failures and successes occur within the context of community standards and expectations;

(c) Improving educational outcomes for young people because young people are influenced by the educational attitudes and behaviours of their peers, and any attempts to invest in and improve educational attitudes and behaviours are likely to reverberate throughout disadvantaged communities.

(d) Evidence, from the range of national and international studies reviewed, reinforced the value of the case study design aiming to capture perspectives at the individual, school and structural or policy levels within each Ward.

Appendix 2: Methodology

The ILIAD research was designed as a three-year (2012-2015) case study analysis of seven Ward areas of NI. The overall methodological design was mixed-methods, combining statistical interrogation of existing data sets (secondary data analysis), a pupil online survey, and an in-depth qualitative case study of each sample Ward.

The ILIAD study is the first study to examine qualitatively and in-depth the factors that may be influencing educational achievement patterns among the more deprived Wards in Northern Ireland.

The ILIAD research adopted a case study approach to explore and understand the factors behind significant differential educational achievement between:

- electoral Wards with high level deprivation who perform better educationally than Wards with lower level deprivation;

- Catholic and Protestant deprived Ward areas;

- similarly deprived Catholic Ward areas;

- similarly deprived Protestant Ward areas, and;

- within areas of mixed housing.

Rationale for case study methodology

Case study is an ideal methodology when holistic, in-depth investigation is needed as it provides multi-perspectival analyses, using multiple sources of data. Case study data is normally a lot richer and of greater depth than statistical experimentation thus providing illumination and insight into complex issues, such as those anomalies on achievement and deprivation identified across NI. However, any findings from this research can only be attributed and related to the case study areas that form the research.

Operational Definitions

The ILiAD study adopted standard definitions associated with the two main factors 'educational achievement' and 'deprivation':

Educational achievement was defined by the standard benchmark measure of 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C or above.

Deprivation was defined according to the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM, 2010).

The study focused on understanding how factors combined at Ward level in NI to create different patterns of educational outcomes, where Ward is defined as:

Ward: An electoral Ward is the smallest unit of administrative geography and is the one used within the IliAD study. Since 1992, NI has been divided into 582 Wards, ranked from 1 'most deprived' to 582 'least deprived' using the NIMDM. Figure 1 illustrates the geographical spread and concentrations of MDM across NI.

Selecting the Seven Case Studies

Following statistical analyses of multiple deprivation measures (MDM) in relation to educational performance of Ward areas in the top 20% for multiple deprivation, case study Wad areas were selected.
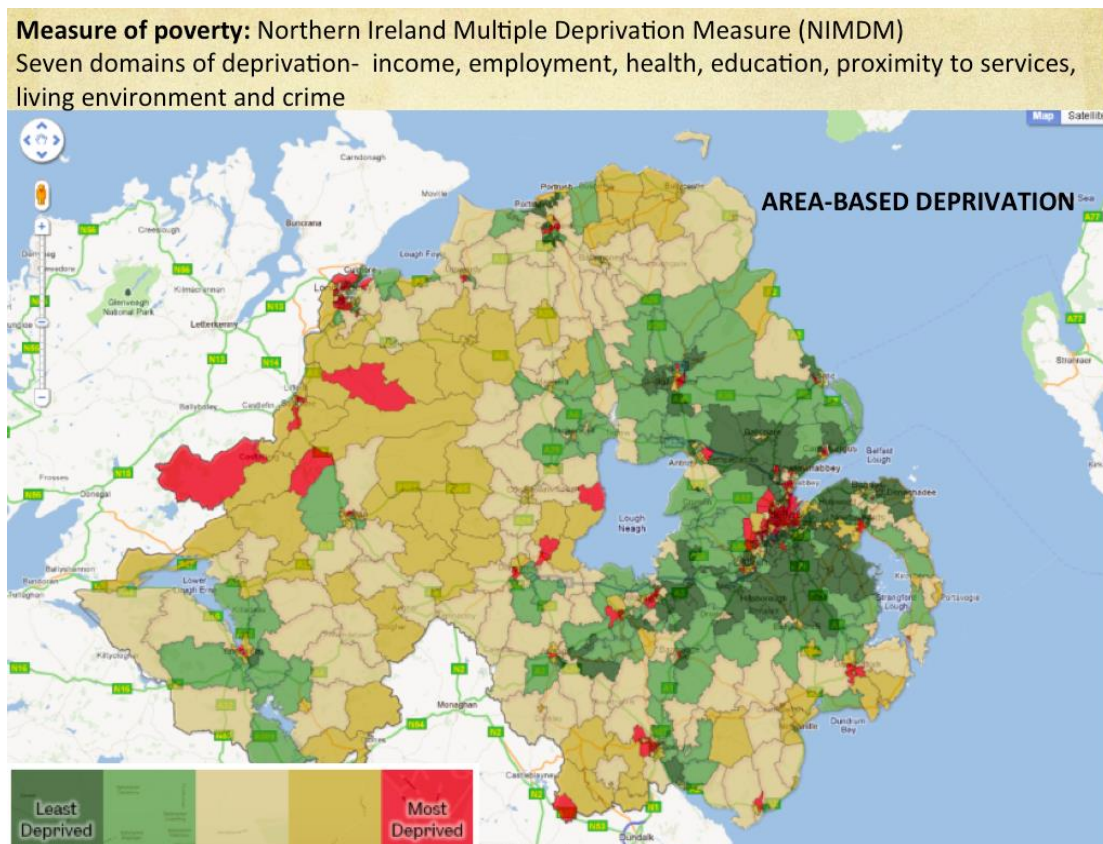
Figure 8: Geographical spread of deprivation for Northern Ireland using the NIMDM from which the seven case study electoral wards were selected.

The ILiAD study selected seven case studies from within the top 20% electoral Wards for multiple deprivation, according to the NIMDM (i.e. between electoral Ward 1 – electoral Ward 116). Selection was undertaken:

(i) by a preliminary analysis of the 15 year trends of the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE passes at Grade C or above within the top 20% most deprived Ward areas;

(ii) against criteria that were judged would lead to the best comparative data in response to the research questions. Figure 2 shows the geographic locations of the seven case study Wards across NI.

Selection criteria included urban location; largely Catholic/Protestant/mixed demographic; mix of anomalous and average profiles regarding levels of deprivation and educational outcomes. The research goal was to 'drill down' beneath the headline statistics to determine and map more holistically what factors could be contributing to the various identifiable patterns of achievement within and between these areas.

The criteria for including these particular seven Wards in the study, as examples of differential educational achievement, was as follows:

- Whiterock because it is the most deprived Ward in Northern Ireland and it has significantly different educational achievement levels compared with The Diamond (which is also a predominantly Catholic Ward and closely matched for multiple deprivation).
- The Diamond and Duncairn because this gave the study predominantly Catholic and Protestant Wards which are very closely matched for deprivation but demonstrate differential performance educationally. Duncairn experienced a spike in educational attainment since approximately 2008/09 and is now performing at similar levels as Woodstock, another predominantly Protestant Ward, even though Duncairn is more highly deprived. Regarding the GCSE indicator, The Diamond appears to be a particular anomaly because it has high deprivation and strong educational performance.
- Rosemount and Tullycarnet because Rosemount provides a predominantly-Catholic Ward with relatively high deprivation but good educational performance, whereas Tullycarnet, predominantly-Protestant, provides the opposite profile (i.e. a Ward with relatively low deprivation and poor educational performance).
- Woodstock because it is more highly ranked for deprivation than Tullycarnet, and yet has better educational outcomes. Both are predominantly-Protestant, so they offer a comparative view within the Protestant group.
- Dunclug because it is a mixed-religion Ward and it has an average GCSE performance level in the sample of cases.

In total the case studies comprised three largely Catholic Wards, three largely Protestant Wards and one mixed-religion Ward. Two of the Wards were located in L/Derry, one in Ballymena, and four in Belfast/Greater Belfast area. All of the Wards were in urban/semi-urban locations.

The seven case study electoral Wards (with the composite Super Output Areas [20] (SOAs) in brackets) chosen for the sample are listed below:

- **Whiterock**   (Whiterock 1; Whiterock 2; Whiterock 3)
- **The Diamond**   (The Diamond)
- **Duncairn**   (Duncairn 1; Duncairn 2)
- **Woodstock**   (Woodstock 1; Woodstock 2; Woodstock 3)
- **Dunclug**   (Dunclug)
- **Rosemount**   (Rosemount)
- **Tullycarnet**   (Tullycarnet)

Rationale for selection

Case Study Data Collection

A comprehensive literature review informed the subsequent data collection plan and the analysis undertaken.

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to collect data in each of the case study Ward areas, comprising:

- Qualitative data - focus groups, individual interviews, desk-based research
- Secondary data analysis of existing data

Qualitative Case Study Data

Case study data were collected through a variety of fit-for-purpose methods in each of the seven Wards. These comprised semi-structured, individual face-to-face interviews and focus group interviews.

The approach was community-centred and, as such, was iterative and developmental. Thus, data derived in the early stages of fieldwork informed subsequent data collection among community participants and stakeholders until data saturation points were reached. Data saturation is a quality standard in qualitative research; it involves gathering and analysing data to the point is reached where no new insights are being observed.

Interviews

The semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews covered the following themes in conversational-style, tailored according to the individual or group respondents. Thus, for young people the emphasis was placed on individual, family, school, community and peer factors, whereas community representatives were focused on community influences, assets and support mechanisms. Themes covered in interviews included the following:

- community influences (community cohesion; capacity; positive assets and resources; community safety);

- individual aspirations, expectations, influences and how these are formed and perpetuated;
- influences in the home (parental support, family stability);
- school factors (controlled/maintained, leadership, curriculum, pedagogy, pastoral care, extra-curricular, FSM, SEN, attendance);
- wider family influences (attitudes, expectations, experiences of education, parent/school engagement);
- peer influences;
- gender and religious identity;
- influence of informal education provision (for example, youth clubs, Alternative Education Provision, Integrated Services); and
- access to support services/organisations/affiliations.

Secondary Data

Early analysis of a series of social, educational and demographic factors of the Wards using existing secondary data sets (Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service/Census/Department of Education data), including geo-social, community and educational services mapping provided baseline characteristics of the target areas. This allowed a comparative element across the seven Wards and permitted some exploration of change over time in relation to education. Interrogation and mapping of secondary data, included:

- Multiple deprivation (2010) domain statistics (such as crime, employment etc.) at Ward and lower spatial levels;
- 2001 and 2011 Census data, to explore the temporal continuity of these geographical areas over the decade and to examine change (e.g. in demographics and housing tenure) through time;
- Department of Education (DE) and Education and Library Board (ELB) data at the Ward level, including data on enrolment (at nursery level through to post-primary level);
- Achievement levels and destinations of school leavers[21]; absenteeism; Free School Meals entitlement;[22] Special Educational Needs registrations; and
- More qualitatively, assessments of school provision based on school inspection reports from the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI).

Secondary data analysis provided both (i) contextual demographic and educational summary and comparative outlines for each Ward and (ii) a preliminary baseline understanding of patterns to begin responding to the question of how significant educational differentials exist between Wards.

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[21] Full analyses are not presented in this report.
[22] Free School Meals Entitlement (FSME) is used as a proxy for socio economic status (SES). FSM or FSME is generally accepted as a measure of family poverty, since only students from families in receipt of state benefits such as income support, jobseekers allowance or child tax credits.

Sampling

Case study participants: Accessing relevant participants, and appropriate key stakeholder groups in each of the seven case study areas was undertaken on the basis of purposive sampling. In line with the main factors identified in the literature review as influencing educational achievement, the ILiAD study engaged and obtained the views of those at grassroots community level, schools level and those who could comment at a policy/structural level for each of the seven Wards. The latter group were derived from community and education sectors.

Overall, each Ward case study comprised a range of views from: children and young people; parents; teachers; principals; educationists; community leaders; youth workers, church members, police, education welfare officers; statutory officials and other stakeholders (e.g. members of residents' associations, women's associations).

The total range of interview and focus group respondents (n=370) across the seven Ward areas, representing grass roots community and education sectors, is summarised below in Tables 6 and 7. Policy and structural level data were derived from statutory officials but also included views/ documentation from community representatives, who had a role or were influential within the Ward.

Respondent category	Number
Young people	70
Parents	60
Community organisations	22
Community representatives	18
Community/unattached youth workers	8
Residents associations	12
High educational achievers	10
Total	200

Table 6: Total number of respondents (n=200) providing Home-Community level qualitative data by respondent category across Ward areas.

Respondent category	Number
Principals and Vice Principals	42
Senior teachers and teachers	10
Pupils in focus groups	62
Education Welfare Officers	40
Education youth workers	8
Statutory Officials	8
Total	170

Table 7: Total number of respondents (n=170) providing education level qualitative data by respondent category across Ward areas.

With a balance of numbers of participants representing community and education sectors. For the purposes of qualitative analysis, youth worker data were incorporated into the education level data unless the respondent specifically identified as community/or detached youth workers. Specific details of the qualitative data collected within each case study ward is available in **Table 8** below:

Table 8: Specific details of the qualitative data collected within each case study Ward

Ward	Community-level data	School-level data
Whiterock	Education welfare officer focus group x1 Community representative interview x 1 Community partnership focus group x 1 Parents focus group x 1 Detached young people focus group x 2	Senior teachers interviews x 2 Education and Library Board representative interview x1 Nursery school principal interview x 1 Primary school principal interview x 1 Special school principal interview x1 Post-primary principal interview x 4 Post-primary pupil focus group x 2
The Diamond	Community worker interview x 4 Parent of high-achieving child interview x 1 Parent focus group x 2 Youth workers focus group x 1	Nursery school principal interview x 1 Primary school principal interview x 2 Post-primary principal interview x 4 Post-primary pupil focus group x 4 Primary pupil focus group x 1
Rosemount	Education welfare officer focus group x 1 Youth worker interview x 2 Young people forum focus group x 1	Nursery school principal interview x 1 Post-primary principal interview x 4 Post-primary pupil focus group x 5
Dunclug	Education welfare officer focus group x 1 Community worker interview x 2 Community leaders focus group x 1 Youth workers focus group x 1 Young people focus group x 3 High achiever interview x 1	Nursery/primary school principal interview x 1 Post-primary principal interview x 3 Teacher interview x 1 Post-primary pupil focus groups x 4
Duncairn	Education welfare officer focus group x 1 Community representative interview x 1 Youth/community worker interview x 2 Young people's focus group x 1 Parents focus group x 1 Residents association focus group x 1	Nursery/primary school principal interview x 1 Post-primary principal interview x 4 Post-primary vice-principal interview x 1 Post-primary senior teacher interview x 2 Alternative education pupil focus group x 2
Woodstock	Education welfare officer focus group x 1 Parents focus group x 1 Community representative interview x 2 Youth and community workers focus group x 1 Residents focus group x 1 Young people focus group (residents) x 1 Neighbourhood Partnership personnel focus group x 1	Post-primary principal interview x 3 Post-primary vice-principal interview x 2 Post-primary senor teacher interview x 4 Post-primary focus group x1
Tullycarnet	Education welfare officer focus group x 1 Community worker interview x 4 High achiever interview x 4 Parent focus group x 1 Neighbourhood forum focus group x 1	Nursery school principal interview x 1 Primary school principal interview x 1 Post-primary principal/teacher interview x 6 Primary pupil focus group x 1 Alternative education pupil interviews x 3

Data analyses

Qualitative data from the focus groups and interviews were firstly transcribed and inductively analysed; members of the research team engaged in data reduction by closely reading and systematically providing coded content and thematic interpretations of the data. The full research team worked collectively on the comparative analysis of all qualitative data to reveal individual Ward factors. For each Ward, a force-field analysis was developed to identify the key drivers and inhibitors to educational achievement that summarised factors at play for each case. This was followed by a comparative analysis that identified cross-cutting themes across the seven Wards.

These themes were subsequently considered in respect of the statistical analyses to provide a holistic picture of each case study site and ultimately a critical contrast of cases across the study sample in response to the research goals.

Secondary data analyses from a range of available data sets for the Ward areas included:
- GCSE passes including equivalents;
- GCSE passes including the core subjects, English and Maths;
- FSM, SEN and attendance rates
- Impact of gender and religion.

Ethical approval

The study was granted ethical approval by the Queen's University Belfast's Ethics committee through the School of Education and the research team was guided by the BERA's Ethical Guidelines (2011)[23]. Particular ethical issues relevant to this study included voluntary informed consent; right to withdraw; entitlement to privacy and anonymity of participants; incentives; legal compliance; minimal bureaucratic or emotional burden and responsibility to the sponsor.

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[23] British Educational Research Association's (BERA) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research; available at: https://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/BERA-Ethical-Guidelines-2011.pdf?noredirect=1

Appendix 3: ILiAD Case Study Ward summaries

This section provides a summary sketch for each of the seven case study Ward areas to provide context for the findings. Basic geographical, demographic and deprivation details based on the Census 2011 data are described. The case summaries are presented in order from the most deprived Ward (Whiterock) to the least deprived (Tullycarnet) within the sample. All seven Wards lie within the top 20% deprived (MDM, 2010) Wards for Northern Ireland. Fuller descriptions for each Ward cases can be found in **Volume 2.**

A force-field diagram follows a summary description of each case study Ward areas. The diagram illustrates the factors identified as enabling (**Drivers**) and impeding (**Inhibitors)** young people's educational achievement in that area.   Drivers and Inhibitors are separated into Structural factors, School-level factors and Immediate-level (Individual-Home-Community) factors respectively.

Whiterock (1st MDM)

Whiterock is located in the Lower Falls electoral area of West Belfast. It is identified as the most socially deprived Ward in Northern Ireland (ranked 1st out of 582) on the NIMDM (2010). Whiterock has the highest population density in the ILiAD sample (5694 people, and has the second highest percentage of young people under the age of 15, at 25.2% (NISRA, 2011). Its demographic is predominantly Catholic (93.1%). The population density within the Ward is the second highest of the ILiAD sample, and has very low percentages of residents who were born outside of the UK or the Republic of Ireland (1.1%, significantly lower than the NI average of 7.1%). In 2011, 14.1% of young people from Whiterock attended grammar schools (the second lowest proportion of the seven ILiAD Wards) and 85.9% attended secondary schools. Nine schools serve the young people of the Ward, of which seven are non-selective schools.

A range of immediate, school-level and structural level factors are seen to impact on the educational attainment of young people from Whiterock. Across these three levels, it is clear that a number of these factors enable academic achievement in the Ward and others are seen to inhibit young people's progression through school. In terms of the Structural drivers of attainment in Whiterock, the data evidence that there is a long-standing culture of collaboration and cooperation between schools and other agencies involved in the educational welfare of young people. This culture may help to explain the reasons why the most deprived Ward in Northern Ireland performs significantly better in terms of the proportion of young people (58%) who attain 5 GCSE A*-C.

It is also clear that an important element of this culture is that there are several high-performing education institutions situated within the local Ward area. Indeed, more than half of Whiterock's school-age population attend schools less than one mile away; and out of a total secondary enrolment of 572, only 15 pupils attend a school which is three miles away. Moreover (and uniquely within the ILiAD Wards) Whiterock has: two grammar schools; a FE campus; a HE institution; and a designated Specialist School for Performing Arts very close to the geographical centre of the Ward. These highly regarded community resources were seen by many local residents as having a wholly positive influence on young people's aspirations. There are also multiple nursery schools and Surestart programmes within the Ward which are fully integrated into partnership arrangements with community groups and statutory agencies. Additionally, nursery place uptake for children born in Whiterock has not fallen below 75% in the last four years (higher than the other ILiAD Wards) and the quality of this provision very high. The final driver was based on the claim that many young people from Whiterock benefit from the social mixing which is said to be a feature of the Ward's grammar school.

Case Studies: Drivers and Inhibitors

Case study 1: Whiterock

Perceived factors influencing achievement in Whiterock Ward

Drivers

Structural-level

a) Inter-agency & school cooperation

b) High-performing education institutions are situated within the local Ward area

c) Substantial, high-quality early years provision

d) Social mixing in grammar schools

e) High attainment performance of grammar sector

School-level

a) Parental involvement in schools

b) Good leadership in schools

c) Facilitative teacher skill-set and positive teacher behaviour & attitudes

d) High expectations of schools

e) Transition support – from nursery school to careers advice

f) Provision of academic and vocational choice

h) Monitoring individual progress and use of school data

i) Combining an academic definition of success with a pastoral definition to heighten aspirations

j) Advantage of single sex schools – for females

Immediate-level

a) Resilience and self-motivation of high achievers against the odds

b) Parental support, encouragement and high expectations

c) Positive intergenerational influences

d) Identification with macro-level structures

Present situation – 60% five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13); 1st Multiple Deprivation 2010

Inhibitors

Structural-level

a) Felt effects of academic selection

b) Pressures on SEN and EWO support & insufficient resources

c) Lack of political representation and feelings of disempowerment to participate in local political structures

d) School closures and amalgamations

e) Poor physical environment

School-level

a) Inappropriate curriculum and school structure

b) Schools and other agencies working in silos

c) Deficits in teaching – disinterested teachers and teachers struggling to manage classes

Immediate-level

a) Class division, anti-social behaviour and the creation of 'no-go' areas

b) Mental health issues and adverse circumstances at home

c) Young people's lack of confidence & internalising a sense of being a 'problem' or failure

d) Poor parental support & skills (particularly low literacy)

e) Intergenerational lack of aspiration/ low expectations of school & education

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The Diamond (12th MDM)

The Diamond Ward is located within the City Walls of Derry-Londonderry. It is a predominantly-Catholic Ward but includes largely Protestant residents of the Fountain area (364), which make up 15% of The Diamond's population of 2551 persons (NISRA, 2011). The second smallest population among the seven Wards, The Diamond is 12th (out of 582) in terms of NIMDM. The Diamond has a lower than average percentage of residents who were born outside of the UK or the Republic of Ireland (3.6%), compared to the NI average of 7.1%. Fourteen and a half per cent of young people are under the age of 15 in The Diamond (Census 2011) which is the second lowest in the ILiAD sample. It also has the smallest numbers of pupils (147 pupils in 2011) attending the seven post-primary schools that serve the Ward. Approximately 14% of pupils from The Fountain area attend a school in the Waterside area of the city.

The data evidence a range of immediate, school-level and structural factors which impact on attainment levels in The Diamond Ward. Some are seen to enable achievement and others are seen to inhibit school progression. In terms of the structural drivers to educational success, it is clear that, certainly for the Ward's Catholic population, the key historical legacies of the Education Act (1947) are a widely held belief in the value of education and qualifications in general and in the Catholic education system in particular. This legacy is also reflected in the secondary data which indicate that, similar to the Whiterock Ward, The Diamond performs significantly better in terms of educational attainment than its deprivation index would suggest and for 2012-2013, it shows a five GCSEs pass rate of 85%. Moreover, the proportion of school leavers in the Ward who entered Higher Education was 36% - more than double the corresponding figures for Tullycarnet (12%), Whiterock (17%), and Woodstock (14%).

There are several high-performing schools located within the Ward (some of which are new-builds). The seven schools which serve the Ward (including three grammars schools) are all within 2.6 miles of the Ward's geographical mid-point: five of these schools have a five GCSE pass rate of over 90%; and several have been given specialist status and, accordingly, receive additional financial support. Other drivers were identified around: the "rich tapestry" of social mix that characterizes many of the Ward's schools; and the equal number of avenues to grammar school education that are now available to girls in the Ward. This parity is also reflected in the attainment data, which show that The Diamond is the only Ward in the ILiAD study where females and males perform at approximately the same level.

Case study 2: The Diamond

Perceived factors influencing achievement in The Diamond Ward

Drivers

Structural-level

a) Historical legacy of the Education Act 1947 (for Catholics)
b) Inward investment and resources
c) Social mixing in primary /post-primary schools
d) Equal number of grammar avenues for males and females
e) Recession as a driver
f) High attainment performance of grammar sector

School-level

a) Transition support between key educational stages
b) Good pastoral care and close relationships with teachers
c) High discipline standards and academic expectations of the part of the schools
d) Rewarding effort and success in areas other than academics
e) Cooperation and links between schools
f) Monitoring individual needs, using school data & target setting
g) Intergenerational engagement with schools
h) School-community collaboration
i) Pupils feeling listened to in school
j) Breadth of curricula and interactive teaching styles
k) Low rates of high-absenteeism

Immediate-level

a) High levels of youth club involvement (Fountain area)
b) Individual resilience and motivation
c) Family support and high expectations of parents
d) Positive adult education experiences of parent/mother are changing norms
e) Feeling connection to a community
f) Positive early education experiences of nursery and primary school

Present situation – 85% five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13); 14th Multiple Deprivation 2010

Inhibitors

Structural-level

a) A lack of community cohesiveness and a fractured community identity for Protestants
b) Continuing division/conflict between communities
c) Felt effects of academic selection
d) Current culture of education policy – perfectionism in a time of cutbacks
e) Official statistics hiding key issues
f) Recession and poverty – role models not coming back to the area
g) Unstable or inadequate funding for early years, youth and community providers

School-level

a) Belief in a finite, 'natural' ability level of a child
b) Overuse of IT
c) Schools struggling to engage with parents
d) Historically, schools that served children from the Fountain had a negative reputation
e) No transition support
f) Boys feeling pressured into doing STEM subjects
g) 'Average' children falling through the cracks at school

Immediate-level Anti-social behaviour

a) Adverse circumstances at home
b) Intergenerational 'switching off' from education

Duncairn (14th MDM)

Duncairn is located in north Belfast, and although extremely close to Belfast City Centre to the south of the Ward, its boundaries also stretch along Belfast Lough into the dockland area of Belfast. The Ward includes the interface areas and security fences of Tiger's Bay and Duncairn Gardens. Duncairn is ranked 14th (out of 582) on NIMDM (2010) and has one of the larger population sizes in the sample of Wards, at 4901 persons (NISRA, 2011). Duncairn is a predominantly-Protestant Ward (although the 2011 Census revealed that the percentage of Catholic residents increased substantially (from 5.5% in 2001 to 23.6% in 2011). The Ward also has a higher than average percentage of residents who were born outside of the UK or the Republic of Ireland (10.3%, compared to the NI average of 7.1%). The percentage of young people under the age of 15 is 17.5%, just under the NI average of 19.6% and has one of the largest numbers of post-primary schools pupils in the ILiAD study Wards (223 pupils in 2011), with eleven schools serving these young people. In 2011, 11.7% of young people from the Ward attended grammar schools (the lowest proportion of the seven ILiAD Wards) and 88.3% attended secondary schools.

It is apparent that, across immediate, school-level and structural levels, there are factors seen to enable academic achievement in the Ward and others which appear to inhibit such progress. In terms of structural factors, i.e. those informed by historical, demographical, and policy considerations, a range of issues have been identified as significant barriers to educational success. For example, the Ward's history has clearly been shaped by the recent conflict and, as a consequence: spatial mobility restrictions and insular attitudes are common; and more broadly, the wider community continues to be characterised by both intra and inter-community divisions.

It is also clear that the learning is inhibited because there are no secondary schools located in the hub of the Ward and as a result, the detachment many local young people already feel in terms of education is further compounded by: (a) the invisibility of structured learning in their communities; and (b) the distances they now have to travel to the nearest available schools. Despite the fact that only 11.7% of local secondary pupils attend grammar school, the Duncairn data also highlight the positive contribution of school collaborations with external agencies in terms of addressing needs. Secondly, improvements and renewals of school premises have effected positive change and confirmed that young people are more likely to succeed if their learning environment reflects aspiration and not decline.

Case study 3: Duncairn

Perceived factors that are influencing achievement in Duncairn Ward

Drivers	Present situation – 50% five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13); 14th Multiple Deprivation 2010	Inhibitors

Drivers

Structural-level

a) Collaborative involvement of external agencies

b) The provision of new and improved school buildings and learning facilities

c) Current economic climate

d) Additional resources

School-level

a) Effective school-parent engagement, communication and support structures
b) Flexible curricula, vocational placements and alternative measures of success
c) Stricter school regimes (discipline and high expectations)
d) Committed and empathetic teachers
e) Effective school-community links
f) Support during transition(s)

g) Effective SEN provision and 'problem behaviour' management

-Immediate-level

a) Parental support and a stable home environment
b) Individual resilience and the notion of education as a means to leave the community
c) Community and youth work interventions
d) Student cognisance of value of education / career pathways

Inhibitors

Structural-level

a) Legacies of the recent conflict
b) Felt effects academic Selection
c) Spatial detachment of schools serving the Duncairn Ward
d) Lack of inter-agency collaboration / disjointed provision of SEN support
e) Demographic change / unsettled demographic patterns
f) Exclusion from mainstream education

School-level

a) Negative teacher attitudes and behaviour management techniques
b) High levels of absenteeism
c) Perception of schools as 'detached' i.e. class-based identifications
d) Inappropriate curricula

Immediate-level

a) Parents' lack of capacity to support their child(ren)'s education
b) Disadvantaged home and community environments
c) Low expectations / low self-esteem amongst young people (in contrast with RC community)
d) Peer, familial, community dissuasion

Woodstock (39th MDM)

Woodstock comprises the urban, inner-east area of central Belfast. It is bordered by the River Lagan on the north-west side, and has a clearly demarcated interface area with the Short Strand. Woodstock is ranked 39th (out of 582) on NIMDM (2010). Woodstock is a predominantly Protestant Ward (86.7%, Census 2001), however, the percentage of Protestants in the Ward has decreased to 63.3 with the percentage of Catholic residents increasing since 2001 (from 6.2% to 19.4% in 2011). The Ward has a higher than average percentage of residents born outside of the UK or the Republic of Ireland (14.7%, more than double the NI average of 7.1%). Woodstock has the second largest population size of the sample of seven Wards, at 5445 persons (NISRA, 2011). The percentage of young people under the age of 15 is 16.8% (Census 2011), just under the Northern Ireland average of 19.6%. Woodstock also has one of the largest numbers of post-primary pupils (221 pupils in 2011), with eight schools serving these young people. In 2011, 20.4% of young people from the Ward attended grammar schools (the third highest proportion of the seven ILiAD Wards) and 79.6% attended secondary schools.

The data show that there is a range of structural, school-level, and Immediate factors which impact on the learning and attainment of young people from Woodstock. Summarising these factors, it is important to note that there were substantially more barriers identified in the Woodstock data than there were enablers. The structural drivers of educational attainment in Woodstock i.e. those related to policy inputs and the Ward's history and demography, appear to be limited to the improved learning environments which have been created by recent investment in new buildings and facilities in the schools which serve the Ward. The data here make clear that young people from Woodstock have responded very positively to such improvements and appear more willing to apply themselves in newer learning environments that are designed to meet their educational needs.

Similar to findings for Duncairn, the complex interplay between Woodstock's recent history and its demographic trajectory seems to have had a negative impact. East Belfast's changing employment opportunities, broader shifts to a more skills-centric economy, and the latest recession have, collectively, created sizable pockets of acute deprivation in the Ward. It is also clear that the economic cleavages both within Woodstock and between the Ward and its more affluent neighbours have created a "tale of two cities" microcosm.

Case study 4: Woodstock

<u>Perceived factors influencing achievement in Woodstock Ward</u>

Drivers

Structural-level

a) New and improved school buildings and facilities

School-level

a) Positive triangular relationship between school, home and community
b) The raising of discipline standards and expectations on the part of the schools
c) New, younger and more empathetic teachers
d) Schools' provision of vocation opportunities and visible progression routes
e) Alternative measures of success and the rewarding effort and achievement
f) Strong, visionary school leadership and a pupil-centred ethos
g) An effective pastoral care system
h) The provision of effective support during transition
i) The adoption of inter-active learning strategies
j) Appropriate SEN support in schools

Immediate-level

a) Parental support and encouragement

Present situation – 52% five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13); 39th Multiple Deprivation 2010

Inhibitors

Structural -level

a) Legacies of the recent conflict
b) Schools attended by young people not located in the Woodstock community
c) Felt effects of academic selection
d) Demographic change and a perceived 'loss of community'
e) High levels of deprivation, insularity, and benefit dependency
f) Lack of inter-agency collaboration, school closures and inter-school competition
g) Influx of non-English speakers to local schools
h) Lack of resources in schools

School-level

a) Low attainment expectations on the part of schools
b) High levels of absenteeism

c) Disruptive classmates and peer dissuasion
c) Weak linkages between schools and the community
d) Inappropriate curricula / GCSEs as only indicator of achievement

Immediate-level

a) Parents' incapacity and/or unwillingness to support their children's education
b) Youth disaffection and lack of ambition amongst young people
c) Culture of alcohol and drugs and mental health issues

Rosemount (44th MDM)

Rosemount is situated on the outer north-west of Derry-Londonderry city centre. It is ranked 44th (out of 582) for multiple deprivation, meaning that it is one of the less highly deprived Wards in the ILiAD sample, though it is within the top 10% of Wards for multiple deprivation in NI overall. Rosemount is a mainly Catholic Ward; with 87.4% of residents identified from a Catholic background (Census 2011). The Ward has a lower than average percentage of residents who were born outside of the UK or the Republic of Ireland (5.6%, compared to the NI average of 7.1%). Rosemount has one of the highest population densities but the smallest population size among the sample of seven Wards, at 2651 persons (NISRA, 2011). The percentage of young people under the age of 15 is 13.9% (Census 2011), the lowest in the sample and below the Northern Ireland average of 19.6%. In 2011,147 pupils were served by seven post-primary schools; of these, 30.6% of young people from the Ward attended grammar schools, the highest proportion of any of the ILiAD sample Wards.

The data has identified immediate, school-level and structural issues which impact on the educational attainment of young people from Rosemount. Across these three levels, a number of issues were seen to enable academic achievement in the Ward and others were seen to inhibit school progression. In terms of structural factors, it is clear that like The Diamond there is an enduring appreciation of education's value amongst large sections of the Ward's population; and an equally widely held belief in the Catholic education system.

In addition to the psycho-social connections engendered by the role of the Catholic Church, educational attainment in the Ward is also seen as enabled by the propinquity of high-performing schools. Of the seven schools which serve Rosemount, five are within 1.6 miles of the Ward's geographical mid-point; and the three main 3 main secondary schools are all within 0.5 miles. Other drivers were identified around: effective youth service and education initiatives in the community; extensive inward investment in the Ward, such as, new and improved school buildings; substantial provision of Early Years and other pre- school programmes; the social mix which is said to exist in the Ward's schools; the benefits of co-education for boys, particularly around addressing aggressive behaviour; and the argument that the recession and lack of jobs has, paradoxically, provided "incentives."

Case study 5: Rosemount

<u>Perceived factors influencing achievement in Rosemount Ward</u>

Drivers

Structural-level

a) Effective youth service and education initiatives in the community

b) Inward investment

c) Physical locations of schools and educational institutions

d) Historical legacy of the Education Act 1947 for Catholics

e) Huge early years provision nearby

f) Recession as a driver

g) High attainment performance of grammar sector

School-level

a) Community-school linkages and Extended Schools

b) Warm ethos of school, combining pastoral care and academic success

c) Close relationships with teachers

d) Provision of flexible curricula and alternative qualifications

e) Measures to ease transition

f) School leaders' understanding of local needs

g) Schools and community workers promoting the voice of young people

h) Individual needs of pupils are considered

i) Peer role models in schools

j) Primary school expectations of and support for pupils sitting the transfer test

k) Low rates of absenteeism

Immediate-level

a) Family support and high expectations of parents

b) Intergenerational closeness and close knit area

c) Feelings of connection to a broader community

d) Family connection to schools

e) Individual resilience

Present situation – 91% five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13); 44th Multiple Deprivation 2010

Inhibitors

Structural-level

a) Impact of academic selection

b) Community resources lacking for older teenagers

c) Changes in demographics

d) The lack of jobs in Derry

School-level

a) Curriculum (statutory and local) and school structure

b) Balancing 'labelling' and support in school

c) Poor relationships with teacher

d) Education system failing to pick up underlying issues early

Immediate-level

a) Anti-social behaviour and negative peer pressure

b) Low self-esteem, low expectations, and sense of hopelessness

c) Adverse family circumstances

d) Low parental expectations or engagement with schoolwork

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Dunclug **(83rd MDM)**

Dunclug is located in the town of Ballymena in North Antrim. It is defined as a mixed-religion Ward, with 56.5% of residents from a predominantly Catholic background and 35.0% from a predominantly Protestant background (Census 2011), although residential areas within the main Dunclug housing estate are not necessarily mixed. Dunclug is ranked 83rd (out of 582) on NIMDM, meaning that it is one of the less highly deprived Wards in the ILiAD sample. The Ward has a higher than average percentage of residents born outside of the UK or the Republic of Ireland (13.7%, compared to the NI average of 7.1%). It also has one of the lowest population densities of all the sample Wards, with the second smallest population, at 2363 persons The percentage of young people under the age of 15 is 25.9%, above the NI average of 19.6% (NISRA, 2011) and Dunclug has one of the smallest numbers of pupils within post-primary school provision amongst all the Wards in the study (171 pupils in 2011). Nine schools serve these young people, and in 2011 19.3% of young people attended grammar schools or schools with a grammar stream (the median of the seven LWards) and 80.7% attended secondary schools.

Structural influences were identified around: local youth groups actively supporting young people; and the embedded nature of the relationship between local schools and the communities they serve. The Dunclug data suggest that local youth groups enhance the educational achievement of young people by: providing young people with a safe space and alternative opportunities for learning; supporting them in the context of formal education; demonstrating an active interest in their welfare; and encouraging them to believe in themselves. The data also highlight the value of schools being located in the local community. For example, it was frequently cited that: young people's school choice and attendance was often premised on opportunities for peer interaction; the embeddedness of schools means they can more easily engage with the communities they serve; and because successive generations have attended the same school, local educators have a robust knowledge of pupils and their family circumstances. However, several inhibitors of attainment in Dunclug were also identified, the most significant of which related to the fact that only 17.5% of young people in the Ward attend grammar school. Educators in Dunclug also argued that academic selection: creates significant pressure and stress around the transfer test (which some pupil-respondents claimed they struggled to cope with). Despite being the only 'mixed' Ward in the ILiAD sample, sectarian polarisation and a lack of social cohesion was evidenced that led to challenges to full inter-agency co-operation.

Case study 6: Dunclug

Perceived factors influencing achievement in Dunclug Ward

Drivers	Inhibitors

Present situation – 61% five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13); 83rd Multiple Deprivation 2010

Drivers

Structural-level

a) Youth groups actively supporting young people towards self-development and educational achievement
b) A local school embedded in a local community (Extended Schools)

School-level

a) Providing and validating academic and vocational choice
b) A culture that prioritises the pursuit of excellence
c) The pursuit and provision of teaching excellence
d) Demonstrably engaged, committed and supportive teachers
e) Securing the circumstances in which learning can take place - the need to attend to the social and emotional welfare of pupils
f) Establishing a stimulating, creative and responsive learning environment
g) Ongoing pupil assessment, streaming and target setting
h) An examination system incorporating modular teaching, coursework and final exams
i) Effective transition: supporting pupils in their movement through education to career

Immediate-level

a) A home environment in which education is explicitly valued and promoted

Inhibitors

Structural-level

a) Impact of academic selection
b) Population flux and fracture
c) Lack of social cohesion and effectiveness
d) Social deprivation and disadvantage
e) Limitations in inter-agency communication and cooperation

School-level

a) Institutional and personal deficits in teaching: a missing impetus for pupil attainment
b) A 'writing off' of some pupils based on negative stereotyping
c) Manifold pressures on schools

Immediate-level

a) (Felt) stigma and marginalisation
b) Adverse circumstances in the home environment
c) Alienation from the value or 'point' of education

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Tullycarnet (109th MDM)

Tullycarnet is located on the outskirts of east Belfast in the (former) Castlereagh District Council area. The Tullycarnet estate was developed in the 1970's originally to accommodate people moving out of inner east Belfast, largely as a result of redevelopment. The MDM score places Tullycarnet 109th out of 582 for deprivation and it is a Ward almost completely surrounded by areas of very low deprivation. Tullycarnet is predominantly-Protestant (93.3% in 2001, and 85.8% in 2011). The Ward has a lower than average percentage of residents who were born outside of the UK or the Republic of Ireland (2.1%, compared to the NI average of 7.1%) and has one of the smallest populations of the sample at 2419 persons (NISRA, 2011). Twenty-one per cent of young people are under the age of 15 according to the Census 2011, slightly more than the Northern Ireland average of 19.6%. Tullycarnet has one of the smallest numbers of pupils within post-primary schools out of all the Wards in the study (109 pupils in 2011), with nine schools serving these young people. In that year, 19.3% of young people attended grammar schools or schools with a grammar stream (the median for the seven ILiAD Wards) and 80.7% attended secondary schools.

In terms of the structural level factors, there are nine post-primary schools which serve the Ward and only one is located within two miles of the estate. Indeed, almost half of the 109 post-primary pupils in Tullycarnet attend a High School, which is some 4.3 miles away. These distances serve to reinforce the idea that, for local young people, education is not a priority and make it difficult for young people to feel 'their school' is in any way part of 'their community'. Moreover, it was also be argued that the significantly higher than average absenteeism levels at Newtownbreda (32.8%) and Dundonald High (36.5%) can, at least in part, be attributed to this sense of spatial detachment and the, consequential, invisibility of post-primary education in the estate.

In terms of school level factors, several enablers were identified around the recent (community-inspired) "transformation" that has occurred in relation to improved triangular linkages between schools, the Tullycarnet community and local parents. The data make clear that two key factors in this transformation were, firstly, the 'wake-up call' engendered by the proposed closure of the local primary school; and secondly, the role of a local Action Group Initiative Group. The successful campaign led by this group has clearly galvanised the wider community and increased levels of parental and familial engagement with schools. It is also apparent that the community's improved perception of education has been matched by the schools which serve the Ward in terms of: higher expectations; increased levels of commitment and empathy on the part of teachers; flexible policies and pedagogical styles; effective support during transition; and broader conceptualisations of achievement.

Tullycarnet (109th MDM)

Case study 7: Tullycarnet

Perceived factors influencing achievement in Tullycarnet Ward

Drivers

Structural-level

a) Socially-mixed schools serving the area

School-level

a) Improved community-school links
b) Increasing levels of parental and familial engagement with schools
c) Strong school leadership and high expectations by the school
d) Staff commitment to local schools and community
e) Adaptation of school structures, policies and pedagogical styles to suit local pupil needs
f) Support for pupils during transitions
g) Broader conceptualisations of achievement (on the part of schools)

Immediate-level

a) Parental support and encouragement
b) Individual resilience and self-motivation of high achievers against the odds
c) Close social networks and positive community influences

Present situation – 43% five GCSEs A*-C (2012/13); 109th Multiple Deprivation 2010

Inhibitors

Structural-level

a) Schools closures and falling enrolments
b) Spatial detachment of schools from the communities they serve
c) Unreliability and skewing effect of official statistics
d) Unsuitable facilities, lack of resources, and inadequate provision of Early Years
e) Lack of joined-up education strategy

School-level

a) Inappropriate teacher skill-set/negative teacher attitudes, behaviours and expectations
b) Inappropriate curriculum and learning strategies
c) Schools and other agencies working in silos

Immediate-level

a) Lack of aspiration and sense of hopelessness amongst young people
b) Low parental expectations and engagement regarding education
c) Negative community norms
d) Mental and physical health issues