

# INTEGRATING EDUCATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND:

*Celebrating Inclusiveness and  
Fostering Innovation in our Schools*



November 2016

*The Report of the Independent Review of Integrated Education*

to Mr Peter Weir MLA, Minister for Education, Northern Ireland  
by Prof Margaret Topping and Mr Colm M Cavanagh



*... Northern Ireland is an advanced, modern society. Its people are productive, literate, articulate. But for all its modernity and literacy, Northern Ireland has been divided, by a deep and ancient hatred, into two hostile communities, their enmity burnished by centuries of conflict. They have often inflicted hurt, physical and psychological, on members of the other community, and they have been quick to take offense at real or perceived slights. They have a highly developed sense of grievance. ... Each is a minority ... Each sees itself as a victim community, constantly under siege, the recipient of a long litany of violent blows from the other .... I wondered how it was possible to have two such completely different views of the same society.*

George J. Mitchell, *Making Peace* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp.13 and 27.

*We are a conservative society that promotes safety over adventure and celebrates academic attainment by the gifted few over the creativity and teamwork of everyone. We [need] leadership centred on hope, aspiration and belief and the opportunity to be inspired by and learn from each other ...*



*If we make the change to education, we will rule the world.*

Steve Orr, Director, Catalyst Inc., in his 2016 Sir Bernard Crossland Lecture, Queen's University Belfast.

***Letter to the Minister***

Dear Mr Weir,

We were asked to carry out, independently of the Department, a review of integrated education. Our remit was to make recommendations on:

1. how to develop and grow integrated education;
2. how to develop a more integrated system in its widest sense to bring together increasing numbers of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils within all schools (as distinct from the co-operation of separate shared schools); and
3. the allocation of £50 million per year for the period 2016-2026 made available for capital expenditure under the “Fresh Start” Agreement.

We were not asked to make the case for integrated education. The statutory duty since 1989 ‘to encourage and facilitate integrated education’ was to be taken as a given.

We are most grateful to the many individual and group respondents to our public consultation; and also to the many stakeholders we consulted: officials of your own Department; school students and staff; the EA; the Transferor Representatives’ Council; the CCMS; NICIE, the IEF; Queen’s University; Ulster University; St Mary’s University College; Stranmillis University College; and the Education spokespersons of the political parties.

The frictions within Northern Ireland community life have no simple solution. The words of Senator George Mitchell with which we introduce this report, summarise how we in Northern Ireland appear to sympathetic and benevolent outsiders; while the words of Steve Orr point the way to a vibrant, self-confident, outward-looking Northern Ireland society.

With the maturing of our political structures and the wish to tackle outstanding matters of division, we are still faced with the long-standing issue of our separate and costly schooling. We therefore place these proposals before you, Mr Weir, in the hope that you and the NI Executive and Assembly will find them positive both in strengthening our community and in making more efficient use of limited public expenditure. We submit these proposals in the certain knowledge that understanding and friendship across our community divisions is strengthened by our young people going together to school; and that offering parents this choice is in everyone's interest.

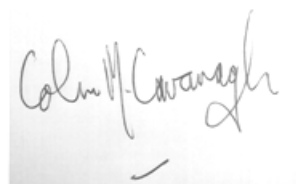
We hope this report will help us to move towards a more united community.

Yours sincerely,



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Professor Margaret Topping



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Mr Colm M Cavanagh

| <b>ABBREVIATIONS</b> |   |
|----------------------|---|
| APTIS                | Association of Principals and Teachers in Integrated Schools    |
| BOG                  | Board of Governors  |
| CASS                 | Curriculum Advisory Support Service                             |
| CCEA                 | Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment             |
| CCMS                 | Council for Catholic Maintained Schools                         |
| CFF                  | Common Funding Formula  |
| CnaG                 | Comhairle Na Gaelscolaíochta (Council for Irish-medium schools) |
| DE                   | Department of Education   |
| EA                   | Education Authority   |
| ELB                  | Education and Library Boards                                    |
| ETI                  | Education and Training Inspectorate                             |
| GBA                  | Governing Bodies Association                                    |
| GCSE                 | General Certificate of Secondary Education                      |
| GMI                  | Grant Maintained Integrated                                     |
| IEF                  | Integrated Education Fund                                       |
| NDPB                 | Non-Departmental Public Body                                    |
| NICIE                | The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education           |
| NISRA                | Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency                     |
| PfG                  | Programme for Government  |
| PAC                  | Public Accounts Committee                                       |
| VGS                  | Voluntary Grammar Schools                                       |

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## INTEGRATED EDUCATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND:





***i. A Vision for Education in 2030***

Northern Ireland is becoming a major centre of creativity and innovation. We foster creativity and celebrate difference in our schools, in our businesses and in our community at large.

Self-confidence is replacing defensiveness. Risk-taking is replacing caution. Our admired leaders are our inventors, our entrepreneurs, our engineers. Our creative teams are built on inclusiveness and pluralism. The world is again becoming our oyster for ideas, personnel and business.

Our businesses trade in a global market. Our universities attract students and researchers from across the world.

We live on an island but insularity is a thing of the past. We are people of the world. We face outwards and we think big. We look at the world and think globally. We see opportunities and act on them.

We base this on the invaluable work of our pre-schools and primary schools; our post-primary schools build on that firm foundation; our Further Education Colleges and universities build upwards and outwards.

Tomorrow is arriving. We are ready to meet it.



**ii. Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1**

That DE reviews the existing legal definition of 'integrated' education to ensure it is appropriate for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly in light of Northern Ireland's changing demographic and increasing diversity.

**Recommendation 2**

That DE brings forward legislation to place a duty on DE and the EA and a power on all other Arms Length Bodies to encourage, facilitate and promote integrated education.

**Recommendation 3**

That the new legislation should include a requirement to report to the Assembly at intervals of not more than two years on the implementation of the statutory duty to encourage, facilitate and promote integrated education.

**Recommendation 4**

That DE should review the religious balance criteria for integrated schools to take greater account of our more diverse society and regional and local demographics, including the balance of the community in which a school is located.

**Recommendation 5**

That further comparative research should be commissioned to assess the evidence for differing pupil outcomes in terms of tolerance and reconciliation across the different school sectors in Northern Ireland. This should also include the outcomes for those pupils involved in shared education.

**Recommendation 6**

That where clear demand is demonstrated, integrated pre-school provision (an integrated nursery or any pre-school linked directly to an integrated primary school) should receive funding and additional places even where there are unfilled pre-school places in other providers in the area.

**Recommendation 7**

That the EA should pro-actively plan, set objectives for, and monitor progress towards, increasing the places available in the integrated sector.

**Recommendation 8**

That the EA carries out an in-depth and individualised audit of demand for places in existing integrated schools.

**Recommendation 9**

That this audit should be underpinned by the principle that demonstrated demand for integrated education should be met regardless of the existence of available places in other sectors.

**Recommendation 10**

That the outcome of the audit is used as a basis to plan for the growth of integrated education.

**Recommendation 11**

That all Development Proposals for closures and amalgamations of existing schools should be required to demonstrate explicitly in the Case for Change that they have given meaningful consideration to a sustainable integrated, jointly managed or shared solution.

### **Recommendation 12**

That a stakeholder engagement strategy for Area Planning is developed with a specific focus on how planning authorities engage with local communities around innovative integrated, jointly managed and shared options.

### **Recommendation 13**

That DE should remove all financial disincentives to shared education partnerships that wish to amalgamate (technically both schools close and reopen as a new school) through the Development Proposal process to become either an integrated or jointly managed school.

### **Recommendation 14**

That DE should develop clear guidance and a funded support package for those schools that wish to follow this pathway.

### **Recommendation 15**

That Contingency Funding should be provided for all new pupils at integrated schools which are increasing in size and the practice of not funding the first 5% or ten pupils should be discontinued.

### **Recommendation 16**

That DE should consider moving towards a model whereby it commissions sixth form places on an area basis, with open access to area-based sixth forms.

**Recommendation 17**

That DE should, in partnership with others, design and provide step by step guidance on the transformation process. This should provide details of the structured, intensive support and all sources of funding that will be available to transforming schools.

**Recommendation 18**

That the ETI develop a new continuum for schools to self-assess their practices, methodologies and capacity in relation to integrated education.

**Recommendation 19**

That the role of the Transformation Officer be re-established within the EA, with a remit to support transforming schools.

**Recommendation 20**

That as an integral part of planning the Case for Change when publishing a Development Proposal to transform, each school should prepare a five-year business case outlining its funding needs over that period.

**Recommendation 21**

That a cross-phase integrated education professional learning community for school leaders be established, funded and supported by DE.

**Recommendation 22**

That DE urgently considers the provision of support services to grant-maintained integrated schools; the demand and need for centralised support to be available to these schools; and how best to provide such centralised support.

**Recommendation 23**

That DE and NICIE should formally agree the work which DE wishes to fund NICIE to undertake.

**Recommendation 24**

That DE should continue to prioritise the accommodation needs of existing integrated schools and should take forward a well publicised call for major capital projects from all existing integrated schools as soon as possible.

**Recommendation 25**

That further calls for projects from integrated schools should continue annually throughout the lifetime of the Fresh Start programme so that recently transformed integrated schools can enter the programme.

**Recommendation 26**

That DE should ensure that it adequately takes account of potential future growth in planning capital projects for existing integrated schools.

**Recommendation 27**

That Fresh Starting Funding is used to provide temporary accommodation to facilitate the growth of integrated schools in a swift and timely fashion whilst the planning of a permanent new build is ongoing.

**Recommendation 28**

Where a Development Proposal is approved for a new integrated school, there should be no capital viability period rather, as demand has been demonstrated, modern modular accommodation should be provided from the outset via the Fresh Start Agreement.

**Recommendation 29**

That DE should take forward an annual call for major capital projects from jointly managed schools.

**Recommendation 30**

That DE should take forward an annual call for capital projects from integrated pre-school provision (an integrated nursery or any pre-school linked directly to an integrated primary school).

**Recommendation 31**

That Special Schools should be able to access the significant investment available from the Fresh Start Capital funding.

**Recommendation 32**

That the Secretary of State should agree to the carry-over of any unspent Fresh Start Capital Funding into future financial years.

**Recommendation 33**

That DE considers the development of standardised baseline designs for nursery, primary and post-primary schools to ensure that as much of the Fresh Start Capital Funding as possible is spent on the ground to transform our education system.

**Recommendation 34**

That a working group with appropriate representation be established by DE to develop indicators for an 'Open and Welcoming' kitemark for schools.

**Recommendation 35**

That DE should, in partnership with others, provide guidance, training and support to all schools that wish to be recognised with the ‘Open and Welcoming’ kitemark.

**Recommendation 36**

That the Executive through DE provide additional funding to support schools which seek to obtain the ‘Open and Welcoming’ kitemark.

**Recommendation 37**

That DE should ensure that all student teachers being educated in Northern Ireland shall have substantial, meaningful, cross-community, professional training including cross-community contact, that will prepare them to work in any publicly-funded school in Northern Ireland.

**Recommendation 38**

That, in order to encourage all schools to have cross-community staff, the Executive should reform legislation so that teachers at secondary level be no longer exempted from the regulations of Fair Employment; and that early consideration be given to the removal of teacher exemption at all levels.

**Recommendation 39**

That DE should explore with the relevant parties the building, with Fresh Start Capital Funding, of two pilot Innovation Hubs in Belfast and Derry-Londonderry to be an inclusive resource for schools and all students generating creativity, innovation and business entrepreneurship opportunities.



# Part I

## Introduction and Context



## **Chapter 1: Context for the Independent Review of Integrated Education**

### **Scope of the Review**

1. In January 2016, the then Minister for Education commissioned an independent panel, consisting of Mr Colm Cavanagh and Professor Margaret Topping, to undertake a review of the future planning, growth and development of integrated education.
2. The origin of integrated schools may be traced to the early 1970s and to a campaign (“All Children Together”) led by a group of parents wishing to explore the idea of sharing their children’s education with other families of differing religious affiliations in the form of a new type of school, the “integrated school”. Lagan College was established as the first independent, integrated school in 1981.
3. Subsequently, the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 provided a statutory framework for the development of integrated schools. Article 64 of the Order defines integrated education as *‘the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils’* and stipulates that it *‘shall be the duty of the Department [of Education] to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education’*. There are currently 65 integrated schools in Northern Ireland. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the origins, characteristics and development of integrated education between 1981 and 2016.
4. The overarching aim of the review is to make recommendations for structures and processes that support the effective planning, growth and development of a more integrated education system within a framework of viable and sustainable schools. The terms of reference for the review

are attached at **Appendix 1**. The key objectives of the review can be summarised as follows:

**Key Review Objectives:**

- To analyse the historical growth patterns of the integrated sector and identify potential obstacles to continuing growth.
- To examine existing arrangements for the strategic development of the integrated sector under current statutes, including the roles of the Department, the EA, NICIE and communities.
- To assess the impact of the Duty placed on the Department to encourage and facilitate integrated education and comment on effective support mechanisms in place or needed to enable the Department to fulfil this duty.
- To assess the effectiveness of current arrangements to determine and project levels of demand for integrated education within the wider context of area planning.
- To develop short and medium term models for the future expansion of integrated education based on current legislation that are cost effective and value for money.
- To assess the nature and effectiveness of the statutory transformation process.
- To assess the continuing effectiveness of a parental demand-led model of development for both transformation and establishment of new GMI schools.
- To consider how best to maximise the impact of the potential Stormont House capital investment for integrated education.

## The Review Methodology

5. The panel took a broad and open approach to gathering information for the review. Consequently, the review's findings are based on evidence from many sources. This includes a review of local, national and international research evidence; a critical analysis of relevant data on the education system as a whole and integrated education in particular; a programme of stakeholder engagement and a call for evidence.
6. Stakeholder engagement was a key feature of the review. Between January and June 2016, the panel met with representatives from a wide range of stakeholder groups. This included education professionals from both the integrated and other school sectors, children and young people, sectoral support bodies, the Transferor Representatives' Council, trade unions, relevant staff within the DE, the EA and CCMS and a range of other interest groups.
7. At each meeting stakeholders were given the opportunity to provide evidence to the review. Meetings were informal and stakeholders were encouraged to provide forthright opinions on the efficacy of current arrangements and to provide suggestions for change.
8. A significant amount of information was gathered through a call for evidence. This enabled interested stakeholders to submit their views and provide evidence relating to the planning and development of integrated education.
9. The call for evidence was launched on 18 March 2016 and closed on 22 April 2016, although additional time was afforded to organisations and individuals who could not meet the deadline. During this time, 275 written responses were received from a wide variety of stakeholders. We would like to thank all those who took the time to respond.
10. The outcomes of the call for evidence can be accessed at <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/education/IntegratedReviewCallforEvidence>

11. 118 (43%) questionnaire responses came from school staff, with 24 (9%) from school governors; 53 (19%) of the responses were sent by parents. A further 52 responses were received from a range of organisations and members of the public (approximately 9% from each).
12. Of the responses received from school staff, the vast majority (of those where the school was identified) were received from integrated schools. Only 3 responses were identified as from staff at non-integrated schools. The majority of responses from parents were also from those with children attending an integrated school. In referring to the data produced from the call for evidence, the panel has taken account of the dominance of responses from within the integrated sector.
13. As noted previously, the recommendations in this review are based on extensive evidence and consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. The information gathered through stakeholder meetings, the call for evidence, and the panel's own research, all form the basis for the remainder of this report.

### **Overview: The Education System**

14. Northern Ireland has a diverse schools system, with distinct school categories for grant-aided (or publicly funded) schools. The following table describes the large variety of grant-aided schools.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> There are also 14 independent schools, which receive no state funding.

| <i>School Type</i>  | <i>Key Features</i>   |
|---|---|
| <b>Controlled</b> (includes nursery, primary, special, secondary and grammar schools and controlled integrated schools) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the management of a BOG.</li> <li>• Funding authority is the EA.</li> <li>• EA is employing authority for all staff.</li> <li>• The majority of pupils are from a Protestant community background.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Roman Catholic Maintained</b> (includes nursery, primary, special and secondary)                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the management of a BOG.</li> <li>• CCMS is employing authority for teaching staff.</li> <li>• EA is employing authority for non-teaching staff.</li> <li>• Funding authority is the EA.</li> <li>• The majority of pupils are from a Catholic community background.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Voluntary Grammar</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the management of a BOG.</li> <li>• The school is employing authority for all staff.</li> <li>• Funding authority is DE.</li> <li>• Denominational VGS are mainly attended by pupils from a Catholic community background whilst non-denominational VGS are mainly attended by pupils from a Protestant community background.</li> </ul> |
| <b>GMI</b> (includes primary and secondary schools)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the management of a BOG.</li> <li>• The school is employing authority for all staff.</li> <li>• Funding authority is DE.</li> <li>• Aim to enrol an equal number of pupils from both Protestant and Catholic community backgrounds.</li> </ul>   |

| School Type   | Key Features   |
|---|--|
| <b>Other Maintained</b> (primarily Irish-medium primary and post-primary schools) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the management of a BOG.</li> <li>• The school is the employing authority for teaching staff.</li> <li>• EA is the employing authority for non-teaching staff.</li> <li>• Funding authority is the EA.</li> <li>• Irish is both the teaching language and the working language of communication in the school.</li> </ul> |

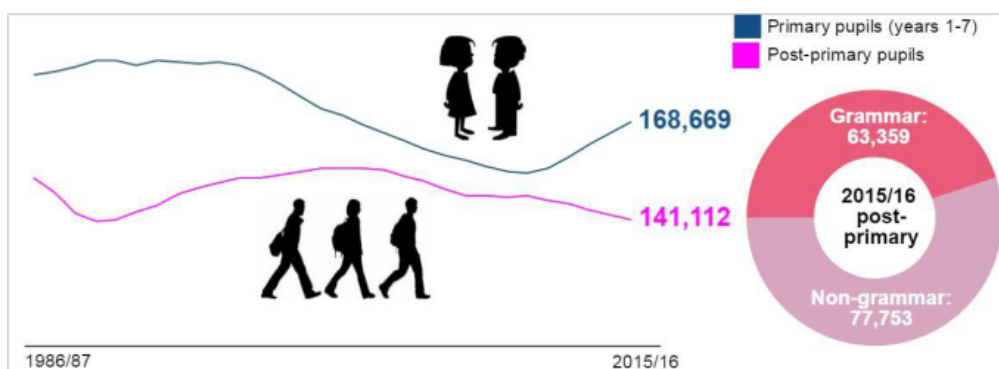
15. The school system largely reflects traditional divisions in society. Although there is nearly universal enrolment in publicly funded schools, the majority of children and young people continue to be educated within single or majority identity settings: 70.4% of pupils attending controlled schools are of Protestant denomination and 96.3% of pupils attending Catholic maintained schools are of Catholic denomination. Notably, less than 1% of pupils attending Catholic maintained schools are Protestant and only 6.6% of pupils attending controlled schools are Catholic.
16. Around 6.9% of pupils are enrolled in integrated schools, where there is a much more even split between Protestant and Catholic pupils, with 41% of pupils from a Protestant background and 36% from a Catholic background in 2015/16.

**Table 1.2 Number of pupils in different types of Grant-Aided School in Northern Ireland by Religious Background**

|                       | Protestant     |             | Catholic       |             | Other religion/<br>no religion/<br>not recorded |             |
|-----------------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|---|-------------|
|                       | N              | %           | N              | %           | N   | %           |
| Controlled            | 87,416         | 70.4        | 8,232          | 6.6         | 28,534  | 23.0        |
| Voluntary             | 14,101         | 28.1        | 30,159         | 60.2        | 5,842   | 11.7        |
| Catholic Maintained   | 1,128          | 0.9         | 114,593        | 96.3        | 3,245   | 2.7         |
| Other Maintained      | 327            | 8.0         | 3,398          | 83.6        | 342   | 8.4         |
| Controlled Integrated | 3,191          | 50.0        | 1,556          | 24.4        | 1,635   | 25.6        |
| GMI                   | 5,844          | 37.4        | 6,443          | 41.2        | 3,348   | 21.4        |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>112,007</b> | <b>35.1</b> | <b>164,381</b> | <b>51.5</b> | <b>42,946</b>                                   | <b>13.4</b> |

17. The period between 1996-97 and 2010-11 saw a significant decline in Northern Ireland’s school population. The total number of pupils in all grant-aided schools fell by over 30,000 from 352,598 in 1996-97 to 311,493 in 2011-12. The past five years have shown a slight growth in numbers to 319,334 in 2015-16. While enrolments at post-primary level have continued to decline, growth has been triggered by an increase in primary school enrolments, as set out in Diagram 1.1 below.

**Diagram 1.1: School Enrolments**





18. The higher proportion of small schools in Northern Ireland is often attributed to the rural nature of the region: the population density (133 people per square km) is similar to that of Wales and double the population densities of Scotland and the Republic of Ireland (both 67 per square km). However, in reality, the proliferation of small schools is largely attributable to a multi-sector school system, single-sex schools and a selective system of education. This was intensified by a 15-year period of demographic decline.
19. In December 2006, an Independent Strategic Review of Education (the Bain Review) indicated that because of falling pupil numbers and many school sectors, there were too many schools in Northern Ireland. As a result, some would become educationally unsustainable.
20. In response, DE introduced the Sustainable Schools Policy in January 2009 and the Area Planning process in September 2011. The overriding objective of Area Planning is to raise educational standards by creating a network of educationally strong and sustainable schools.
21. A recent report by the NIAO concludes that overall there has been some progress in implementing the Sustainable Schools Policy through the delivery of Area Planning but that implementation has been difficult and hampered by the division between different types of schools and the split in responsibilities between various statutory agencies.<sup>2</sup>

### Policy and Societal Context

22. The social, political, economic and educational landscape in Northern Ireland has changed beyond recognition in the 30 plus years since the initial development of the concept of integrated education.
23. Most notably, there have been radical political changes with a cessation of political violence. Following the restoration of devolution in May 2007, the Northern Ireland Executive committed itself to the development of a new strategy for community relations in Northern Ireland. The *Together: Building a United Community Strategy* outlines a vision based on equality

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<sup>2</sup> Northern Ireland Audit Office, *DE: Sustainability of Schools* (June, 2015).

of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and reconciliation. Government Departments are expected to work together to ensure outcomes are delivered on the ground.

24. “Building a Strong and Shared Community” was recognised by the Executive both as a key priority within its *PfG 2011-15* and as essential to the growth of a strong, modern economy and society.
25. Within this context, there has been increasing political discourse around the benefits of educating children and young people from different community backgrounds together.

### **The Development of Shared Education**

26. In recent years, there has been a significant focus on the concept of shared education, whereby schools and other education providers of differing ownership, sectoral identity and ethos, management type or governance arrangements provide opportunities for children and young people from different community backgrounds to learn together.
27. The *PfG 2011-15* set out three specific objectives relating to shared education for the period:
  - to establish a Ministerial Advisory Group to advise on advancing shared education;
  - to ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes by 2015; and
  - to substantially increase the number of schools sharing facilities by 2015.
28. The Assembly has recently passed a Shared Education Act, which provides a legal definition of shared education and places a statutory duty on the DE to encourage, facilitate and promote shared education.

29. The Executive, in conjunction with funding from Atlantic Philanthropies, is providing funding of £25 million over four years to support the further development of shared education. This represents a significant funding commitment against the backdrop of a challenging financial landscape.
30. In addition, shared education is identified as one of four key objectives in the Peace IV Programme of the European Union. The Programme is designed to support peace and reconciliation in the northern regions of Ireland and in Northern Ireland. Funding of around €35 million will be available for shared education projects.
31. By contrast, there has been less political discussion or Executive commitment and funding for integrated education. Indeed, the growth in the number of pupils attending integrated schools has slowed down in recent years.
32. In an era where public and political attitudes have evolved to the degree where moving to a more inclusive educational system is a distinct possibility, the future nature and development of integrated education now requires focus.
33. Notably, the PfG Consultation Document, which was published in October 2016, references integrated education for the first time.
  - Under Outcome 7 – ‘We have a safe community where we respect the law, and each other’ – the Executive is committed to continue to facilitate integrated education including through consideration of the recommendations from the review of integrated education.
  - Under Outcome 9 – ‘We are a shared society that respects diversity’ – again the Executive is committed to ‘encourage and facilitate integrated education, including through consideration of the recommendations from the review of integrated education.’

## The Way Forward

34. The wider framework for this review is, therefore, how best to develop and define integrated education in a changing society. It comes at a time when there is increasing recognition of the benefits of educating children together while still considerable support and attachment to a diverse school system that largely reflects traditional religious and economic divides in society. In addition, the difficult financial environment, characterised by falling real-terms budgets, compounds the challenges of implementing reform.
35. This report sets out the conclusions reached by the panel on the basis of the evidence provided during the review. The panel is satisfied that this report provides a fair and comprehensive review of the current nature and planning of integrated education. The panel is likewise satisfied that it proposes reforms that will support the further development and expansion of integrated education in a manner that is practicable and affordable. These recommendations have also been considered with reference to incentivising the option to create jointly managed schools.<sup>3</sup> The report also highlights areas that require more in-depth research and reform.

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<sup>3</sup> In April 2015, the DE published Circular 2015/15 on jointly managed schools. The circular provides guidance on the establishment of what has been termed by stakeholders a jointly managed church school that is a grant-aided school, providing shared education with a Christian ethos, with Trustee representation agreed by the Transferor churches and the Catholic Church and managed by a Board of Governors with balanced representation from both the main communities here.

## **Chapter 2: What is Integrated Education?**

### **The Emergence of Integrated Education**

1. As noted in Chapter 1, the origin of integrated schools may be traced to a campaign in the early 1970s by a group of parents called 'All Children Together' who wished to explore the idea of sharing their children's education with other families of differing religious affiliations and cultural traditions in the form of a new type of school, the "integrated school". Subsequently, the 1978 Dunleath Act (Education NI) allowed existing schools to transform to integrated status.
2. No existing schools succeeded in transforming, so this led directly to the establishment of Lagan College, the first independent integrated school in Northern Ireland. It opened in 1981 with 28 first-year pupils, and two full-time and five part-time teachers. During its first three years the College received no government funding.

**Image 2.1: Lagan College**



3. Provision for existing schools to seek controlled integrated status was further provided in legislation in 1986, but this facility was not significantly utilised before the 1989 Education Reform (NI) Order.
4. By 1987, there were seven newly established integrated schools, and NICIE was formed as a charitable organisation to co-ordinate efforts to develop integrated education, and to support parent groups through the process of opening new schools.
5. The Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 provided a statutory framework for the development of integrated schools. Article 64 of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 defines integrated education and stipulates that it *'shall be the duty of the Department to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education, that is to say the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils'*.
6. Part VI and Schedules 5 and 6 of the Order further define the arrangements for the establishment, management and governance of two types of integrated school: grant maintained and controlled integrated schools. It was at this point that DE began to grant-aid schools with revenue funding, provided they met the appropriate criteria.
7. An important feature that distinguishes the establishment of integrated schools is that the impetus had not come from state or church authorities. The main activists were parents from different traditions, engaged in a community development process to prove the viability of cross-community schools.
8. These roots have evolved into a vision for integrated education which, as articulated in NICIE's Statement of Principles, aims to go beyond the co-education of Protestant and Catholic children in a single building by:
  - a. creating a shared ethos and environment that is open and welcoming and that celebrates all traditions;
  - b. having a mixed BOG, staff and pupils;

- c. fostering an environment where governors, staff, parents – and, in age-appropriate ways, pupils – can engage with social, political and religious debates explicitly and in a sharing and inclusive way.
9. The four key elements of NICIE’s Statement of Principles are:
- a. Equality and diversity
  - b. A child-centred education
  - c. A partnership with parents
  - d. A Christian ethos

### Integrated Education Today

10. Since the 1980s, 65 formally integrated schools have been created, attended in 2015-16 by 20,000 children – 6.9% of all pupils. Of the 65 formally integrated schools:
- 38 are Grant-Maintained Integrated (ie new schools, created by local parents, the last of which, Rowandale Integrated Primary School in Moira, was established in 2008);
  - 27 are Controlled Integrated (ie existing controlled schools which have voted to ‘transform’ to integrated status);
  - 45 are primary schools;
  - 20 are post-primary schools.
11. While the number may appear small when viewed in the context of total educational provision in Northern Ireland, parent-led growth at this scale, and in a society emerging from conflict, is unique in the world. Moreover, research suggests that:

*despite the small number of integrated schools they have had a significant impact and posed implicit challenges to the existing system of separate schools. They have questioned whether it is appropriate for the churches to be directly involved in the management of schools in a divided society and provided models for the involvement of parents on a cross-community basis.*

*Integrated schools have reflected the predominantly Christian society in which they have emerged, but have also had to cope with the need for comparative religious education to be inclusive of other world faiths, and to take account of the needs of parents with no faith, and in this respect integrated schools have been remarkably successful at creating institutions which are neither denominational nor secular.*<sup>4</sup>

12. Research-based evidence of the impact of integrated education is the focus of Chapter 3, with a particular emphasis on the 'potential [of integrated schools] both for building social cohesion, and for promoting forgiveness and reconciliation'.<sup>5</sup> The next chapter also highlights some of the acknowledged challenges for and limitations of, research in this area and proposes further avenues for exploration.

### **The Legislative Framework for Integrated Education**

13. As noted in Chapter 1, the legislative definition of Integrated education refers to '*the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils*' (Education Reform (NI) Order, 1989; art 64); while Judge Treacy's High Court ruling on the judicial review taken by Drumragh Integrated College confirms that integrated education is to be interpreted as a 'stand-alone concept' ie distinctive from, for example, shared education initiatives.
14. Professor Alan Smith, of the UNESCO Multidisciplinary Centre for Research on Children and Youth at the University of Ulster, describes how the legal definition remains 'somewhat minimalist' in that the 1989 Order refers only to a requirement on BOG of integrated schools to 'ensure that the management and ethos of the school are such as are likely to attract to the school reasonable numbers of both Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils'.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> A. Smith, 'Religious Segregation and the Emergence of Integrated Schools in Northern Ireland', *Oxford Review of Education*, 27: 4 (2010), pp.559-575, p. 573.

<sup>5</sup> Claire McGlynn, 'Moving out of conflict: the contribution of integrated schools in Northern Ireland to identity, attitudes, forgiveness and reconciliation', *Journal of Peace Education*, 1: 2 (2004), pp.1-26 (p.2).

<sup>6</sup> Smith, p.565.



15. Further guidance, in relation to religious balance, ethos, curriculum etc is provided by DE and NICIE, but for a number of reasons, the panel believes it may be timely to conduct a review of existing legislation to establish whether the current definition of 'integrated education' is appropriate for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
16. The changing ethnic mix of Northern Ireland's population is one factor; another is the reality of differing interpretations of what integrated education *is* both within and outside the sector. This was clearly demonstrated in the responses to the panel's call for evidence. The majority (71%) of responses agreed that integrated education should continue to be primarily about educating young people from Protestant and Catholic backgrounds together but a sizeable minority of 22% felt it should not.
17. Equally when asked what should be the key feature of integrated education – a mix of Protestant and Catholic pupils; the integrated ethos; high quality education; or a mix of pupils from a wide range of social, cultural and racial background – a significant number of responses (31%) gave a first preference to all of the four options specifically listed. Views amongst the remainder who gave an ascending preference order as requested were mixed, with 37% suggesting the key feature should be the integrated ethos. Only 8% and 10% of responses indicated that the key feature should be a mix of Protestant and Catholic pupils and a mix of pupils from a wide range of backgrounds respectively.
18. Consequently, given the divided views even within the sector, the panel has stopped short of recommending a revised legal definition of integrated education. We believe this issue needs wider consultation and consideration across the community. The panel recommends therefore that the DE reviews the existing legal definition of 'integrated' education to ensure it is appropriate for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly in light of Northern Ireland's changing demographic and increasing diversity.
19. More generally, the legislation surrounding integrated education is now over 30 years old. It is the view of the panel that the Shared Education Act 2016 provides an updated legislative framework which could be used as a template to revise the legislation surrounding integrated education in order to support the future development of the sector more effectively.

20. The Shared Education Act places new duties on DE to encourage, facilitate and *promote* shared education. Notably, this duty is also applied to the EA and a power is given to other education Arms Length Bodies to encourage and facilitate shared education.
21. In updating the legislative framework for integrated education, the panel believes it is important that parity is created between integrated education and shared education by the body politic and a duty to *promote* integrated education is introduced.
22. Currently, the duty to encourage and facilitate integrated education lies only with DE. This means there is no clear legal duty on other key organisations. The panel believes it is imperative that this is extended to the EA, which is the key operational arm of the education system and has a crucial role in supporting transforming schools. A power should also be extended to all Arms Length Bodies.
23. In addition, the Act requires DE to review and prepare reports on the operation of the Act at intervals of not more than two years. The Report is to be laid before the Assembly and requires DE and other bodies to report on: the extent to which they have complied with the duty to encourage, facilitate and promote shared education; the level of participation in shared education; and the extent to which the purpose of shared education has been achieved. The panel believes that such public and visible accountability would have significant benefits for the development of integrated education.

**Recommendation 1: that DE reviews the existing legal definition of ‘integrated’ education to ensure it is appropriate for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly in light of Northern Ireland’s changing demographic and increasing diversity.**

**Recommendation 2: that DE brings forward legislation to place a duty on DE and the EA and a power on all other Arms Length Bodies to encourage, facilitate and promote integrated education.**

**Recommendation 3: that the new legislation should include a requirement to report to the Assembly at intervals of not more than two years on the implementation of the statutory duty to encourage, facilitate and promote integrated education.**

24. The panel recognises that legislative change takes time and political consensus to achieve. However, the Shared Education Act has proved that this is possible. The panel believes that an updated legislative framework will provide a secure foundation for the future development of integrated education and will send the message that it is valued and prioritised by our politicians.

### **‘Balance’ in Integrated Schools**

25. In considering the appropriateness of the current definition of integrated education with reference to factors such as new demographic diversity, the panel also examined the current position on achieving ‘balance’ in integrated schools. Community balance has been a key issue in working towards not only integrated schools but an integrated society. Its importance to questions of reconciliation and cross-community cohesion is at the core of fair employment legislation; and its outworkings are evident in, for example, the drive to achieve community acceptance of the new Police Service of NI, or the emphasis on creating mixed housing developments in current NI Housing Executive policy.
26. Whilst the legislation refers only to reasonable numbers of Catholics and Protestants, DE’s policy criteria on balance indicate that a new integrated school should attract 30% of its pupils from the minority community in the area where the school is situated. Existing schools, transforming to integrated status, must demonstrate the ability to achieve a minimum of 10% of their first-year intake drawn from the minority tradition (Protestant or Roman Catholic) within the school’s enrolment and the potential to achieve a minimum of 30% in the longer term.

27. NICIE proposes a different balance based on the experience of racial segregation in the United States of America where it was observed that if the participation rate of one community falls below 40%, that minority community begins, even unconsciously, 'to keep its head down' or not to participate at all.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, where the participation rate of one community rises much above 60%, that larger community begins, even unconsciously, to adopt a hegemonic perspective and discourse ie to act as if everyone shares its viewpoint. NICIE's Statement of Principles thus sets out an aspiration to achieve:
- an annual intake of at least 40% pupils from a perceived Catholic background and at least 40% pupils from a perceived Protestant background;
  - a BOG comprising at least 40% members from a perceived Catholic background and 40% from a perceived Protestant background; and
  - the active recruitment of teachers whose cultural or traditional background reflects that of existing or potential pupils.
28. In the case of new GMIs, it has proven relatively straightforward to achieve a mix on the BOG and the teaching staff. As is to be expected, the challenge is significantly more acute in the case of schools that vote to transform to integrated status.
29. For both GMIs and transformed schools, the difficulties in achieving pupil balance are clear, and are influenced in large part by the broader community balance: a school with only 10% of the minority population within its local community may be unable to attract a larger proportion (or even the same proportion) of the minority group to the school. Evidence suggests therefore that the 30% threshold established by DE is not one that schools can easily achieve.
30. In 2015/16, four integrated schools had fewer than 10% of their pupils drawn from the minority community and 32 schools had fewer than 30% of pupils drawn from the minority community.

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<sup>7</sup> See Smith (p. 571) for a discussion of the 'tipping point' phenomenon.

31. In addition, a number of the stakeholder groups interviewed by the panel preferred to emphasise ethos rather than numerical balance as a marker of a successful integrated school. The successful embedding of an integrated ethos could be measured via:
- the inter-community actions and observances by a school body;
  - the public religious and political events marked/celebrated by a school;
  - the broad range of icons present or worn in a school;
  - the breadth of curriculum and sports provided by the school; and
  - the presence of adult role models from all sides of the community.
32. It is significant that the review's public call for evidence did not reveal any clear consensus on the appropriateness of the 30% balance criterion. The breakdown of responses to the question: *'Is the current requirement for integrated schools to enrol a minimum 30% of all pupils from the minority community still appropriate?'*, was as follows:
- 30% thought the current level was appropriate;
  - 32% were unsure; and
  - 38% indicated that they no longer thought the current requirement was appropriate.
33. Of the 38% who thought the current position was inappropriate, a small majority were of the view that there should be no minimum community balance requirement at all.
34. In terms of how balance is calculated, 69% of respondents indicated that all pupils should be included. Yet while clear in principle, this is less straightforward to implement in practice, primarily because of the increasing proportion of pupils who are designated as 'other'. In 2015/16, 13 integrated schools had more than 30% of their pupil intake designated as 'Other' and no fewer than 40 integrated schools had more than 20% of their pupil intake designated as 'Other'.

35. The social make-up of Northern Ireland has visibly changed since Lagan College opened in 1981 and the Education Reform (NI) Order was passed in 1989. In every National Census the number of people who decline to declare a religious label increases; and there has been a significant growth in adherents of other world faiths. A further difficulty is experienced by the children of Christian Inter-Church marriages who are obliged at age 5 or 11 to declare themselves as following the faith of one, and not both, of their parents. There is also the added difficulty that we are using a faith label for what is, at least partly, a political/national identity.

### Proposed Solutions from Key Stakeholders

36. NICIE and APTIS propose that attention to balance should focus only on the proportion of the school population that includes *declared* Protestants and Catholics. Members of other faiths and none would make up the total enrolment, but would not count in statistics for community balance.
37. The IEF, in its response to the Call for Evidence, argues that for integrated schools to prove integration through the religious make-up of their enrolment is based on out-dated and narrow criteria; that the ethos of structural inclusiveness, broad curriculum and sports, and wide community representation in the staff and governance of the school; and the methodical tackling of potentially contentious religious, social, historical and political issues is what makes a school truly integrated.
38. Notwithstanding these clear positions, the panel recognises that this is a challenging question on which even the call for evidence responses (which emerge in the vast majority from within the integrated sector itself) do *not* indicate consensus.
39. The panel is therefore reluctant to offer short-term solutions to the question of balance and would propose instead that this requires a significant piece of work in its own right. Its key recommendation on the question of balance is therefore as follows:

**Recommendation 4: That DE should review the religious balance criteria for integrated schools to take greater account of our more diverse society and regional and local demographics, including the balance of the community in which a school is located.**

## **Integrated/ing Education for the Future**

40. The remainder of the report seeks to offer a route for rethinking integrated education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century outside the legislative sphere. The panel recognises that the integrated sector has faced considerable barriers to growth that can and should, as per the panel's recommendations, be overcome through policy change, funding, and the engagement of appropriate stakeholders. The review thus seeks to work on three levels that broadly connect to short, medium and longer-term impacts:
- i. Recommendations for facilitating future growth of the integrated sector, guided by the fundamental principle of the parental right to choose where their children are educated (Part 2).
  - ii. Introduction of the 'Open and Welcoming School' kitemark as a means of enabling any school from any sector to demonstrate meaningful commitment to, and tangible evidence of, its ethos of openness and inclusiveness (Part 3).
  - iii. The creation of innovation hubs open to all schools in a given region/Area Learning Community which respond to the attested need to upscale entrepreneurial activity in Northern Ireland and where, as is recognised by research in relevant fields, explicit collaboration across borders (of culture, religion, class, academic ability) is the necessary condition for developing different skills in innovation and creativity, skills which will make school-leavers genuinely future-ready. These are the spaces that Steve Orr, global leader in creative thinking and innovation, calls 'liquid environments', that is 'places where people from different backgrounds come together' to think differently in ways that transform themselves and their environment' (Part 4).

### Chapter 3: The Research Evidence for Integrated Education

*Students at integrated schools were more likely to self-disclose to members of the other community, sharing important aspects of themselves, an activity associated with higher levels of liking, trust, and empathy. Indeed, the study found that students who had more other-community friends self-disclosed more, and were in turn more empathic.<sup>8</sup>*

1. While the remit of the present review is not to make the case for integrated education, there has none the less been a significant body of research – locally, nationally and internationally – that has sought to assess the impacts of both separate and integrated educational systems. Examples of this research will be referenced in the present chapter, and further evidence is cited in the bibliography, but a large body of research data suggests that separation risks maintaining ignorance and reinforcing binary perceptions of Self and Other ('us' and 'them'), whereas contact and collaboration creates the conditions for generating mutual respect and understanding.
2. This has been recognised by DE in its 'Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education' (CRED) policy which identifies as a minimum curriculum requirement that schools be proactive in exploring and fostering mutual understanding and respect. The objectives of the policy, which was launched in 2011, are to:
  - i. ensure that learners, at each stage of their development, have an understanding of and respect for the rights, equality and diversity of all without discrimination;
  - ii. educate children and young people to live and participate in a changing world, so that they value and respect difference and engage positively with it, taking account of the ongoing intercommunity divisions arising from conflict and increasing diversity within our society; and

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<sup>8</sup> Extract from email correspondence with Prof Turner; see Bibliography for further references to her research in the area of contact theory.



equip children and young people with the skills, attitudes and behaviors needed to develop mutual understanding and recognition of, and respect for, difference.<sup>9</sup>

3. DE has also developed a CRED self-evaluation indicator framework, an audit tool for schools, and a range of teaching and learning resources to support implementation of the policy. In other words, all schools are engaged with addressing these challenges as a curriculum requirement.
4. It is, however, the impact of extended contact between communities that many researchers have sought to measure. Research on the friendship patterns and attitudes to sectarianism among children in integrated and non-integrated Northern Ireland schools was, for example, conducted by Rhiannon Turner and other researchers. The results revealed a substantial relationship between two types of intergroup contact – cross-group friendship and extended contact – and lower levels of prejudice. While cross-group friendships were associated with more positive intergroup relations via the mediating mechanisms of self-disclosure and empathy with the out-group, extended contact worked by eliciting positive perceived peer norms toward the out-group.

### **The Impact of Intergroup Contact**

5. Professor Rhiannon Turner, Senior Research Fellow at The Senator George J Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice; and Director of the Centre for Identity and Intergroup Relations at Queen's University Belfast provided the panel with an overview of research on the psychological impact of intergroup contact between people of different ethnicities, nationalities, and religions. Individuals who have experienced positive, friendly, and co-operative contact with members of another group tend to have lower levels of prejudice, are more trusting, experience greater empathy, and are less anxious about interacting with that group (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

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<sup>9</sup> <http://credni.open.wp-dev.web.tibus.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/CRED-Policy-March-2011-English-PDF.pdf>

6. She cites, in addition, a number of studies which have demonstrated the benefits of intergroup contact specifically between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland (including school and university students, and representative community samples), showing its association with lower levels of prejudice, increased trust (Tam, Hewstone, Kenworthy, and Cairns, 2009), lower intergroup anxiety (Paolini, Hewstone, Cairns, and Voci, 2004), and even greater forgiveness (eg for acts committed by the other community during the Troubles (Voci and colleagues, 2015). Prof Turner observes, moreover, that:

*in addition to its social value, intergroup contact may have additional personal benefits. Encountering and learning from people who have different perspectives may increase intercultural competence and self-efficacy (Turner & Cameron, 2016) and enhance problem solving and creativity (Crisp & Turner, 2011).*

Elements of this research will be relevant to Part IV of the report where intergroup contact is linked explicitly to innovation, creativity and problem-solving skills as the necessary conditions for upscaling entrepreneurial activity in Northern Ireland. As Prof Turner notes in email correspondence with the Panel, however,

*despite these advantages, intergroup contact is reliant on there being the opportunity for contact (Turner, Hewstone, & Voci, 2007); unless people have neighbours from, or attend a school or workplace with, members of the other community, meaningful intergroup contact is unlikely to occur. The divided school system in Northern Ireland is therefore likely to have a detrimental psychological impact, because students will miss out on the social and individual benefits of inter-community contact.*

7. The three-part study published in 2003 by Tony Gallagher, Alison Montgomery, Alan Smith and others on Integrated education in Northern Ireland provided an invaluable, early review of the challenges and impacts of integrated education with a particular focus on the following areas:
- Report 1: Participation, Profile and Performance
  - Report 2: Integration in Practice
  - Report 3: The Challenge of Transformation

8. The second of these included the results of the 'Past Pupil Study' (conducted in 1999) that surveyed and/or conducted focus groups with 159 past pupils from the two longest established integrated post-primary schools in Northern Ireland. The study showed that past pupils believed that their experience in integrated education 'had facilitated opportunities for the exploration of issues related to difference in Northern Ireland'. There was less consensus on 'whether their sense of identity had been changed or deepened [...] although many seemed not to rate religion or politics as particularly significant in their lives' (ibid.). Later research has sought to evaluate the impact of formally integrated education on questions of forgiveness and reconciliation (McGlynn, 2004), tolerance and respect for diversity (Donnelly, 2004 & 2010), and conflict resolution (Hayes & McAllister, 2009). McGlynn (2003) also reflects on the 'critical multiculturalism' that may be identified as an outcome of best practice in the sector.
9. Notwithstanding, all of these researchers identified the challenges of conducting research in this area. These centred on:
  - the availability of sufficient longitudinal data to measure long-term outcomes of attendance at a formally integrated school; and
  - the 'causality' question ie are positive outcomes in terms of tolerance and mutual-understanding created by virtue of attendance at an integrated school, or are pupils attending an integrated school more likely to come from a family context in which tolerance for diversity is already firmly embedded?
10. Given that it is now almost 30 years since the first cohort who enrolled in Lagan College left secondary education, a farther-reaching longitudinal analysis is arguably now possible. A comparative study which seeks to assess whether there are different reconciliation outcomes across the range of sectors and in schools participating in shared education initiatives would also be invaluable.

11. The work current being undertaken through the Delivering Social Change Shared Education Signature Project and complementary research by Atlantic Philanthropies on the value of children from different community and socio-economic backgrounds being educated together could provide an effective model for a comparative study of the kind proposed above.
12. As part of the ongoing research and evaluation surrounding the Shared Education Signature Project, the Centre for Shared Education at Queen's University Belfast is providing an online pupil attitudinal survey. This survey and the accompanying research programme has been funded by the Atlantic Philanthropies, one of the three funders of the Signature Project. Further information on this study can be found on the Queen's University (Centre for Shared Education) website.<sup>10</sup> The survey is designed to measure 'soft' educational outcomes as well as reconciliation outcomes.

The research evidence and anecdotal evidence thus points to the value of children from different communities or cultures being educated together, but further empirical evidence is required. Future avenues for research are therefore the civic, relational and educational outcomes for children educated in all of the school sectors in Northern Ireland as well as those involved in shared education.

**Recommendation 5: That further comparative research should be commissioned to assess the evidence for differing pupil outcomes in terms of tolerance and reconciliation across the different school sectors in Northern Ireland. This should also include the outcomes of those pupils involved in shared education.**

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<sup>10</sup> <http://qub.ac.uk/research-centres/CentreforSharedEducation/Research/SharedEducationSignatureProjectResearchStudy/>

# Part II

## Integrated Education: Facilitating Future Growth



## **Chapter 4: Planning for Integrated Education**

### **Introduction - Barriers to Growth**

1. As highlighted in the previous chapter, there is a significant body of evidence pointing to the value of children from different communities or cultures being educated together. Equally, there are significant costs associated with the continuation of a school system with many sectors.
2. In his statement to the Assembly on 17 October 2016, the Education Minister highlighted that there are still a significant number of schools in Northern Ireland that are struggling to deliver the best for their pupils. He particularly noted that there are too many schools with too few pupils to generate sufficient funds to deliver the curriculum to an acceptable level. This is a legacy of the lack of strategic planning to proactively address the growing problem of too many unsustainable schools.
3. The Minister announced his determination that there will be a renewed focus on strategic planning to ensure sustainable provision across Northern Ireland. Within this context, integrated education can offer a potential solution to maintaining educational provision in communities, where divided structures are neither affordable nor sustainable.
4. The aim of this review as set out in the Terms of Reference is, however, not to make the case at length for the benefits of integrated education but to make recommendations for structures and processes that support the effective planning, growth and development of a more integrated education system.
5. The wider context for this review is that overall growth of the number of schools with an integrated management type has slowed since 2000 and in particular during the last decade. The total number of pupils in grant-maintained and controlled integrated schools increased from 14,140 in 2000/1 to 17,558 in 2005/6 but only to 21,956 by 2014/15.

6. Yet many integrated schools are significantly oversubscribed and a number of areas have either no or a small numbers of available places in the integrated sector at post-primary. For September 2016 admission, seven of the 20 integrated post-primary schools were oversubscribed at first preference application stage. At primary level, 21 of the 45 schools were oversubscribed at first preference application stage. At council level, Ards and North Down, Derry and Strabane, Fermanagh and Omagh, Lisburn and Castlereagh, mid-Ulster and mid and east Antrim borough councils all have fewer than 100 places available in integrated education at post-primary level.
7. The findings from surveys and opinion polls also continue to suggest a high parental demand and support for integrated education.<sup>11</sup>
8. The panel believes that the mismatch between actual growth and support for and interest in integrated education can for the most part be explained by the failure of government to pro-actively lead the planning, development and growth of integrated education.
9. In coming to this conclusion the panel fully recognises the many positive policies and support mechanisms put in place by DE, as a result of its statutory duty to encourage and facilitate integrated education. These include provision of annual funding support to NICIE to promote integrated education; grants to the IEF to support capital development; positive adaptations to transport and temporary variation policies for the integrated sector; and funding support for transforming schools.
10. However, it is clear that a parent led model of development and growth (described in Chapter 2) is simply not fit for purpose in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Few parents have the drive, determination and expertise to create a new school from scratch. It is even more difficult to take this path now than it was in the 1980s when this model was conceived given the many changes and increased regulation in areas such as the curriculum, inspection,

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<sup>11</sup> See for example <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/columnists/bill-white/poll-results-majority-want-to-see-an-independent-review-of-northern-irelands-education-system-34651991.html>; Also *Young People' Voice* (September, 2015); *Integrated Education Poll* (June 2013); *Report commissioned by the IEF* (March 2011).

planning, building and health and safety. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the last new GMI school, Blackwater Integrated College, opened in 2008. Equally as described in Chapter 5 transformation to integrated status can be a slow and complex process for existing school communities to undertake.

11. This chapter concentrates on making recommendations for how government can plan more effectively in a managed and coherent manner for the development of integrated education at pre-school and through the Area Planning process at primary and post-primary level. Chapter 5 specifically examines the transformation process proposing a number of measures that may refresh the process and assist schools seeking to follow this route. Both Chapters link directly to Chapter 7 on Fresh Start Capital Funding, which provides an unprecedented opportunity to incentivise integrated provision and grow and expand integrated education.
12. The common theme to each of these areas is that if we as a community are serious about developing and expanding integrated education a bottom-up parent led model must be superseded by a much more co-ordinated government approach, similar to that being provided for the expansion, support and development of shared education. This is a common theme underpinning each of these chapters.
13. As noted earlier in the report, the PfG Consultation Document for the period 2016-21 explicitly commits to encouraging and facilitating integrated education in order to increase shared space; reduce inequality and increase respect. This is a positive and clear government commitment, which underpins and provides the framework for the recommendations in this chapter for how government can more effectively plan the development of integrated education

### **Registering a Sectoral Preference**

14. A number of stakeholders from within the integrated sector, who provided evidence to the panel, suggested a process for tying in the registration of a child's birth with the opportunity for parents to indicate the kind of education they would wish for that child when he/she reaches school



age. Stakeholders believed this would allow a more pro-active approach to planning for integrated education in response to demand. A number highlighted that it would allow a planning time of up to five years to ensure that adequate numbers of the preferred school and type were in place at primary level.

15. The panel considered this proposal from a number of perspectives, notably the logistical implications of implementing it, and its likely impact, as follows:
  - Feedback from the Registrar of Births was that the current computerised registration process could not be adapted easily or economically to record a school preference; and also that registration officials deliberately avoid asking for details of religious affiliation.
  - An alternative could be a manual, confidential process involving a form being given to each adult registering a birth, together with a pre-addressed envelope to DE.
  - The panel notes that key Area Planning stakeholders (Area Planning Steering Group and Area Planning Working Group) have previously rejected this type of proposal on the grounds that a. there is a risk of limited uptake; b. preference may change prior to school starting age; c. this is not a suitable mechanism for indicating demand at post-primary level; and d. indication of demand is not linked to a specific area.
16. The panel has sympathy for both perspectives. However, even if it were possible to indicate location on the preference form, given the increasing mobility of populations – both movement of people within Northern Ireland and increasing newcomer populations – it would not be feasible to base planning decisions on preferences made four to five years in advance of primary school enrolment.
17. Such a system would in effect be no more than a larger scale survey. Rather the panel has focused on ensuring that demand for integrated provision at pre-school level is met and becomes the basis for future growth. If this demand is not met, then a method of identifying parental wishes must be created.

## Pre-school Provision

18. Planning for pre-school education sits outside the main Area Planning process. Pre-school Education Advisory Groups in each of the former Education and Library Board areas secure and fund pre-school education places. The groups include representatives from the statutory, voluntary and private sectors.
19. Pre-school education in Northern Ireland is a partnership between statutory and voluntary/private pre-school providers. In 2015/16, there were 803 settings in Northern Ireland comprising 96 nursery schools, 235 nursery units in primary schools and 403 voluntary and private pre-school centres providing pre-school education to approximately 24,000 children.
20. The establishment or expansion of a statutory nursery school or nursery unit attached to a primary school requires the publication of a Development Proposal. Other pre-school providers seeking to enter the funded pre-school programme are assessed on the basis of need in a particular area, irrespective of sector.
21. Both statutory and voluntary/private providers are equally valued for their contribution to the education of pre-school children; adhere to the same curricular guidelines and are inspected to the same educational standards.
22. DE's policy has been that pre-school provision is not defined according to sectors (eg integrated, Catholic maintained, controlled). All pre-school settings, regardless of location, or whether they are statutory or voluntary are considered accessible to children from all backgrounds.
23. However, DE has already recognised that demand for Irish-medium pre-school provision should be treated differently in light of the statutory duty to encourage and facilitate Irish-medium education and in recognition of the benefits of an immersion experience at pre-school for those pupils wishing to access Irish-medium primary provision.

24. Consequently, DE and the Pre-School Education Advisory Groups consider the need for Irish-medium pre-school provision in the context of Recommendation 2 of the Irish-medium Review (2009) that *Irish-medium providers with sufficient children should be allowed to enter the existing funding programme even where unfilled English-medium provision is available in the area*. No similar consideration is given to integrated pre-school provision.
25. Yet despite the non-sectoral policy, statistics indicate that much pre-school provision is arranged accordingly to traditional religious divides.
  - In 2015/16, there were 405 funded voluntary and private pre-schools. In 67 more than 70% of pupils were from a Protestant background and in 144 more than 70% of pupils were from a Catholic background.
  - Equally, in the statutory sector, in 2015/16, there were 96 nursery schools: In 12 more than 70% of pupils were from a Protestant background and in 36 more than 70% of pupils were from a Catholic background.
26. The evidence does not support the DE's policy that pre-school provision is in reality non-sectoral. Consequently, integrated pre-school school provision can play a meaningful role in breaking down religious and cultural barriers in the same way as integrated education as a whole has done.
27. DE already recognises the unique place of Irish-medium pre-school provision. The educational benefits of an additional year of immersion education provide a compelling rationale. However, in a divided society the recognised benefits of educating children from different religious backgrounds together, particularly from a very early age, surely provide an equally compelling rationale in the case of integrated pre-school provision.
28. Further the statutory duty to encourage and facilitate applies to both sectors and both should be treated in a similar manner, particularly in the context of the PfG commitments to encourage and facilitate integrated education in order to increase shared space; reduce inequality and

increase respect. The principle that demonstrated demand for integrated education should be met, regardless of the existence of available places in other sectors, which DE has recognised in recent years, should apply at pre-school level.

29. Further, the panel considers that expansion at pre-school is a practicable way for integrated education to grow from the bottom up. Parents can express a preference for integrated pre-school provision at the outset of their child's education. Parental preference at pre-school level can be met relatively quickly and easily. Expanding numbers at pre-school will indicate clear demand at primary level, which can be met over time by the managed growth of existing integrated schools, transformation or new integrated schools. Fresh Start Capital Funding should be made available to support expansion at pre-school level where additional accommodation can be provided relatively quickly and easily and subsequently for temporary accommodation to facilitate year on year growth at primary level (Chapter 7 refers).

**Recommendation 6: That where clear demand is demonstrated, integrated pre-school provision (an integrated nursery or any pre-school linked directly to an integrated primary school) should receive funding and additional places even where there are unfilled pre-school places in other providers in the area.**

### Area Planning

#### **The Process**

30. In December 2006, an Independent Strategic Review of Education (the Bain Review) indicated that because of falling pupil numbers and many school sectors, there were too many schools in Northern Ireland. This situation was likely to lead to schools which would become educationally unsustainable.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Schools for the Future: Funding, Strategy, Sharing: Report of the Independent Strategic Review of Education, (Professor George Bain), December 2006.

31. In 2009, DE introduced the Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools (Sustainable Schools Policy). The policy provides a framework for considering the educational viability of schools. It sets out six sustainability criteria, and associated indicators, which are identified as the key references for assessing existing and future education provision to ensure it adequately meets the needs of pupils.
32. The Area Planning process is the vehicle for implementing the Sustainable Schools Policy, which was commissioned by the then Minister in 2011. The aim of Area Planning is to ensure a planned network of viable and sustainable schools of the right type in the right locations to meet future need for places. The overriding objective is to raise educational standards by creating a network of educationally and financially viable strong and sustainable schools.
33. The Area Planning process was led by the former ELBs, working with CCMS and engaging with sectoral representatives including representatives from the integrated sector. The first area plans for post-primary provision were published in 2012 in each ELB area. Plans for primary provision followed in 2013. These initial plans subsequently went through various iterations.
34. The introduction of the new Area Planning process was broadly welcomed, but concerns were raised about the process and the Area Plans published by the former ELBs. A number of issues such as silo planning, lack of engagement with all sectors and a failure to clearly communicate the key strategic issues facing our schools were highlighted.
35. Recent reports on the Sustainability of Schools by both the NIAO (June 2015) and the Northern Ireland Assembly Public Accounts Committee (March 2016) identified a variety of concerns with the process.
36. Most notably in this context, the NIAO reports that the managing authorities for the controlled and the Catholic maintained sector developed separate plans for their sectors which were later simply combined to form the Area Plans. The NIAO concludes that to be fully effective and inclusive, Area Planning needed the input and engagement of all other education delivery sectors ie voluntary grammars, integrated and Irish-medium education, however, these sectors had significant concerns about the process.

37. Within the NIAO report NICIE is quoted as commenting that *‘the process of area-based planning has failed. Area planning was to identify the best delivery model for meeting the educational needs of an area, however the process has been conducted in silos and the main driver has been to protect the status quo rather than meet the needs of the areas’*.<sup>13</sup>
38. Similar criticisms have also been raised by the Education Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly which noted in 2015 that: *“...CCMS appeared to have produced its plans essentially independently of the ELBs. Consequently the plans included limited examples of cross-sectoral co-operation”*.<sup>14</sup>
39. The panel’s call for evidence highlights serious concerns and issues with the Area Planning process primarily from the perspective of the integrated sector.
- Only 8% of the responses to the call for evidence thought it had been effective;
  - 89% of respondents were unsure/did not know how to influence the development of an Area Plan;
  - 83% were unsure/did not know who represented the integrated sector in the process; and
  - 73% indicated that the Area Planning process could be improved to support better the development of integrated schools.
40. In short, many people were unaware of how Area Planning operated; did not understand it; and did not know how to participate in it.

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<sup>13</sup> Northern Ireland Audit Office report on - Department of Education: Sustainability of Schools (30 June 2015).

<sup>14</sup> NI Assembly: Committee for Education: Position Paper: Area Planning - Progress to date: Agreed 13 May 2015.

41. Historically, therefore, the approach to planning of schools had involved sectors planning in isolation. More recently, however, DE has recognised the challenges for smaller sectors and has more recently introduced a series of measures to improve the process and try to ensure a more equal voice for all sectors.
42. The new Area Planning support structures have representation at every level from the range of key stakeholders. At the strategic level, Chief Executives from EA and CCMS, NICIE CnaG and the Controlled Schools Support Council are all represented at the Area Planning Steering Group. The same organisations are represented at the second tier Area Planning Working Group and at the local groups in which representation is further widened to include the GBA/VGS and Further Education sectors. The establishment of these fora aims to encourage consistency of approach and ensure inclusivity and equality of treatment across all sectors.
43. Since 2013, NICIE has been represented in Area Planning Governance structures at every level – strategic, operational and local – and the new draft Area Plan *Providing Pathways, the Draft Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-2020*, which was published for an eight week consultation in October 2016, has been developed in a way that is much more inclusive of all sectors.
44. The new Strategic Area Plan will replace the existing Area Plans that each of the former ELBs had in place. The Plan sets out the parameters within which the statutory planning authorities, managing authorities and sectoral support bodies will identify future education needs and develop solutions to meet those needs on an area basis.
45. The plan is supported by a three-year Area Planning Cycle in which a high level Strategic Area Plans will be reviewed, consulted on and published every three years. An Annual Action Plan for each of the three years covered by the plan will be developed to accompany the Strategic Area Plan.

46. The panel acknowledges these considerable steps forward in recent years, but proposes that more needs to be done to ensure that the Area Planning process and the overarching policy framework within which it operates are effective for all sectors and work to grow and expand integrated education.

Setting Objectives to Increase Integrated Provision

47. The Area Planning process is led by the EA, working with CCMS and engaging with sectoral representatives that includes representatives from the integrated sector.
48. However, no organisation with the exception of NICIE is planning actively to increase places in the integrated sector. There have been a number of recent transformations in the controlled sector to controlled integrated status; however, these have been initiated by the schools themselves rather than the EA.
49. NICIE's impact can only be limited as a body that does not own or manage schools. Moreover, the appropriateness of a small Arms Length Body attempting to act as a planning authority is to be questioned when the EA exists as the chief planning authority. The EA is also owner of all existing controlled integrated schools and all other controlled schools.
50. The panel believes that if the Area Planning process is to support the effective planning, growth and development of a more sustainable integrated education system, the EA, as the chief planning authority and overall statutory planner of education provision, must have a more pro-active role in planning for integrated education. This is essential if government is to give meaningful effect to the commitments in the PfG in regard to encouraging and facilitating integrated education.
51. *Providing Pathways*, the Draft Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-2020, fully recognises that there is a duty to encourage and facilitate the development of sustainable provision in the integrated sector and explicitly commits to developing proposals to encourage and facilitate sustainable integrated schools.



52. This is a very positive step forward. However, the panel believes that the only way to ensure that this is actually carried out effectively and pro-actively is for the EA to set, and subsequently be held accountable for the delivery of, planning objectives to increase places in the integrated sector. Otherwise it will be a superficial commitment only and little will change significantly.
53. High level three year objectives to increase places in the integrated sector should be set out in the final version of the Strategic Area Plan, which is scheduled for publication in February 2017. Annual Area Action Plans should have an explicit section demonstrating how the plan will increase the number of places in integrated (and shared) education. The EA business plan would also include annual objectives to pro-actively plan for and increase integrated provision for which the EA would be held accountable. This is entirely appropriate as developing both integrated and shared education are actions within the PfG.
54. In this way, the role of DE and the Minister as the decision making body on all Development Proposals would remain uncompromised. Each Development Proposal would of course continue to be treated on a case by case basis, whilst the EA would be held to account in regard to overall objectives in relation to integrated education. This is already the case in shared education, where overall objectives to increase the numbers of pupils participating in shared education have been set but there would be no compromise of the Development Proposal process in relation to any proposals of this nature, such as those for jointly managed schools. Indeed, to be approved Development Proposals often demonstrate they are in keeping with the wider strategic priorities of the Executive and the Education Minister, such as removing unsustainable provision and creating sustainable schools.
55. Yet for the first time government would be actively and explicitly planning to increase places in integrated education. It is the panel's belief that this is the only way for integrated provision to increase significantly in a planned and coherent manner.

56. This role for the EA would align with our recommendation that a duty to encourage, facilitate and promote integrated education be placed on the EA, as the major operational organisation within the education sector.
57. However, the role proposed for the EA is in no way incompatible with the current legislative framework. Under the terms of the Education Act (Northern Ireland) of 2014 all functions exercised by the ELBs under any statutory provision were transferred to the EA. This includes the duty under Article 6 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 to ensure *that there are available in its area sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education and the schools available for an area shall not be deemed to be sufficient unless they are sufficient in number, character and equipment to afford for all pupils opportunity for education offering such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of their different ages, abilities and aptitudes.*
58. There is also a legislative stipulation under Article 44 of the same Act that *the Department and boards shall have regard to the general principle that, so far as is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils shall be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents.*
59. In addition, education legislation places specific duties on DE to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education. DE funds its NDPBs not only to deliver their own statutory functions but also to deliver the wider strategic priorities of the Education Minister and the Executive. DE has already indicated that the EA and other NDPBs are expected to play a full and effective role in supporting the delivery of the statutory duty to integrated education. Systematic planning of the growth of integrated education in line with parental demand is entirely in keeping with this role.

**Recommendation 7: That the EA should pro-actively plan, set objectives for, and monitor progress towards, increasing the places available in the integrated sector.**

*Immediate Assessment of Demand for Places in the Integrated Sector*

60. Considerable work has been undertaken by NICIE and IEF to measure the demand for places and to collect data on the numbers of pupils unable to secure places in an integrated school, contrary to the first preference of parents.
61. The panel recognises that there are 2,943 (1,510 primary school places and 1,433 post-primary) available places in the integrated sector across all the Local Government Districts. However, demand is not evenly spread. As noted earlier, six of eleven Local Government Districts appear to be either at or near full (less than 100 available places) capacity in terms of post-primary integrated places.
62. DE recognises that pupils are being turned away from many integrated schools (as well as from schools in other sectors), including some notable cases where demand is exceptionally high. Wherever feasible, DE's practice is to allow temporary variations to student enrolment numbers where no other school is available within the chosen sector and within reasonable travelling distance of a child's home. A key criterion for approving a temporary variation is, of course, the availability of physical space to accommodate children safely. While welcome, the temporary variation option does not offer a longer-term solution to growing the integrated sector.
63. It is clear that planning for growth requires a granular assessment that maps the precise scale of the pressure for integrated places in relation to particular schools and areas. The panel believes an assessment of this kind could be completed relatively quickly by the EA as a distinct piece of work.
64. This analysis should of course be underpinned by the principle that demonstrated demand for integrated education should be met regardless of the existence of available places in other sectors.

65. Solutions to meeting this demand should then form an integral part of the development of the first and subsequent Annual Area Action Plans. Places in integrated education will be increased via a variety of means including increasing admissions at existing schools; transformation of existing schools and the establishment of new integrated provision where demand has been demonstrated.
66. The panel recognises that it will take time to take forward proposals to reshape education provision and subsequently to provide the appropriate facilities. Chapter 7 examines how the Fresh Start Capital Funding can support and speed up this process.
67. The panel also cautions that in the longer term, an increase in places in the integrated sector cannot or should not result in an increase in the number of available places in other sectors.

**Recommendation 8: That the EA carries out an in-depth and individualised audit of demand for places in existing integrated schools.**

**Recommendation 9: That this audit should be underpinned by the principle that demonstrated demand for integrated education should met regardless of the existence of available places in other sectors.**

**Recommendation 10: That the outcome of the audit is used as a basis to plan for the growth of integrated education.**

#### Integrated Solutions

68. A focus on assessing and meeting existing demand for places within existing integrated schools (as detailed above) is not on its own sufficient. In its analysis of Emerging Issues in Primary and Post Primary sectors within Northern Ireland, the Draft Strategic Area Plan highlights that:

*In areas/schools with experience of growth/decline, enrolment numbers need to be amended to ensure effective and efficient provision of education within an area through sustainable schools and, in doing so, explore shared education, integrated education, Irish Medium education and/or collaborative provision.*

69. The panel believes that integrated (or indeed shared solutions) should and must be fully investigated in the case of all potential school closures but more importantly in the case of all amalgamations of existing schools.
70. Enrolments in schools that are earmarked for closure have frequently declined to the point where there is limited prospect of a viable and sustainable school emerging. Amalgamations<sup>15</sup> by contrast need to demonstrate that a viable and sustainable school will be formed. However, amalgamations within sectors can often remove provision from within a community where an integrated or shared solution could provide an opportunity to retain sustainable provision locally, particularly at primary level.
71. Consequently, the panel recommends that all Development Proposals for closures and amalgamations should be required to demonstrate explicitly in the Case for Change that they have given meaningful consideration to integrated or shared solutions at the formative stage of the proposal.
72. In cases where the proposer is not able to provide evidence to this effect, DE should turn down the proposal even if it would potentially produce a sustainable solution. Only in this way will integrated and shared solutions really begin to emerge dynamically and planning in isolation within sectors will begin to cease. In Chapter 7, the panel recommends that such solutions should be prioritised for funding via Fresh Start Funding.
73. The aim should be for integrated and shared solutions to emerge from the formative stage of the planning process and feature within the Annual Area Actions Plans. The publication of Development Proposals comes much later in the process and is seeking approval for well developed proposals. However, the mechanism proposed will provide an initial impetus on planning authorities to make sure such solutions have been properly investigated at the formative stage.

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<sup>15</sup> Technically existing schools will close and a new school open.

74. The 2016 PAC report on the Sustainability of Schools noted that the success of area based planning is dependent upon stakeholders ‘buying in’ to the process. The Committee recommended that DE develops an engagement strategy which reflects the importance of consulting widely and achieving the buy in of all stakeholders. The panel echoes this recommendation for a stakeholder engagement strategy and the emphasis on wide consultation. The panel also recommends that the strategy should include a specific section on how the planning authorities will engage effectively with local communities around innovative integrated and shared options.

**Recommendation 11: That all Development Proposals for closures and amalgamations of existing schools should be required to demonstrate explicitly in the Case for Change that they have given meaningful consideration to a sustainable integrated, jointly managed or shared solution.**

**Recommendation 12: That a stakeholder engagement strategy for Area Planning is developed with a specific focus on how planning authorities engage with local communities around innovative integrated, jointly managed and shared options.**

### **Shared and Integrated Education: A Recognised Pathway**

75. Shared education is not necessarily, and should not be seen as, a pathway to integrated education. For many school communities a high level of inter-school sharing will be the final and long-term aim of participation in shared education.
76. Nonetheless, the panel is concerned that currently shared education partnerships that wish to amalgamate (technically both schools close and reopen as a new school) through the Development Proposal process to become either an integrated or jointly managed schools are potentially financially disincentivised.

77. Such schools may lose not only their shared education funding but also perhaps small schools support and other funding from the CFF. The panel believes that this is an accident of funding mechanisms rather than the intention of DE. Consequently, the panel recommends that DE should develop clear guidance and a funded support package for those schools that wish to follow this pathway. Such schools should also be eligible for capital funding under the Fresh Start Agreement.

**Recommendation 13: That DE should remove all financial disincentives for shared education partnerships that wish to amalgamate (technically both schools close and reopen as a new school) through the Development Proposal process to become either an integrated or jointly managed school.**

**Recommendation 14: That DE should develop clear guidance and a funded support package for those schools that wish to follow this pathway.**

### **Funding for Schools Increasing in Size**

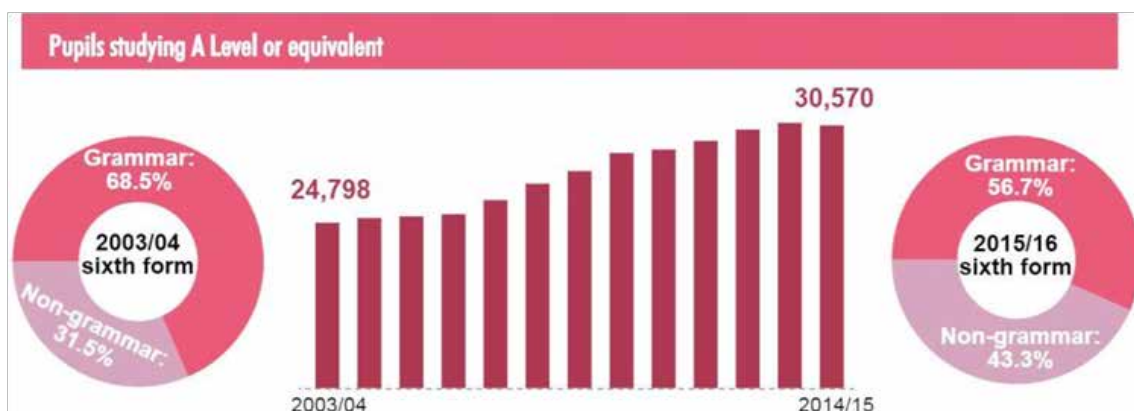
78. Schools are funded in each financial year on the basis of pupil numbers recorded in the October census of the previous year. This can create a potential funding shortfall for schools that have an approved Development Proposal and are increasing their pupil enrolment numbers year on year.
79. Consequently, In-Year Growth funding is provided through the Common Funding Scheme from the Funding Authority Contingency Fund, where the number of pupils enrolled in a school increases by 5% of the original enrolment or by ten pupils (whichever is lesser). However, schools do not receive funding for the first 5% or ten pupils.
80. In all schools pupil numbers vary a little each year and where schools are not increasing in size this should not have a major impact. It makes sense, therefore, that a threshold applies to access the Contingency Fund.

81. However, schools that are increasing in size may face losing funding for ten students for a period of seven months (September to March) over a seven year timeframe. For primary schools this can be approximately £10-15,000 per annum. A number of integrated schools have raised concerns on this issue. The panel, therefore, recommends that Contingency Funding should be provided for **all** new pupils at integrated schools which are increasing in size and that the practice of not funding the first 5% or ten pupils should be discontinued.

**Recommendation 15: That Contingency Funding should be provided for all new pupils at integrated schools which are increasing in size and the practice of not funding the first 5% or ten pupils should be discontinued.**

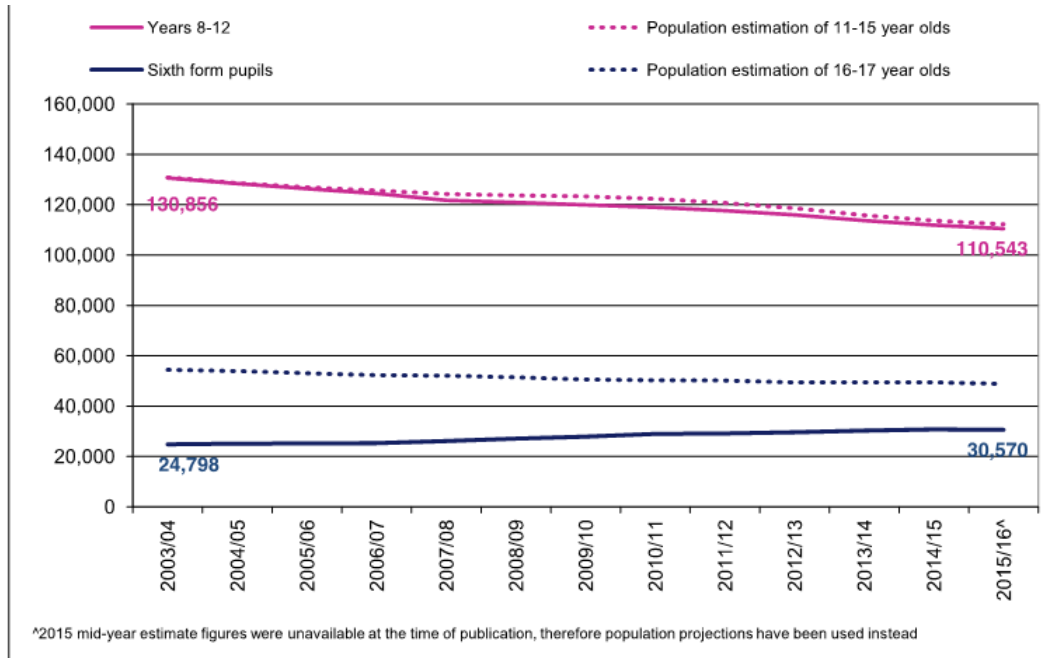
### Sixth-Form provision – Area Solutions

82. The rest of the present chapter is devoted to an assessment of how the current planning process could also be adjusted at the end of the pupil lifecycle in sixth-form provision.
83. Historically, post-16 provision, mainly A Levels, was offered in grammar schools and some non-selective schools. In the last decade, there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils studying post-16 courses in schools. There has also been an increase in the percentage of pupils studying in non-grammar schools. This is demonstrated in the diagrams below.





**Figure 3b: Enrolments in post-primary schools in Northern Ireland - years 8-12/sixth form split, 2003/04-2015/16**



84. The current pattern of sixth-form provision has developed in a piecemeal fashion. Notably, there are a number of small sixth forms, with poor curricular offers, often offering provision that is available elsewhere. The Minister’s recent statement on Area Planning noted that where there is a sixth form provision it should be offering a broad and balanced curriculum and should be sufficient in size to be self funding.
85. In 2013, the Independent Review of the Common Funding Scheme led by Sir Robert Salisbury concluded that the current model of post-16 provision in Northern Ireland was not fit for purpose. The review believed that sixth forms must be of a sufficient scale to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum at reasonable cost. Consequently, the Salisbury Review recommended that:

*In the medium to long-term, DE should consider moving towards a model whereby it commissions sixth form places on an area basis thereby maximising economies of scale and ensuring a broad, balanced curricular offer for all*

*pupils; ensures open access to area based sixth forms; and considers with the Department of Employment and Learning the potential for joint funding arrangements for all 16-19 provision.*

86. The panel believes that an approach of commissioning sixth forms on an area basis with open access provides an opportunity not only to maximise economies of scale and ensure a broad, curricular offer, as was Salisbury's key concern, but also to develop a more integrated education system through bringing more pupils from different backgrounds together within schools of all management types.
87. Many school partnerships already offer a range of collaboratively delivered subjects at post-16. Area sixth forms which in the longer term could develop into stand alone sixth form colleges offer the chance to provide integrated (not in this case intended as a sectoral label) education to our pupils in the final phase of their education.

**Recommendation 16: That DE should consider moving towards a model whereby it commissions sixth form places on an area basis, with open access to area-based sixth forms.**

## Chapter 5: The Transformation Process

*Becoming integrated has transformed Priory Integrated College in every sense. The transformation journey was challenging. Several members of staff resigned, unable to commit to the developing integrated, child-centred ethos. [...] There was no eureka moment that demonstrated integration was now at the centre of the college. Progress was incremental.<sup>16</sup>*

1. Transformation is the process whereby an existing school becomes integrated. It is carried out under the terms of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989. Since 1989 more than 20 schools have transformed to integrated status. To date only schools from the controlled sector have voted to transform, although currently there are indications from several small rural schools from the controlled and Catholic maintained sectors that they may wish to become jointly managed schools.
2. This chapter outlines briefly key stages in the transformation process before exploring the possible reasons for the downturn in the number of schools opting to transform, and proposing a number of measures that may refresh the process and assist schools seeking to follow this route.

### The Transformation Process

3. Schools transform to integrated status through the statutory Development Proposal process. Once agreement has been reached by the BOG, Principal and parents on the desire for transformation, Electoral Reform Services conduct a secret ballot of parents. If a simple majority of those who vote in the ballot is in favour of applying for the proposed new status and at least half of those eligible to vote have done so, the BOG must submit a statutory Development Proposal for transformation to integrated status. A proposal is published, consulted on, and a decision is taken by the Education Minister.

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<sup>16</sup> P. McCreadie, 'Priory Integrated College: A Transformed College - A College Transformed', in *Integrated Education in Conflicted Societies*, C. McGlynn, M. Zembylas & Z. Bekerman (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p.118.

4. Amongst other factors, DE considers:
  - the ability of the school to meet the religious balance criteria, in particular schools seeking transformation must provide evidence that at least 10% of the school's annual intake in the first year of transformation will be drawn from the local minority community and that this is likely to increase over time to a minimum of 30%;
  - the sustainability of the school seeking transformation (its enrolment, quality of education, financial position etc); and
  - the impact on other schools in the area.

### **The Advantages of Transformation**

5. The process is evidently a complex one, and the section below sets out further submissions to the panel from those with direct experience of the challenges it poses in practice.
6. Some of these challenges are not present in the opening of a new GMI school, in the sense that the integrated ethos is largely present from the start and 'bought into' by willing staff, parents and pupils. Transforming a school, in contrast, requires an incremental widening of a long-established culture. However, the benefits of transforming to integrated status in comparison with the option of opening a new school are several:
  - it is cost-effective in terms of the existing estate and staff;
  - a transformed school is drawing on an established track-record of leadership and management, as well as teaching experience and quality with its existing staff;
  - while the transformation process requires a change of ethos to be embedded in all aspects of school life, transformation none the less ensures greater continuity for pupils and parents.

7. The panel concluded, therefore, that transformation remains a valuable option, but a diagnosis of the practical challenges it entails and a review of the support mechanisms available to transforming schools were necessary to ensure that the option remains attractive.

## Challenges

8. There have not been large numbers of schools choosing to transform. Only three schools have chosen to transform in the last five years. The quotation with which the chapter begins indicates the potential rewards for a school – its staff, pupils, governors and parents – in transforming to integrated status. It also highlights, however, that transformation can be a slow and complex process requiring significantly more than inviting pupils from a minority community to join the school.
9. The evidence provided by one principal of a transformed school to this review identified resource challenges, both in terms of personnel and finance: leadership and implementation of the process was additional to normal workload, while the necessity to apply for multiple small pots of funding to cement the process was time-consuming, not least because a comprehensive list of funding sources was not readily available. The principal thus observed that, notwithstanding the support available from DE and NICIE, “every principal of a transforming school is doing it for the first time”.<sup>17</sup>
10. This and other first-hand evidence suggests that the process itself and the ongoing post-transformation challenge of seeking funding to support integrative initiatives may be a disincentive to transformation. These challenges were also recognised in the three-part ‘Integrated Education in Northern Ireland’ survey completed in 2003 by Tony Gallagher, Alison Montgomery, Alan Smith et al. See, in particular, Report 3 on Transformation. One possible outcome is that transformation is an attractive

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<sup>17</sup> One former GMI primary school principal, subsequently a NICIE Associate helping with transforming schools, suggested that it can take up to ten or more years for a successful transformation to take place. The fact that many transforming schools take so long to reach the target pupil balance can be a result of segregated demography, or simply an indication of segregative attitudes (whether within a school community and/or in the public perception of a school).

and viable option only – or primarily – for schools at risk of closure on grounds of sustainability; and, indeed, the last two decades have seen a number of extremely small schools, threatened with closure, taking forward transformation.

11. In the panel's public call for evidence, respondents were asked 'Why do you think only a small number of schools have chosen to transform in the past decade?' 'The following six possible reasons were offered for comment:

- lack of knowledge or awareness of process amongst Boards of Governors;
- lack of knowledge or awareness amongst parents;
- cumbersome process;
- insufficient financial incentives;
- opposition from other managing authorities or Boards of Governors;
- other.

39% responded that the main cause was opposition from other managing authorities or Boards of Governors. 13% regarded the main cause was the cumbersome nature of the process. 10% believed there are insufficient financial incentives. 29% of all respondents said that all the listed factors were equally important.

### Supporting Transformation

12. In order to become an effective and efficient mechanism to increase significantly the numbers of children in integrated education, transformation needs to be made an easier, better-supported and more attractive option, which is supported in a systematic and co-ordinated manner by both the DE and the EA.
13. The Shared Education Signature Project has shown how well-targeted government promotion, funding and support can increase participation and interest. Integrated Education which, as demonstrated earlier in the report, has important benefits for society requires a similar approach.

### The Process

14. In light of the issues highlighted in the course of the review regarding the challenges of transformation, the panel considered options for simplifying the process itself. However, given the fundamental nature of the change entailed in transformation, the panel has concluded that it must remain part of the statutory Development Proposal process, as it represents a significant change in the character and nature of the school. The Development Proposal process also provides the required opportunities for full public consultation and discussion that is crucial when considering transformation.

### Guidance

15. Having concluded that it would not be viable to change the process, the panel focused primarily on measures to support schools interested in transforming. To support the transformation process, DE provides guidance: “Transformation: An Information Pack for schools”<sup>2</sup> (available online at: [http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/9100/1/transformation\\_pack-4.pdf](http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/9100/1/transformation_pack-4.pdf)).
16. However, this guidance has not been updated for over a decade and would benefit from urgent revision to take account of new DE policies, particularly the Sustainable Schools Policy and ‘Every School a Good School’.
17. The panel believes that, given the significant level of self-evaluation and change required to transform, schools should be able to demonstrate how they meet the six key indicators in the Sustainable Schools Policy and should have been evaluated as good or better by the Inspectorate in the areas of achievement and standards, provision for learning, and leadership and management. DE and EA should ensure that the revised guidance is provided to all schools.

**Recommendation 17: That DE should, in partnership with others, design and provide step-by-step guidance on the transformation process. This should provide details of the structured, intensive support and all sources of funding that will be available to transforming schools.**

Self-Evaluation Continuum

18. In addition, it should be noted that, during the last decade, a culture of self-evaluation and assessment focussed on self-improvement has been embedded in our schools. A recent Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development report noted that schools here benefit from sophisticated tools to support their self-evaluation activities. It is essential that this is reflected when providing new guidance for transformation.
19. The ETI has developed in conjunction with practitioners a self-evaluation continuum for shared education. A similar continuum for transforming schools is long overdue.
20. It is also recommended, therefore, that the ETI develop a new continuum for schools to self-assess their practices, methodologies and capacity in relation to integrated education. It will be an effective tool to assist practitioners in carrying out effective initial self-reflection to identify their baseline in relation to integrated education, to set effective goals, and to measure how much progress they have made in meeting these goals following transformation. It will also allow for effective monitoring and evaluation of the transformation process.

**Recommendation 18: That the ETI develop a new continuum for schools to self-assess their practices, methodologies and capacity in relation to integrated education.**

Transformation Officers

21. Additional support was previously provided by the former ELBs in the form of “Transformation Officers”, but these posts appear to have been discontinued due to lack of demand during the many staff reductions and realignments in the years prior to the establishment of the EA.
22. Evidence provided to the panel has indicated the value of this or a similar post to transforming schools. An assessment could therefore be undertaken of the resource available to support such a post or indeed to broaden the remit of the shared education development officers to include transforming schools or those schools wishing to become jointly managed schools. This would complement the role of NICIE development officers.



**Recommendation 19: That the role of Transformation Officer be re-established within the EA with a remit to support transforming schools**

*Financial Support*

23. In terms of financial support, modest funding for the additional costs associated with transformation can be accessed from the DE and the IEF. Funding from DE has been used to support an extra teacher from the minority community (where needed), together with a grant for training and for developing curricular resources over a period of years. Schools are invited to submit a business case outlining their needs. The IEF can also provide grant-aid to assist transformation costs such as marketing/ promoting the new status and awareness training for all staff.
24. The costs to support transformation vary between schools depending particularly on size, the culture in the school prior to initiation of the transformation process, and even whether a teacher from the minority community is already employed. There is no one-size-fits-all appropriate sum of funding. Funding for transformation must be demand-led.
25. There are difficulties in planning and allocating such demand-led funding, particularly when the number of schools transforming fluctuates annually. DE previously ring-fenced significant funds (in excess of £200,000 per annum) to support transformation but then found that few schools were choosing to transform and the funding was not utilised.
26. The panel believes it is important that schools think about funding at the outset of the transformation process. An application for funding will only be truly meaningful if matched closely to the requirements of the individual school's transformation plan. Equally, the plan will have greater impact if accompanied by the well-targeted and planned use of resources. Schools also need to be able to plan effectively for more than one year at a time.

27. Consequently, the panel recommends that as an integral part of planning its Case for Change when publishing a Development Proposal to transform, schools should prepare a five-year business case detailing proposed spend over the five year period. This would also facilitate more effective future financial planning for DE. As part of its statutory duty to encourage and facilitate integrated education, DE should prioritise earmarked funding to support transforming schools in this manner.

**Recommendation 20: That as an integral part of planning the Case for Change when publishing a Development Proposal to transform, each school should prepare a five-year business case outlining its funding needs over that period.**

### **An Integrated Learning Community**

28. High-quality leadership and teaching are essential to raising standards and effecting improvement in pupils' learning outcomes. To this end one of the key strategic objectives in the DE's Teacher Professional Learning Strategy is the promotion of collaborative working and sharing of best practice through professional learning communities.
29. DE has acknowledged that the current system does not lend itself to the sort of collaboration needed to make self-sustaining improvement and capacity-building the norm, rather than the exception. Excellent practice is not always accessible and is not shared widely enough for the benefit of the system as a whole.
30. Within this overall picture it is clear that leading and teaching in an integrated school presents some unique challenges. It is also the case that transforming can be a slow and complex process. Support and sharing of ideas with experienced practitioners can be invaluable, particularly for recently transformed schools.
31. The panel therefore believes that the development of an effective professional learning community within the sector to utilise the skills and experience of school leaders and teachers to share innovation and good practice, particularly in regard to embedding integrated education

throughout the curriculum, would be most beneficial. This will build capacity and expertise across the sector. The costs of facilitating such a group are modest: monthly substitute cover for school leaders and some secretarial support. The panel understands similar proposals have been made for the Irish-medium sector.

32. The panel, therefore, recommends that a cross-phase integrated education professional learning community for school leaders be established, funded and supported by DE as part of both the wider roll-out of its Teacher Professional Learning Strategy and as part of its statutory duty to encourage and facilitate integrated education. Following successful evaluation, such a project could be extended to mid-level leaders and the wider teaching workforce.

**Recommendation 21: That a cross-phase integrated education professional learning community for school leaders be established, funded and supported by DE.**

## **Chapter 6: Support Bodies for Integrated Schools**

1. There are two main bodies with a specific remit to support integrated schools and the growth of integrated education in Northern Ireland: the IEF and NICIE.<sup>18</sup>
2. This chapter provides a brief overview of the origins and functions of both bodies, but its principal focus is NICIE given that the IEF does not receive annual recurrent funding from DE.

### **What is IEF?**

3. The IEF is an independent charitable trust that raises funds in the UK and elsewhere to support the growth of integrated schooling in Northern Ireland. It believes that educating all children together is an essential part of the reconciliation process and of building a society that celebrates respect, understanding and friendships across traditional divides. IEF was established in 1992 with money from European Union Structural Funds, the DE, the Nuffield Foundation and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, as a financial foundation for the development and growth of integrated education.
4. The Board of Directors, which has 14 members, administers the charity; the day-to-day operations of the IEF are managed by the Chief Executive and her staff. In addition, there is also a Campaign Council made up of volunteers which is chaired by Baroness Blood, supported by Volunteer Teams in Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

### **What does IEF do?**

5. The IEF seeks to bridge the financial gap between starting integrated schools and securing full government funding and support. It supports financially the establishment of new schools, the growth of existing schools and those schools seeking to become integrated through the transformation process, and works with individuals, organisations and businesses as well as other trusts and foundations to achieve these objectives.

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<sup>18</sup> See [www.ief.org.uk](http://www.ief.org.uk) and [www.nicie.org](http://www.nicie.org) for further information.

6. IEF's current three-year strategic plan for 2014-17, 'Opening Minds', aims to raise at least £5.35 million. Its specific objectives for the three years are to secure:
  - access to integrated education for those who choose it by supporting the growth and development of integrated school places in response to parental demand; and
  - an initial 10% of all school places.

### **What is NICIE?**

7. NICIE was formed in 1987 as a charitable organisation to co-ordinate efforts to develop integrated education and to support parent groups through the process of opening new schools. NICIE was formed with the encouragement of the Nuffield Foundation, which was then a major funder of integrated schools.
8. Article 64 of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 provided that DE may 'pay grants to any body appearing to have as an objective the encouragement or promotion of the integrated education'. Since 1989, DE has funded NICIE to encourage and promote integrated education.
9. In 2016, NICIE is a limited company with charitable status managed by a Board of Directors (appointed in accordance with its Articles of Association). It obtains its core funding of approximately £650,000 per annum from DE, which it uses primarily to employ ten staff. It also receives small amounts of funding from other grant providers and government agencies.
10. Since 2012, NICIE has been designated as a NDPB of DE. Consequently, DE agrees objectives, key targets and performance measures with NICIE in its Corporate and Business Plans.

## What does NICIE do?

11. NICIE is not a statutory body with roles and responsibilities defined in legislation. Broadly, the role of NICIE is to promote and support integrated education. The mission of NICIE as stated in its Strategic Plan 2013-16 is to lead, promote and facilitate the development and growth of integrated education through a range of approaches, including innovation, influence, and working with others. The four strategic aims of NICIE as set out in its Strategic Plan are as follows:
  - i. **Growth:** to increase the numbers of children and young people experiencing an integrated education.
  - ii. **Excellence in integrated education:** to support the delivery of quality integrated education which delivers excellent experiences and outcomes.
  - iii. **Inform, influence and promote:** to raise awareness, influence others and increase support for integrated education.
  - iv. **Internal capacity building:** to strengthen the organisation so that it achieves its mission successfully.
12. NICIE carries out a wide range of functions including:
  - providing advice and support to schools wishing to transform to integrated status and those that have recently transformed;
  - providing advice and support to communities wishing to develop integrated education provision;
  - facilitating a number of forums for integrated schools;
  - representing the integrated sector on a variety of bodies and committees;
  - raising public awareness of integrated education;

- providing training particularly around the integrated ethos for staff and governors in integrated schools;
  - representing the interests of integrated education in the area planning process; and
  - supporting the consolidation and expansion of existing integrated schools.
13. The panel notes that many of the roles that NICIE carry out have emerged organically over time in response to emerging need.

### **The Nature of NICIE**

14. NICIE is not a body that is similar in nature to either the EA or CCMS, which are both planning authorities and have responsibility for the employment of teaching staff, as well as a range of other functions.
15. The EA is responsible for securing adequate provision for primary and secondary education in Northern Ireland and for recreational, social, physical, cultural and youth service activities for grant-aided schools and other grant-aided educational establishments. It acts as the employing authority for all staff in controlled (including controlled integrated) schools and for all non-teaching staff in maintained schools. It is also responsible for supporting the development of governors, principals, teachers and other school-related staff and has duties to provide training, advice and support for schools to bring about improvement. CCMS is responsible for the employment of teachers in Catholic maintained schools and has a statutory duty to promote and co-ordinate the planning of the effective provision of Catholic maintained schools.
16. By contrast NICIE is not a planning or employing authority in relation to integrated schools. It can only offer advice and support to schools, which are free to accept or decline NICIE's advice.

17. The specific issues around planning for integrated education are considered in Chapter 4. More generally, GMI schools, which are under the management of a BOG and are the employing authority for all staff, have full responsibility for a range of administrative functions connected to the school. NICIE has indicated that it is concerned over the provision of Human Resources support for these schools and notes that it regularly receives queries and requests for advice from schools on this and other areas such as legal advice, finance, and building maintenance.
18. The panel notes that GMI schools, like VGS, receive some additional funding annually for additional administration and landlord maintenance costs. However, the panel believes annual uniform additional funding is not sufficient when a difficult situation arises in a particular school and expertise is required. NICIE is not, however, resourced or scaled to be able to provide this range of services. It therefore finds itself unable to meet some of the expectations placed upon it by the sector.
19. Consequently, the panel recommends that DE urgently consider the provision of support services to GMI schools; the demand and need for centralised support to be available to these schools and how best to provide such centralised support. This will have the benefit of ensuring that fit-for-purpose support is available to these schools. It will also ensure that the roles and responsibilities of NICIE are clearly delineated allowing it to focus on promoting and developing integrated education. Given the wide variety of roles that NICIE performs it is also recommended that formal roles and responsibilities are agreed with DE in order to avoid the organisation spreading itself too thinly.

**Recommendation 22: That DE urgently considers the provision of support services to grant-maintained integrated schools, the demand and need for centralised support to be available to these schools and how best to provide such centralised support.**

**Recommendation 23: That DE and NICIE should formally agree the work that DE wishes to fund NICIE to undertake.**



## **Chapter 7: Fresh Start Capital Funding**

### **Introduction**

1. The Fresh Start Agreement makes provision of £50 million of capital funding per year for the next ten years to support shared and integrated education. This marks a significant commitment to creating the infrastructure in which children can be educated together.
2. The first tranche of projects to benefit from this funding package was announced on 23 March 2016 as follows:
  - Funding was secured for projects being taken forward by DE under the Together: Building a United Community Strategy headline action to commence ten shared education campuses by 2018. Applicant schools were required to have a history of sharing, and the projects had to demonstrate clear educational benefits. The first two calls for applications have resulted in five campus projects being identified to progress in planning – Limavady, Ballycastle, Moy, Brookeborough and Duneane/Moneynick.
  - Funding for the construction of three new-build projects already underway (under DE's Major Capital Investment Programme) at Braidside, Drumlins and Roe Valley Integrated Primary Schools.
  - An additional 15 projects for integrated schools across Northern Ireland were also announced to advance in planning under the fund.
3. The Shared Education Campus Programme is already a well-developed stream, which will receive funding under the Fresh Start Agreement. The Education Minister announced a third call for projects in September 2016. The deadline for the submission of proposals under this third call is 27 January 2017. The next set of projects approved to proceed in planning is expected to be announced in May 2017.

4. The panel has been asked to consider how the potential capital investment from the Fresh Start Agreement can be best used to increase the numbers of Roman Catholics and Protestant pupils being educated together in sustainable schools. In addition to the continuation of the Shared Education Campus Programme, the panel recommends four funding streams that should be taken forward under the Fresh Start Agreement. These may be summarised as follows:
  - i. **Capital funding for existing integrated schools.** It is imperative that this funding plans adequately for the potential expansion and growth of these schools, as assessed via the proposed audit of demand to be carried out by the EA. A well-publicised and publicly announced call for projects from existing integrated schools should be taken forward as soon as possible. Further calls for projects should continue annually throughout the lifetime of the Fresh Start Agreement so that recently transformed integrated schools can enter the programme.
  - ii. **An annual call for projects from jointly managed schools.** Only schools which have approved Development Proposals to establish a jointly managed school will be eligible for this funding stream. In some cases, new accommodation will be necessary to facilitate such amalgamations, as existing accommodation will be too small to house the new larger school.
  - iii. **An annual call for integrated pre-school projects.** The ultimate aim of this stream is to provide fit-for-purpose, state of the art and self-contained pre-school provision for all integrated nursery units or playgroups attached to integrated primary schools.
  - iv. **The inclusion of Special Schools within the remit of the Fresh Start Capital Funding and an annual call for Special School projects.** Special Schools already educate Catholic and Protestant children together.

## **Integrated Schools**

5. The panel welcomes the fact that DE is already prioritising the estates requirements of existing integrated schools via the Fresh Start Funding. This is particularly important as 15 integrated schools remain in non-permanent buildings.
6. DE should continue to prioritise the needs of existing integrated schools and should take forward a well-publicised call for projects from all existing integrated schools as soon as possible. This is important so that **all** controlled and grant-maintained integrated schools which have sub-optimal accommodation have an equal opportunity to access this funding.
7. As noted above, further calls for projects from integrated schools should continue annually throughout the lifetime of the Fresh Start Agreement so that recently transformed integrated schools can enter the programme.
8. Historically large numbers of schools have not chosen to transform to integrated status. Chapter 5 considered the opportunities and challenges of transforming. The panel concluded that, while the process of transformation could not itself be easily simplified for statutory reasons, significant additional support should be provided to schools interested in following this route, currently following it, or that have recently completed it. An annual call for capital projects from integrated schools will provide a clear application process which schools can access upon receiving approval to transform.
9. In light of the oversubscription of a number of existing integrated schools, the panel is concerned to ensure that the potential for future growth is effectively embedded in planning capital investment. We do not want to build schools that are too small to cater for the demand for integrated education. Nor should the opportunity be missed whilst modernising the existing integrated estate to increase the number of integrated places. This is after all one of the key aims of the Fresh Start Funding.

10. The panel has recommended that the EA carries out an in-depth and individualised audit of demand for places in existing integrated schools, and that this is used as a basis to plan for the growth of integrated education. The panel also recommends that the findings of this audit are considered when planning major capital projects for existing integrated schools so that the future growth of these schools is adequately scoped.
11. The panel recognises that there is a potential difficulty in sequencing given the need for approval of a statutory Development Proposal in order for a school to increase its admissions. However, the panel believes this can be overcome by ensuring that the audit is used to identify all schools which need to increase in size to meet demand. In planning capital projects for these schools (and even prior to the completion of the statutory Development Proposal process) DE should ensure that sites are large enough and that planning takes account of not only the existing, but also the maximum potential size for each school.
12. The panel is aware that this has been done in a number of existing capital projects where schools intend to bring forward Development Proposals to increase admissions.
13. In addition, some integrated schools will require modern, modular temporary accommodation to facilitate approved growth whilst the planning for a permanent major capital works project is ongoing. Such accommodation would be portable for ongoing use around the schools' estate. The panel, therefore, recommends that Fresh Starting Funding is used to provide such temporary accommodation to facilitate the growth of integrated schools in a swift and timely fashion.
14. In some cases, the audit may identify a need for a new integrated school due to an extremely high level of over-subscription at existing integrated schools in the area. Once a Development Proposal is approved for a new school, there should be no capital viability period. Rather, as demand will have been clearly demonstrated, modern modular accommodation should be provided by the EA on establishment of the school. The accommodation requirement will increase annually as the school's enrolment increases.

15. There is a clear need for the audit to be carried out swiftly and its outcome embedded in the Area Planning and capital planning processes as quickly as possible.

**Recommendation 24: That DE should continue to prioritise the accommodation needs of existing integrated schools and should take forward a well-publicised call for projects from all existing integrated schools as soon as possible.**

**Recommendation 25: Further calls for projects from integrated schools should continue annually throughout the lifetime of the Fresh Start Agreement so that recently transformed integrated schools can enter the programme.**

**Recommendation 26: That DE should ensure it adequately takes account of potential future growth in planning capital projects for existing integrated schools.**

**Recommendation 27: That Fresh Starting Funding is used to provide temporary accommodation to facilitate the growth of integrated schools in a swift and timely fashion whilst the planning of a permanent new build is ongoing.**

**Recommendation 28: Where a Development Proposal is approved for a new integrated school, there should be no capital viability period rather, as demand has been demonstrated, modern modular accommodation should be provided from the outset via the Fresh Start Agreement.**

### **Jointly-Managed Schools**

16. DE published guidance for stakeholders on establishing a jointly-managed school in April 2015. Since that time no schools have chosen to amalgamate to become jointly managed schools. Chapter 4 highlighted that there are potential financial disincentives for schools that wish to follow this route and proposed a number of measures to ensure this is no longer the case.

17. In some cases, new accommodation will be necessary to facilitate amalgamations to form jointly managed schools, as existing accommodation will be too small to house the new larger school. This requirement may also be discouraging schools from pursuing the jointly managed option.
18. The panel, therefore, recommends that an annual call for capital projects from jointly-managed schools is taken forward by DE as part of the Fresh Start Programme. Only schools which have approved Development Proposals to establish a jointly managed school will be eligible for this funding stream. It will therefore take a number of years before a first call can be initiated. However, the intention to schedule such a call for projects should be immediately publicised by DE. It is also important that shared education development officers within the EA promote awareness of this option. This will provide a major incentive to encourage amalgamations to form jointly managed schools.
19. This funding stream will support projects which have directly reduced the number of places in other sectors and increased the number of Catholic and Protestant pupils being educated together. Additionally, amalgamations to form jointly managed schools will also produce larger, sustainable schools resulting in significant additional educational and financial benefits.

**Recommendation 29: That DE should take forward an annual call for projects from jointly managed schools.**

### **Integrated Pre-school Provision**

20. In Chapter 4, the panel recommended that where clear demand is demonstrated, integrated pre-school provision (an integrated nursery or any pre-school linked directly to an integrated primary school) should receive funding and additional places even where there are unfilled pre-school places in other providers in the area.
21. The aim of the recommendation is to meet parental demand at the outset of a child's education and to allow integrated education to grow from the bottom up.

22. The panel believes that this recommendation should result in more integrated pre-school provision. New pre-school provision will require accommodation quickly. In addition, many existing integrated nursery units and playgroups require modern, fit for purpose, permanent accommodation.
23. Many integrated nursery units will, of course, ultimately receive new accommodation as part of a capital project for the primary school of which they are part. However, this will not always be the case. A nursery may require accommodation in cases where the primary school already has fit for purpose accommodation. New pre-school provision will often require accommodation quickly.
24. In addition, the panel strongly recommends that the Fresh Start Capital Funding should be used to provide accommodation for all pre-schools linked to integrated primary schools, including voluntary playgroups, which have not traditionally been eligible for capital funding from DE.
25. The ultimate aim of this stream is to provide fit for purpose, state of the art and self-contained pre-school provision for all integrated nursery units or playgroups attached to integrated primary schools.

**Recommendation 30: That DE should take forward an annual call for projects for integrated pre-school provision (an integrated nursery or any pre-school linked directly to an integrated primary school).**

### **Special Schools**

26. Children in Special Schools are placed there on the basis of their assessed need, as set out in their Statement. The meeting of the pupil's needs is the only factor in determining a Special School placement for the child. The religious affiliation of the pupil is in no way relevant to this process. Consequently, Special Schools are not eligible to become integrated schools.

27. However, Special Schools in Northern Ireland are in practice educating Protestant and Catholic children together. In 2015/16, 17 of our 39 Special Schools had more than 30% of their enrolment from a Protestant background and also more than 30% from a Catholic background. A further seven had more than 20% of their enrolment from a Protestant background and also more than 20% from a Catholic background.
28. Consequently, the panel believes that Special Schools, which are educating our children with complex learning needs, should be able to access the significant investment available from the Fresh Start Capital funding. There would of course be no religious balance or qualifying criteria of this nature for Special Schools to enter this programme.
29. Rather, the inclusion of Special Schools in the Fresh Start programme is simply a recognition of the reality that, as we aim to move towards a more integrated education system, they are already educating children from different religious backgrounds together. Modern, fit for purpose facilities for the most vulnerable of our children who are being educated together should be provided under the Fresh Start Funding.

**Recommendation 31: That Special Schools should be able to access the significant investment available from the Fresh Start Capital funding.**

### **Utilising Funding**

30. Major capital investment projects take time to develop: investment business cases; design work; planning permission; procurement; site purchase and site works are all required before construction can begin.
31. In 2016/17 and in all probability the subsequent two financial years, it is unlikely that DE will be able to utilise the £50 million of capital funding available annually under this scheme. In addition, a number of the funding streams proposed will take time to come to fruition, for example, that for jointly managed schools.



32. It is extremely important to Northern Ireland that this unprecedented opportunity to develop a more integrated education system is not lost due to timing. The overriding consideration must be to secure maximum benefit from the funds which were hard won by our Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). None should be lost. The panel, therefore, recommends that the Secretary of State should agree to the carryover of any unspent Fresh Start funding into future financial years.
33. In addition, the panel believes that, given the significant level of capital investment available from the Fresh Start Agreement, it is important that as much funding as possible is spent on the ground to transform our education system. If each school is designed separately a significant amount of funding will be utilised in consultancy fees. This has been one of the key conclusions of evaluations of the Building Schools for the Future programme in England. By contrast, standardised baseline designs would prevent any waste of funding and time-consuming and unnecessary duplication of design work. It may also allow for modular construction so that parts can be built off-site to reduce costs further and expedite the construction process.

**Recommendation 32: That the Secretary of State should agree to the carryover of any unspent Fresh Start Funding into future financial years.**

**Recommendation 33: That DE considers the development of standardised baseline designs for nursery, primary and post-primary schools to ensure that as much of the Fresh Start Funding as possible is spent on the ground to transform our education system.**

# Part III

## Integrating Education: Promoting and Celebrating Inclusiveness across all Sectors



## Chapter 8: 'Open and Welcoming Schools': A Kitemark for Inclusiveness

### Introduction

1. In addition to identifying barriers to the growth of the integrated sector, the present *Review* was tasked by the Minister with 'examining how to develop a more integrated education system in its widest sense, which will bring together increasing numbers of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils within all schools. The phrase **within schools** indicates in this context a distinction from shared education which specifically involves two or more schools working together'.
2. This ambition is reflected in the community relations policies past and present of the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly, especially TBUC (Together Building a United Community), the Stormont House Fresh Start Agreement, and the current Draft PfG 2016-21.
3. In the Draft PfG, ambitions for reconciliation have been assigned three Indicators and Measures as follows:
  - Indicator 26: Increase respect for each other; Measure: a respect index to be developed.
  - Indicator 31: Increase shared space; Measure: the percentage who think leisure centres, parks, libraries and shopping centres in their areas are 'shared and open' to both Protestants and Catholics.
  - Indicator 35: Increase reconciliation; Measure: percentage of the population who believe their cultural identity is respected by society.
4. The panel recognises that schools have a significant role to play in realising these ambitions and that they could also contribute significantly to measuring their success. Schools lay the foundations for fostering the openness to, and celebration of, difference that is necessary to creating the kind of future society envisaged by the PfG.

5. Of the existing 1,166 schools in Northern Ireland, 65 are formally integrated schools, and an additional 75 schools have more than 10% minority enrolment of pupils (ie Protestant pupils at Catholic schools or, more usually, Catholic pupils at controlled schools). These are unofficially known as 'super-mixed schools'. The remaining 1,028 schools have a lesser degree of cross-community mixing among their pupils, albeit they may be increasingly involved in shared education initiatives.
6. Notwithstanding, and as is reflected in earlier chapters, teachers and governors across all sectors clearly wish to be, and be recognised as being, open and welcoming to pupils from all backgrounds, faiths and traditions. Such a perspective is not incompatible with a preference, on the part of many parents, for their children to be educated within their 'own' school sector.
7. In the context of the Draft PfG 2016-21, and to reflect the manifesto statements of the political parties in our Assembly, the panel therefore sought to identify a means for all schools to demonstrate their adherence to principles of openness via a brand or kitemark which would not require schools to move out of their existing sector. In line with the desired outcomes set out in the Draft PfG, one option would be to badge these schools 'Open and Welcoming' Schools.

### **'Open and Welcoming' Schools**

8. The panel proposes that a Road Map and set of indicators be drawn up for any existing school to follow and thus demonstrate that it is open to all pupils and that it is welcoming to all regardless, not only of religion and culture, but also of ethnicity, disability, gender or sexuality. Given the need for the kitemark to be closely linked to School Development Planning and the overall process of school improvement, the ETI may be well placed to develop an appropriate framework as it has done with shared education.
9. In discussion with the panel, the Community Relations Council has also indicated that it would be open to considering a request to draw up a Road Map and set of Criteria that demonstrate an ethos and practice of inclusiveness.

10. If this suggestion were to be acceptable to DE and to the school community, schools wishing to demonstrate that they meet these criteria could apply for, be assessed for, and awarded the title without any impact on their sectoral affiliation. Such a brand would also enable schools that already have a religiously mixed pupil cohort to demonstrate their openness to pupils of all backgrounds. Integrated schools would be encouraged to apply and be assessed for this status in the same way as schools from other sectors.
11. The challenges for schools of moving from a monocultural environment to an open, inclusive one are real but certainly manageable, and significant progress has been made on the contested issue of creating shared spaces in Northern Ireland. Those bodies which have specific experience of operating open education cultures can provide valuable information and guidance. Those organisations whose remit includes this work of reconciliation, such as the Community Relations Council and the Trade Union movement, also have invaluable insights into the issues. If we are to understand, welcome and celebrate difference at primary and post-primary schools, rather than simply accommodating it, support and guidance will be required from DE. In this way, Northern Ireland can provide leadership in a fractured world.
12. The panel recognises that school principals and teachers have an already demanding role to perform within their schools and in relation to their broader communities. Governors also perform a vital community task in their own time. Yet if we believe our psychologists and sociologists, the prize of a more understanding, respectful, co-operative society is within our grasp; and promoting inclusiveness within our school system will be a major step towards that prize.
13. Controlled schools and Catholic maintained schools have always been open to all pupils. The advantage of the 'Open and Welcoming' branding is that schools will also have a clear, public, 'accredited' means of demonstrating to potential parents and pupils that they are open to, and welcoming of, all traditions, all beliefs and all communities. A positive impact on schools' intake is a likely outcome of the process.

**Recommendation 34: That a working group with appropriate representation be established by DE to develop indicators for an ‘Open and Welcoming’ kitemark for schools.**

**Recommendation 35: That DE should, in partnership with others, provide guidance, training and support to all schools that wish to be recognised with the ‘Open and Welcoming’ kitemark.**

14. The panel recognises that training and support (financial or otherwise) may be important in assisting schools to prepare an application for this kitemark. Schools attaining this standard would also ideally be rewarded with an allocation of resource to fund an event or series of activities aimed at celebrating – and developing for the future – their ‘Open and Welcoming’ status.
15. Schools themselves can be offered this option in a direct, cost-effective way by DE, but it would be valuable to bring this opportunity to the attention of a wider general public – which naturally includes parents and governors. A case could be made for combining various community relations budgets to advertise the option to a broader public; and for approaching community, business and social organisations to evaluate the proposal and, if content, to endorse it. As detailed further below in Part IV of this review, there is significant evidence to suggest that inclusive societies tend to be economically thriving societies which attract inward investment and tourism.

**Recommendation 36: That the Executive through DE provide additional funding to support schools which seek to obtain the ‘Open and Welcoming’ kitemark.**

### **Preparation and Recruitment of Teaching Staff**

16. Currently student teachers in Northern Ireland are trained in four different institutions. Protestant and Catholic students learn together at Queen’s University and Ulster University; but they are largely separated at Stranmillis University College and St Mary’s University College. The social, cultural and economic arguments on this issue have been well rehearsed in public. It adds £2.2 million every year to Northern Ireland’s cost of servicing a divided society.<sup>3</sup>

17. However, a limitation that is less frequently raised is the preparation of these student teachers to work in an integrated or a shared environment. While recognising the impact of the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education policy on teacher training and the joint initiatives between the different teacher training providers, the panel notes that many student teachers still come from one sector in the school system, train in that same sector; and return to teach in that sector. For this reason, there is a risk that many young teachers are:
- trained to be familiar with and teach in approximately one half of the schools across Northern Ireland only;
  - less familiar with the ethos and environment of the other half of our schools; and
  - under-prepared to work in the environment of an integrated or jointly managed school.
18. In addition, the ‘chill factor’ identified by the Equality Commission for teachers working in a school not of their tradition means that broad pre-graduation training would be of professional benefit for all.

**Recommendation 37: That DE should ensure that all student teachers being educated in Northern Ireland shall have substantial, meaningful, cross-community, professional training including cross-community contact, that will prepare them to work in any publicly-funded school in Northern Ireland.**

19. This question of the preparedness of a teacher to teach in any school raises two further issues: the exception from the Fair Employment regulations, and the Certificate in Religious Education required in order to teach in Catholic maintained nursery and primary schools.
20. Having staff, both teachers and support staff, from a variety of community backgrounds is an important aspect of any school that wishes to welcome pupils of all traditions – a matter which has been raised in debate in the NI Assembly on 22 April 2013 and on 13 April 2015.

21. The original Fair Employment legislation in 1976 exempted teachers from its regulations. However, the Equality Commission is obliged by Article 71 of the 1998 Fair Employment & Treatment Order to keep this exception under review. In June 2004 it carried out such a review. The review noted: *'It is widely recognised in the sector that the [employment] exception is a consequence of separate religion schools and there is a wide acceptance of a 'chill' factor for teachers'*.
22. The investigation was based on employment figures for 2002-3, with a sample of 1,629 teachers in 80 schools broken down as follows:
- In controlled schools approximately 85% of teachers were from the Protestant community; 5% were from the Roman Catholic community; and 10% were from neither community.
  - In the Catholic maintained schools, 98% were from the Roman Catholic community; fewer than 1% were from the Protestant community; and fewer than 1% were from neither of those communities.
  - In the grant maintained and controlled integrated schools, 48% of teachers were from the Protestant community; 43% were from the Roman Catholic community; and 9% were from neither of those communities.

The Equality Commission recommended that the legal exemption should be abolished at secondary level; and that early consideration be given to its removal at all levels.

23. In the meetings held by the panel with stakeholders representing all main sectors, there was a widespread consensus among stakeholders that second-level teachers should no longer be exempt from Fair Employment regulations. While this issue has, of course, a direct bearing on schools and education, it is noted that the Equality Commission and the Fair Employment & Treatment Order fall not within the remit of DE but within that of the Executive Office.



24. The panel also believes that the requirement that all primary teachers should have the Certificate in Religious Education could usefully be examined again by the CCMS. Since Catholic pupils at both integrated and controlled schools receive the sacraments of their Church, it is arguably not essential for all teachers in Catholic primary schools to hold this Certificate.

**Recommendation 38: That, in order to encourage all schools to have cross-community staff, the Executive should reform legislation so that teachers at secondary level be no longer exempted from the regulations of Fair Employment; and that early consideration be given to the removal of teacher exemption at all levels.**

# Part IV

## Collaborate to Innovate: Working Together for an Enterprising Future



## Chapter 9: A Vision for Education in Northern Ireland

1. The present section of the report responds to the objective in the Terms of Reference which requires the Panel to ‘develop longer-term proposals to ensure that the nature and structure of integrated education remains fit for purpose in light of the significant societal changes in the 25 years since the 1989 order’.
2. It takes this opportunity to reflect on the ways in which creating spaces for active and dynamic collaboration across borders of all kinds is the pre-condition for celebrating inclusiveness, understanding difference, appreciating the value of divergent perspectives, and from that foundation, for fostering a spirit of innovation which is necessary if we are to continue the process of transforming our society in positive and entrepreneurial ways.
3. This chapter recognises, in other words, that educating children together – and introducing particularly skills development opportunities into that context – responds not only to the reconciliation outcomes of the PfG on which considerable progress has been made since the 1989 Order, but also to the attested need to grow Northern Ireland as a thriving, economic magnet for domestic entrepreneurship, inward investment, and tourism.
4. The proposal that follows may appear to align more closely to the bases of shared education than to those of integrated education. The panel also recognises the impact of shared education initiatives which actively promote collaboration over ‘cohabitation’ in a teaching environment. Notwithstanding, the panel’s aim is to put forward recommendations that increase the conditions in which more pupils from Catholic, Protestant, and, indeed, other backgrounds actively collaborate, and in which collaboration in diversity is recognised as necessary to nurture innovation and creative thinking. The panel recognises the success of Shared initiatives which actively promote integrated working, but also suggests that it is essential that we create the conditions in which active collaboration across difference is the baseline for success.

5. In this, it seeks to recognise the value of increased ethnic diversity as moving Northern Ireland society beyond the traditional binary opposition of Catholic and Protestant, and it provides an invaluable opportunity to develop our young people as global citizens who value inclusivity, are comfortable with difference, and are capable of actively building on the creativity and innovation that comes from negotiating difference to create the kind of flourishing entrepreneurial society that has been identified as a key priority in the PfG.
6. The link between inclusivity and economic prosperity is one that has been established by research such as the British Council's Open Cities project.<sup>19</sup> Open, tolerant, inclusive cities attract inward investment, and children educated in a culture that actively interrogates difference (whether religious, cultural, linguistic, or linked to disability, gender, or sexual orientation) have been shown to demonstrate greater levels of intellectual risk-taking, creativity, and a tendency to challenge accepted categories and modes of working than those educated in a monocultural environment. These are also the characteristics that have been identified as common to entrepreneurs; while culture (in which education is one of the key modes of transmission, along with family and media) has been identified as one of the key blockers to growing entrepreneurial activity in Northern Ireland.<sup>20</sup>
7. The present report has identified significant barriers to the growth of the integrated 'sector' and made urgent recommendations for overcoming them; yet it also seeks to propose a broader and longer-term vision for education in Northern Ireland which, through a strategic use of Fresh Start funding, would explicitly align investment in young people and in their potential to work beyond borders (of religion, class, culture, subject interest, or academic performance) with a transformative investment in the economic prosperity of the region.

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<sup>19</sup> See [www.opencities.eu](http://www.opencities.eu) for further information.

<sup>20</sup> For details of the 'Innovation into Action' which led to these conclusions, see <http://connect.catalyst-inc.org/about-connect/research>.

8. A number of contexts, reflected in the quotations below, are brought together in proposing this vision; establishing a connection between them, as this chapter will seek to do, opens up one potential route on the journey to further integrating young people from all cross-sections of Northern Ireland society.

*We are an innovative, creative economy where people can fulfil their potential.*<sup>21</sup>

*The real role of leadership in education is not and should not be command and control. The real role of leadership is climate control – creating a climate of possibility. If you do that, people will rise to it and achieve things that you completely did not anticipate and couldn't have expected.*<sup>22</sup>

*Borderless leadership involves the possession of a very specific set of intersecting skills. These include being operationally agile, comfortable with digital technologies, literate in a broad range of disciplines and good at mobilising and sustaining personal networks. Entrepreneurship underpins this skill set, because such skills are only truly ignited in the moment of entrepreneurship, where innovation and creativity are essential.*<sup>23</sup>

*Open, inclusive cities are economically prosperous cities that attract visitors and inward investment.*<sup>24</sup>

9. The first, and the guiding principle for the vision set out in this chapter, is one of the outcomes articulated in the Draft PfG 2016-21; the second is an excerpt from a speech by Prof Sir Ken Robinson, internationally recognized educationalist whose work is focused on introducing greater creativity into education; the third is from an analysis of current and future employability

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<sup>21</sup> Steve Orr, Bernard Crossland Lecture, 2016.

<sup>22</sup> K. Robinson, lecture on education and creativity; accessed at <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/ted-talks-education/speaker/ken-robinson/>

<sup>23</sup> P. Pathek, 'How to future-proof university graduates', The Conversation (accessed at: <https://theconversation.com/how-to-future-proof-university-graduates-48639>).

<sup>24</sup> [www.opencities.eu](http://www.opencities.eu)

needs and trends by Dr Pathik Pathak, Director of Social Entrepreneurship and Founding Director of the Social Impact Lab at the University of Southampton; and the fourth is a key finding the report of the British Council-funded Open Cities project in which Belfast participated.

10. Bringing these four contexts into dialogue has the potential to create a productive ecosystem for personal and regional growth with impact beyond a single generation.
11. The creation of dedicated, borderless spaces for collaboration and innovation in education encourages a culture of possibility, confidence, ambition, disruptive thinking and considered risk-taking. These are the hallmarks of the borderless leaders of the future who will create the conditions to upscale entrepreneurial activity in Northern Ireland, and will, over time, cement a (now emerging) culture of openness and inclusiveness that attracts inward investment and tourism.
12. This chapter proposes that key to realising the economic, cultural and wellbeing ambitions of the PfG is creating the conditions where children with different cultural perspectives, life experiences, subject knowledge and academic ability collaborate to innovate, precisely because that difference is the prerequisite for nurturing creativity and innovation, as entrepreneurs, researchers and practitioners worldwide recognise. Our key proposal to realise this vision is the creation of regional innovation hubs that are open to all schools in their area, that offer a physical environment specifically designed to facilitate collaborative and project-based learning and networking, that are technologically well-equipped, and where activity is facilitated by specialists in creative and design thinking, in innovation and entrepreneurial thinking, and in team-building and promoting self-reflection. As detailed further below, the initial model would be co-curricular, with the possibility of recognition via external accreditation such as the Institute of Leadership and Management or the Chartered Management Institute, but in the longer term, there may be scope for integrating activity carried out in the innovation hubs into the curriculum as they are embedded. The condition for their success – which is also the condition for successful creativity and innovation – is teamwork that is based not on ‘cohabitation’ (ie different teams working side by side but each one composed of

children from the same school) but fully integrated collaboration where borderless teams – ie incorporating the full range of diversity in Northern Ireland – discover both the rich creative possibilities of working together to problem-solve and innovate, and the complex negotiations this requires. This vision is based on longer-term outcomes in line with the ambitions of the PfG.

13. The approach taken in this chapter is based on the Appreciative Inquiry model developed by Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) which, in the spirit of the PfG, focuses not on current ‘dysfunction’ (identification of problems) but on what is already working and how this can be harnessed to positive transformation of the future.

Key elements in the AI model that are relevant to the present report include the following:

- The *positive principle* which proposes that momentum and sustainable change requires positive affect and social bonding. Sentiments like hope, excitement, inspiration, camaraderie and joy increase creativity, openness to new ideas and people, and cognitive flexibility. They also promote the strong connections and relationships between people, particularly between groups in conflict, required for collective inquiry and change.
- The *anticipatory principle* which posits that what we do today is guided by our image of the future. Human systems are forever projecting ahead of themselves a horizon of expectation that brings the future powerfully into the present as a mobilizing agent. Appreciative inquiry uses artful creation of positive imagery on a collective basis to refashion anticipatory reality.

The following table illustrates briefly table differences between a problem-solving approach and an appreciative inquiry approach.

| <i>Problem Solving</i>                  | <i>Appreciative inquiry</i>                  |
|---|--|
| Felt need, identification of problem(s) | Appreciating – valuing “the best of what is” |
| Analysis of Causes                      | Envisioning what might be                    |
| Analysis of possible solutions          | Engaging in dialogue about what should be    |
| Action Planning (treatment)             | Innovating what will be                      |

14. Appreciative inquiry attempts to use ways of asking questions and envisioning the future in order to foster positive relationships and build on present potential. It commonly uses four processes:

1. DESCRIBE: where are we currently?
2. DREAM: where do we want to be in the future?
3. DESIGN: how do we get there?
4. DELIVER: implementation.

### Describe

15. In 2015, Steve Orr, entrepreneur and co-founder of NISP CONNECT (now Catalyst-Connect) led a project entitled, ‘Innovation into Action’, the purpose of which was to work with local government to help answer the crucial question: ‘How do we change the entrepreneurial culture in Northern Ireland at scale?’
16. The background to the project was a stakeholder analysis conducted by NISP CONNECT in 2013 and involving 170 people operating at the coalface of innovation and entrepreneurship in Northern Ireland. The team agreed a shared vision and targets for Northern Ireland’s knowledge economy and identified the biggest challenges holding Northern Ireland back from achieving this vision. One of the key blockers was culture; we have the talent, but we need a culture that encourages it; the Innovation into Action project was thus tasked with understanding and proposing ways



of breaking down those barriers. The findings and recommendations of the Innovation into Action project were presented to First Minister, then Enterprise Minister, Arlene Foster in June 2015 and feed into both the next iteration of the Northern Ireland Executive's Innovation Strategy and the current PfG. They also formed a major part of the content at the publication of the 2015 Knowledge Economy Index.

17. The project brought together the multiple, divergent, perspectives of what Steve Orr called 'can-do' thinkers from over 40 commercial, 3<sup>rd</sup> sector, and educational organisations to debate the following:
  - how we foster a culture of innovation at an early stage, so that start-ups can be a reality for school age and university students, and people in the workforce can feel equipped and empowered to act on their ideas;
  - how we foster a culture of collaboration where organisations enter into productive, challenging, dialogue across sectors and across their different areas of concerns;
  - in essence, how we create the spaces in which to talk to different people so that we can maximise the potential for saying something new.
18. The Innovation into Action project identified no deficit in terms of talent; quite the contrary, but it did recognize a number of disenablers in terms of creating the climate of possibility that would be conducive to upscaling entrepreneurial activity. To unpack that further, the panel would add the following observations about educational attainment in Northern Ireland. We enjoy very high levels of academic attainment overall in comparison with UK and Ireland; but these positive headline statistics conceal inequalities in educational achievement, with young Protestant boys being identified as particularly at risk of underachievement. Selection at post-primary level may contribute to these inequalities, but what these attainment gaps also highlight for some, such as Steve Orr, that:

*Northern Irish society defines a high achiever as an academic achiever, the A\*. Everyone in the education system: from pupils, teachers, school principals to the Education Minister, is judged on one metric: grades achieved. With*

*grades as the sole metric other essential skills such as creativity and teamwork become secondary or are discarded with the system rewarding those that can perform better in a memory test and de-incentives the creative thinkers.*

19. His observations emerge from the findings of the Innovation into Action project where cross-sectoral stakeholders, including from the education sector, concluded that:

*We are a conservative society that promotes safety over adventure and celebrates academic attainment by the gifted few over the creativity and teamwork of everyone. We lack leadership centred on hope, aspiration and belief and the opportunity to be inspired by and learn from each other.*

20. While there may be cultural factors which intensify this trend in Northern Ireland, it should be noted that progressive educationalists, such as Ken Robinson, have identified the same trends more universally – trends in which the restrictions placed on schools by curriculum requirements impede creative and innovative teaching staff from producing radical change which allows pupils to explore different skills and competences.<sup>25</sup> Prof Robinson argues, however, that it is an economic imperative in a world where imagination and innovation are crucial to the future, that education becomes more diverse and more creative. He explores in his recent work how schools and within them head teachers are a critical part of that solution, and argues for the importance of transdisciplinary education in producing the divergent, disruptive thinkers who will be the future leaders of cultural and economic growth. He talks about the structures that define how the curriculum is organised or common assumptions that a science teacher, for example, can't work with music teacher. By way of resistance to these assumptions, he cites the case of a primary school, where the head teacher abandons the curriculum every Friday to run a small internal university. 30 or 40 classes are made available for any child to attend, provided they go for an eight week series. But some of these classes are taught by the children themselves and the teachers attend as pupils, because the children sometimes know more than the teachers about certain fields - new technologies, for example. Our innovation hubs seek to create

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<sup>25</sup> Robinson, K. and L. Aronica, *Creative Schools: Revolutionizing Education from the Ground Up* (London: Penguin, 2016).

that sort of space beyond the curriculum with a view to further research being carried out on how the curriculum itself could ultimately be evolved to create spaces for innovation where collaborating across difference is the condition for success.

## **Dream**

21. Our vision is for an educational culture where school and university leavers have not just subject knowledge but the skills that knowledge economy employers need additionally. These include:
  - curiosity and imagination;
  - creative problem solving;
  - teamwork and collaboration;
  - analytic and critical thinking;
  - initiative and entrepreneurship;
  - confidence and the ability to create, adapt, collaborate in teams and overcome adversity;
  - Global/transcultural awareness.
  
22. This proposal also maps onto the first Outcome of the Draft PfG 2016-21 which relates to the creation of “a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy”. This outcome will be achieved in several categories of the Draft PfG.
  - Objective 1: We prosper through a strong, competitive, (regionally balanced) economy.
  - Objective 5: We are an innovative, creative society where people can fulfil their potential.
  - Objective 6: We have more people working in better jobs.
  - Indicator 16: Increase the proportion of people in work.

- Indicator 17: Reduce economic inactivity.
- Indicator 18: Increase the proportion of people working in good jobs.
- Indicator 20: Increase the size of the economy.
- Indicator 22: Increase innovation in our economy.
- Indicator 32: Increase economic opportunity for our most deprived communities.
- Indicator 33: Reduce unemployment.
- Indicator 34: Improve regional balance of economic prosperity through increased employment.

23. In the Draft PfG responsibility for these is largely shared between the Department for the Economy and the Department for Communities, with the DE's responsibility focusing on the academic outcomes of the curriculum. The panel would urge the Executive to recognise the crucial role of the DE in moving our society in this direction.

### Design

24. The panel's proposal for beginning to create this space is to build using Fresh Start funding, and as an initial pilot, two Innovation Hubs, one in Belfast and one in Derry-Londonderry. The activities and footfall in these hubs should be monitored annually, with a major review completed at the end of Year 3. The review should also consider, where the pilots are judged to have been successful, the appropriate number of Innovation Hubs to be invested in across Northern Ireland eg one per Area Learning Community. The effectiveness of the training children receive in these hubs will be dependent on the appropriate balance of diversity among participants, so will require sufficient diversity of schools in a given area.

### **Who are they for?**

25. The Innovation Hubs would serve children from all school sectors, crucially working in cross-sectoral groups. Activities should never be for one school alone, as the basis of the innovation work being conducted is that it is predicated on teamwork and collaboration that involves negotiating difference.
26. The Innovation Hubs would be open to children from primary level upwards. The evidence of successful innovation activity with children indicates that Age 8 is appropriate for a number of reasons: not only have children mastered basic literacy and numeracy, but this is also the age at which future paths begin to be defined.

### **What would happen there?**

27. There is significant local and global expertise in delivering innovation-based activity to different cross-sections of the population, including children and young adults; and the panel would recommend that this experience be drawn on via the steering group. Examples include:
  - Northern Ireland Catalyst-Connect
  - Queen's University Belfast Student Enterprise
  - The cross-border Innovation Academy, a collaboration between Queen's University's Graduate School, Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin
  - Young Enterprise, Sentinus, School Employer Connections, W5, Coderdojo, The Prince's Trust.
28. Key features of the Innovation Hubs regardless of specific activity would include:
  - Team working, crucially with individual teams made up of pupils from across different schools
  - This 'borderlessness' symbolized by the absence of school uniforms

- Emphasis on facilitation rather than hierarchy: guide at the side rather than sage on the stage
- Technological awareness
- Project-based/real-world challenge based
- Opportunities for self-reflection (360 analysis etc; model for understanding different roles, personalities, preferences)
- All subject perspectives bring equal value
- All talents bring equal value to reflect the idea of a metric beyond grades

#### Sample Training and Developmental Opportunities

- Creative thinking
- Design thinking
- Communication Skills
- Hackathons
- Social storms
- Employer-led problem-solving sandpits
- Training and support for entrepreneurship and start-ups
- Upscaling of Catalyst Inc's current programmes with post-primary children (weblink) eg Generation Innovation and Connect Young Founders
- Access to technology training for all eg Coderdojo
- Global citizenship (transnational/translational awareness; celebration of different languages represented)

### **When would it happen?**

As noted above, the panel conceives of this activity being co-curricular (at least initially, albeit this idea contains a vision for transforming education in Northern Ireland in the future). The rationale for a co-curricular approach is to free children and facilitators from the pressure of the metrics by which they are commonly judged (ie grades). Notwithstanding, we would wish to explore the possibility of recognition for having completed a certain amount of activity in the innovation hubs eg accreditation by ILM/CMI or a new metric devised by DE. The Queen's University Degree Plus programme could provide a model for an 'Education Plus' metric. Co-curricular activity would blend after-school/weekend activity with models such as the week-long innovation bootcamp which could be offered in the summer holidays.

### **Deliver**

30. Key recommendations in preparing for delivery are as follows:

- The development of the hubs should be overseen by an international steering committee that includes educators, entrepreneurs, leaders in innovation, creative, design thinking, disruptive thinking
- Key to their initial remit would be devising indicators of success for the short, medium and long term – from numbers of children participating in short term to longer term outcomes and indicators aligned to the PfG.
- The physical infrastructure should not replicate a traditional classroom model, but should be based on flexible, collaborative, non-hierarchical organisations of space.
- The hubs would require staff and specialist facilitators who would work in collaboration with schools but who would not be drawn from existing teaching staff. While staffing costs would not be eligible expenditure within the Fresh Start funding, the panel would urge MLAs and Ministers to recognise that the additional funding required to support this initiative is not the remit of DE alone, given that the proposed

interventions have the potential to impact on the economy, culture, welfare, security, as set out under 'Dream' above. The PfG recognises explicitly the need to work differently across Departmental boundaries. This offers a concrete example for encouraging this new mode of working.

**Recommendation 39: That DE should explore with the relevant parties the building, with Fresh Start funding, of two pilot Innovation Hubs in Belfast and Derry-Londonderry to be an inclusive resource for schools and all students generating creativity, innovation and business entrepreneurship opportunities.**



## **Appendices**

### ***Appendix i: Terms of Reference for the Independent Review of Integrated Education***

*Review of the planning, growth and development of integrated education*

#### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide a Terms of Reference for a review of the planning, growth and development of integrated education. The paper defines the strategic context, aim and objectives of the review and the structure and timeframe required.
2. This review will consider how to develop and grow integrated education as defined in the 1989 Order and the Treacy Judgment of May 2014. In the context of ensuring fit for purpose arrangements for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the current constrained financial climate, the review will also examine how to develop a more integrated education system in its widest sense, which will bring together increasing numbers of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils within all schools. The phrase within schools indicates in this context a distinction from Shared Education which specifically involves two or more schools working together.

#### **Integrated Education**

3. Article 64 of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 defines integrated education and stipulates that it 'shall be the duty of the Department to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education, that is to say the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils'.
4. Part VI and Schedules 5 and 6 of the Order further define the arrangements for the establishment, management and governance of grant maintained and controlled integrated schools.

5. In his Judgment of 15 May 2014, Justice Treacy, provided further clarity that 'Article 64 of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 applies only to "integrated education" as a standalone concept within the confines of part VI of the 1989 Order'. He went on to define integrated schools as not having a predominant ethos of one religion, together with a balanced representation on the BOG.

## Background

6. The origin of integrated schools may be traced to a campaign in the early 1970s by a group of parents, under the motto "All Children Together" "to explore the idea of sharing their children's education with other families of differing religious affiliations and cultural traditions in the form of a new type of school, the "integrated school".
7. Lagan College was established as the first independent, integrated school in 1981. The 1980s was characterised by parent-led initiatives supported by charitable trusts and foundations such as Nuffield and Joseph Rowntree to establish a number of new integrated schools, initially without government funding.
8. By 1987, there were seven newly established integrated schools. In that year, NICIE (NICIE) was formed as a charitable organisation to co-ordinate efforts to develop integrated education; and support parent groups through the process of opening new schools.
9. As noted above, the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 provided a statutory framework for the development of integrated schools and placed a responsibility on the DE (DE) 'to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education'.
10. By the late 1990s, there was increasing policy emphasis on the 'transformation' to integrated status of existing schools. To date, this process has only been utilised by controlled schools.

11. There are currently 63 grant-maintained or controlled integrated schools. Overall growth of the number of schools with an integrated management type has slowed since 2000 and in particular during the last decade. The total number of pupils in grant-maintained and controlled integrated schools increased from 14,140 in 2000/1 to 17,558 in 2005/6 but only to 21,956 by 2014/15.
12. Whilst the findings from various surveys suggest a high parental demand/support for integrated education, the numbers enrolling their children in integrated schools do not match this support.
13. The last new grant-maintained integrated school, Blackwater Integrated College, opened in 2008. The last successful transformations to controlled integrated status were in 2010. However, the Minister has recently approved Development Proposals for the transformation of Mallusk and Loughries Primary Schools from controlled to controlled integrated status from September 2015 and September 2016 respectively.
14. In 2006, the Bain Report highlighted the decline in pupil enrolments in the north of Ireland and the need for greater integration within the education system, particularly advocating greater sharing and collaboration between schools.
15. In this context, with the support of external funding from the International Fund for Ireland and the Atlantic Philanthropies, the concept of shared education evolved and a series of pilot projects were implemented. Political and policy discourse has increasingly focused upon the concept of shared education.
16. Shared education involves the sustained provision of opportunities for children and young people from different community, as well as social and economic, backgrounds to learn together. This is specifically achieved through co-operation between schools of differing ownership, sectoral identity and ethos, management type or governance arrangements.

17. In recent years, there has also been increasing interest in what have been termed ‘naturally integrated’ or ‘super mixed’ schools, where Protestant and Catholic pupils are educated together outside controlled or GMI schools. There are currently 60 grant-maintained or controlled integrated schools where at least ten percent of the pupil enrolment is from the minority community.

### Strategic Context

18. In particular, this review should take account of the following:
- a. the Minister’s overall vision and strategy for education;
  - b. all existing DE policies and processes in particular:
    - the Sustainable Schools Policy;
    - the Area Planning process;
    - Every School a Good School;
    - the Shared Education Policy and the DE circular on Jointly Managed Schools;
    - Learning to Learn: A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning, the requirements of the Revised Curriculum and the Entitlement Framework;
    - the protocol for the selection of major capital works; and
    - the overall aims of targeting social need and promoting equality.
  - c. the potential investment in shared and integrated education via the Stormont House Agreement;

- d. the statutory duties on the DE, particularly the statutory duty on the Department under Article 64 of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 to encourage and facilitate integrated education; and the need to ensure that its analysis and recommendations are practical and applicable within the statutory framework;
- e. previous reviews and analysis of the development and planning of integrated education here, including the Education Committee Report on Shared and Integrated Education;
- f. the resources available to the DE in the context of the Budget settlement for 2015/16 and future settlement for 2016/17;
- g. the NIAO Report of June 2015 on the Sustainability of Schools; and
- h. the current organisational structure of the education sector.

### **Aim of the Review**

19. The aim of the review is to make recommendations for structures and processes that support the effective planning, growth and development of a more integrated education system within a framework of viable and sustainable schools.

### **Structure of the Review**

20. The review will be conducted by an independent panel appointed by the Minister. Dr Margaret Topping and Mr Colm Cavanagh will be the panel members.

### **Objectives of the Review**

21. The objectives of the review are to:
- a. analyse the historical growth patterns and nature of the education together of Protestant and Catholic pupils and identify potential obstacles to continuing growth;

- b. examine existing arrangements and, if required, develop proposals for the future strategic development of integrated education as defined in the 1989 Order, including consideration of:
  - i. the future roles of the Department, the Planning Authorities, Arm's Length Bodies and communities;
  - ii. the effectiveness of current arrangements to determine and project levels of demand for integrated education within the wider context of area planning; and
  - iii. the effectiveness of the processes for statutory transformation and the establishment of new integrated schools;
- c. assess how the Duty placed on the Department under Article 64 of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 has assisted in encouraging and facilitating integrated education;
- d. assess the effectiveness of current arrangements and, if required, develop proposals for future sectoral support arrangements for integrated education;
- e. consider how the potential capital investment from the Stormont House Agreement for shared and integrated education can be best used to increase the numbers of Roman Catholics and Protestant pupils being educated together in sustainable schools;
- f. develop short and medium term proposals to develop a more integrated education system based on current legislation, enhance the network of viable schools and are cost effective and value for money; and
- g. develop longer-term proposals to ensure the nature and structure of integrated education remain fit for purpose in light of the significant societal changes in the 25 years since the 1989 Order.

## **Task**

22. The review team is asked to:
  - a. undertake a strategic assessment across all aspects of current planning and development of integrated education;
  - b. undertake appropriate engagement on the way ahead with DE, the Planning Authorities, education organisations, professionals within the education sector, schools and other key stakeholders, including political representatives (primarily through the Assembly Education Committee);
  - c. identify at an early stage key emerging themes and potential issues of public/political/media concern; and
  - d. produce coherent proposals and recommendations to the Minister to support the effective planning, growth and development of a more integrated education system in the form of a report incorporating its analysis, findings and recommendations.

## **Timing of the Review**

23. The review team should complete an interim report after the analysis phase of the assignment has been undertaken.
24. On completion of the full assignment, the review team should prepare its report and submit it in final form by NO LATER THAN 30 June 2016.

**Appendix ii: 1831-2016: Key Events in the Development of Integrated Education**

*1831: The Creation of The National Schools Across Ireland:*

- Ireland was the first country in the English-speaking world to have a government-funded, nationwide system of schools - the National Schools - many of which survive to this day.
- It was a fundamental intention of the government - specifically set out by Chief Secretary Edward Stanley MP in the important 'Stanley Letter' - that the National Schools it funded across Ireland would be attended by all children, with rigidly separated time being available for instruction in religious education according to the denomination of the pupils. Religion was to be completely excluded from the time allocated for the '3 Rs'. The Stanley Letter makes this clear and explicit:

*"... in 1828 a committee of the house of commons ... recommended a system to be adopted which should afford, if possible, a combined literary and a separate religious education, and should be capable of being so far adapted to the views of the religious persuasions which prevail in Ireland, as to render it, in truth, a system of National education ...*

*"... while the interests of religion are not to be overlooked, the most scrupulous care should be taken not to interfere with the peculiar tenets of any description of Christian pupils.*

*"To attain the first object, it appears essential that the board should be composed of men of high personal character, including individuals of exalted station in the church; to attain the latter, that it should consist of persons professing different religious opinions.*



*“... as one of the main objects must be to unite in one system children of different creeds, and as much must depend upon the co-operation of the resident clergy, the board will probably look with peculiar favour upon applications proceeding either from -*

*1st the Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy of the parish;*

Or

*2nd one of the clergymen, and a certain number of parishioners professing the opposite creed;*

Or

*3rd parishioners of both denominations.*

*“Where the application proceeds exclusively from Protestants or exclusively from Roman Catholics, it will be proper for the board to make enquiry as to the circumstances which lead to the absence of any names of the persuasion which does not appear”.*

- And to make sure that textbooks did not stray across the denominational divide, the Stanley Letter specified that the Board:

*“will exercise the most entire control over all books to be used in the schools, whether in the combined moral and literary or separate religious instruction; none to be employed in the first except under the sanction of the board, nor in the latter but with the approbation of those members of the board who are of the same religious persuasion with those for whose use they are intended”.*

- However, under church pressure, the government failed to put these fundamental intentions into effect. By 1860 the churches had secured such concessions from the government that to this day the country has had a distinctly denominational, church-based, school system.

*1923: The Education Act Northern Ireland*

- In 1921 Lord Londonderry became the first Minister for Education in the new Government of Northern Ireland. He, once again, wanted to have all children attend the same non-denominational schools, with no religious instruction during school hours.
- The Minister's Education Act NI was passed in spring 1923. It banned religious instruction during school hours and banned religious discrimination in recruiting teachers. However, the Catholic hierarchy did not wish to participate in these schools; and the Protestant churches disliked the non-denominational nature of these proposed schools.
- Two years later, in 1925, these bans were removed by amending statutes and the previous denominational system continued. The Minister resigned.

*1973: Parents Create "All Children Together"*

- In 1973, a group of Catholic and Protestant parents in County Down came together and formed All Children Together. What they wanted was, essentially, what the Governments in London and Dublin had wanted in 1831; and the Stormont Government had wanted in 1923 - to send their children to schools attended by both Catholic and Protestant pupils.
- They got little political support - and met considerable church disapproval. In 1973 their local Catholic Bishop of Down and Connor, Dr William Philbin, announced that Catholic children who did not attend Catholic schools would not receive the sacrament of confirmation.

*1974: The Power-Sharing Executive*

- In 1974, the short-lived, cross-community 'Power-Sharing Executive' with 51 of the Assembly's 78 seats, comprised representatives of the Ulster Unionist (24), SDLP (19) and Alliance (8) Parties. They unanimously agreed a plan for what they called "shared schools" to cater for children of different denominations and in which the Catholic

and Protestant churches would share the management. Officials of the teacher unions UTU and INTO indicated support - the INTO was on record as having advocating mixed schools since 1969. But reaction of the churches was less united:

- The power-sharing Executive lasted only from 1 January until 28 May 1974.

#### *1978: The Education (NI) Act*

- Given the lack of progress, Northern Ireland peer Lord Henry Dunleath presented in the House of Lords this Bill, drafted by All Children Together with assistance of Stormont's parliamentary draftsmen.
- Passed in the Lords and then introduced in the Commons by Labour MP Peter Hardy, the Bill became law on 25 May. It allowed existing schools where 75% of the church representatives and 75% of the parents so wished, to become an integrated school. There was no successful take-up of this route to integrated status by an existing school.

#### *1981 Lagan College*

- All Children Together opened this first modern formally integrated school in Northern Ireland. It had 28 first-year pupils with two full-time teachers and five part-time teachers. It opened by renting daytime use of a scout hall.
- During its first three years the College received no government funding. The first donor was the Quaker-based Rowntree Trust which guaranteed £15,000 per year for three years to pay the staff wages. In all the parents had to fundraise some £750,000 to keep the school open - and 95% of this was raised outside Northern Ireland.

*1986: Education & Libraries (NI) Order:*

- Section 44 of this 1986 Order sets out the importance of Parental Choice in education:
- *“In the exercise and performance of all powers and duties conferred or imposed on them by [the Education Orders], the Department and boards shall have regard to the general principle that, so far as is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils shall be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents”.*
- This Parental Choice applied to all parents, of course; parents who wanted their children to be educated together as well as those who preferred them to be educated separately.

*1989 Education Reform (NI) Order*

- This Order gave full legislative status to integrated schools. A broad-ranging Order of 201 pages, the 37 articles of Part VI implemented the right of people to create schools where Protestant and Catholic students would study together.
- Article 64 states that:
  - “(1) It shall be the duty of the Department to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education, that is to say the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils”.*
  - (2) The Department may, subject to such conditions as it thinks fit, pay grants to any body appearing to the Department to have as an objective the encouragement or promotion of integrated education.*
  - (3) It shall be the duty of a board to provide free of charge to any person seeking it advice and information about -*
    - (a) the procedures for acquisition by a school of controlled integrated status;*
    - (b) the implications for a school of the acquisition of that status”.*

*Integrated Education in 2016*

- Prior to the 1989 Education Reform Order, Northern Ireland had 8 integrated schools - less than 1% of all Northern Ireland pupils.
- There are now 65 formally integrated schools in Northern Ireland. The total number of pupils currently attending integrated schools is 22,017, which is 6.9% of the total school population of Northern Ireland.

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