



Growth and Demand for Integrated Education

- In 2005, despite falling demographics, over 600 children were turned away due to a shortage of places in integrated schools.
- Six parent groups are currently working to establish integrated provision in the following areas: Saintfield; Moira/Hillsborough; Clogher Valley; Antrim; Limavady; Strabane and Ballymoney.
- Six schools have recently undertaken a parental ballot to transform to integrated status: Tyrella Primary School, Crumlin High School, Ballycastle Primary School, Collone Primary School, Knockbreda Primary School and Conlig Primary School.

Research on Integrated Education

- Repeated *Life and Times* Surveys show that over 60% of people in Northern Ireland support mixed religion schools.
- A Millward Brown Ulster Omnibus Survey (March 2006) asked why parents and grandparents didn't send

their children or grandchildren to an integrated school:

- 46% replied that the reason was because there were none in their area
- only 3% were opposed to Integrated Education in principle
- only 2% preferred a single denomination school.

When asked about the transformation process (how existing schools 'transform' status to become integrated):

- 86% didn't know how this could be initiated, **and yet**
- 71% would support a request to transform their school into an integrated school.

And when asked 'How important is integrated education in Northern Ireland to Peace and Reconciliation?'

- 82% said it was 'very or fairly important'

Demand and support for Integrated Education in Northern Ireland clearly exists on a huge scale.

Integrated Education ...
'makes pupils more willing to challenge stereotypes'

Research on Integrated Education, Cont'd

A 2002 study: *Too Young To Notice? The Cultural and Political Awareness of 3-6 year olds in Northern Ireland*, by Paul Connolly, Alan Smith and Berni Kelly, analysed the tendency of young children to make sectarian comments and found that:

- 7% of 5 year olds and 15% (nearly 1 in 6) of all 6 year olds did so.
- 'The fact these represent the first few years of compulsory schooling is unlikely to be a coincidence' and that 'it certainly seems reasonable to suggest that one explanation is likely to be the de facto segregated nature of the school system itself'.



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Independent research published in January 2006 - '*In Search of Middle Ground: Integrated Education and Northern Ireland Politics*' by Professor Bernadette Hayes, Ian McAllister and Lizanne Dowd revealed that Integrated Education has an extremely positive impact on pupils that extends into later life as it:

- Promotes a less sectarian outlook and willingness to engage with the other 'side'.
- Makes pupils more willing to challenge stereotypes.
- Will nurture the development of individuals who have the potential to create a new common ground in Northern Ireland politics.



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Time for change!

Integrated Education

Helping to Build a Shared Future for Northern Ireland





Northern Ireland is a deeply divided society. We have segregated housing, segregated politics and segregated education. As we emerge from conflict, it is critical that the public, voluntary, community and private sectors, along with politicians, work in harmony to build trust between our communities.

Together, we must learn from our past mistakes. Together, we must tackle community divisions. Together, we must put in place strategies to improve community relations.

The Integrated Education Campaign

The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) and the Integrated Education Fund (IEF) are campaigning to increase not only the integrated school population in Northern Ireland, but also to encourage all schools to consider creative ways of sharing educational resources to build trust, respect, understanding and tolerance between communities. We recognise that Integrated Education is not a panacea in combating sectarianism and inter-community conflict, but believe it must be part of the solution.



What do we want Government to do?

- To engage with NICIE and the IEF, along with other educational partners such as the Department of Education; Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS); Education and Library Boards; Comhairle Na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) and church leaders to discuss strategies for the development of a shared education in Northern Ireland.
- To be held accountable on its existing policy commitment under the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 which places a statutory duty on the Department of Education 'To encourage and facilitate Integrated Education'.
- To fully implement and monitor *A Shared Future* which is the Government's own Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland. This policy unequivocally states that 'Separate but equal is not an option. Parallel living and the provision of parallel services are unsustainable both morally and economically'.
- Under this framework, the Department of Education is required to promote sharing at all levels of education within an overall context of the government's obligation to 'facilitate the development of a shared community where people wish to learn, live, work and play together'.
- To develop, as *A Shared Future* encourages: 'opportunities for shared and inter-cultural education at all levels - nursery, primary, secondary and tertiary, providing further, higher and adult education on an open and integrated basis'.
- To act on the Government's own recognition of the fact that 'The education system... represents a major opportunity to create greater sharing and address the diseconomies of duplication' (*A Shared Future*).
- In new community areas, or where there is growth or decline and necessary rationalisation of educational provision, the Department of Education to conduct community audits to ascertain the needs and the desires of the local community for education provision.
- To make Integrated Education available to every parent who wishes to avail of it for their children either through transformation or, where appropriate, new development.
- To take responsibility for developing a strategy for Integrated Education rather than devolving sole responsibility to parents to campaign for an integrated school in their local area.
- Under the Review of Public Administration (RPA), to ensure that Integrated Education is securely positioned within the proposed new Education Skills Authority.
- To remove the existing cap on oversubscribed integrated schools.
- Facilitate the development and growth of sixth forms in integrated colleges.
- To make it easier for existing schools to transform to integrated status by providing a robust support package, including funding for a transformation officer to work, assist and guide the school through the transformation process.
- Encourage and facilitate the development of shared teacher training and in-service professional development.



To discuss these proposals please contact our Westminster and Northern Ireland lobbyists through:

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Stark Reality

- Approximately 94.5% of children in Northern Ireland attend segregated schools, i.e either predominately Catholic or Protestant.
- It is estimated that £1 billion of tax payers' money is spent each year on duplication of public services in Northern Ireland, for example in housing, health, and transport as well as education.
- There are 50,000 empty places in classrooms across Northern Ireland. This is linked not only to the demographic downturn/birthrate, but also to the segregated school system.

Information about Integrated Education

- The first integrated school, Lagan College, was opened in 1981 with 28 pupils. At present there are over 60 integrated schools educating in excess of 18,000 pupils.
- Integrated schools educate Protestant and Catholic children together along with those of other faiths and none.
- New build schools (Grant Maintained Integrated) aim for a 40:40:20 ratio (Catholic, Protestant and Others) in religious balance whilst transforming schools aim for a 70:30 ratio.
- Integrated schools are co-educational, accept children from all levels of ability and social backgrounds, practice a child-centred approach to teaching methods and follow the statutory Northern Ireland curriculum.
- Integrated schools are particularly well placed to meet the needs of pupils from minority faiths in an increasingly multi-cultural Northern Ireland.