

Northern Ireland's preparatory schools may lose their government funding

March 2010



The Northern Ireland Assembly recently debated a motion proposed by the DUP and UUP jointly calling on the education Minister Ms Ruane to reverse a move towards the withdrawal of funding for Preparatory Schools.

There are currently 17 preparatory schools in Northern Ireland. They are attached to grammar schools and 2,500 primary school-aged pupils attend them. These schools currently receive £800 per pupil, much less than the £2,000 currently paid by the Department of Education for each primary school child.

Parents of preparatory school children pay an average of almost £3,000 a year in fees for each child. After a heated debate, all parties, with the exception of Sinn Fein backed an SDLP amendment calling for the minister to consult with representatives from preparatory schools to find an agreed way forward.

Any reform of the funding of Preparatory Schools will be controversial and may lead to challenges in the courts.

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