

Location of Integrated Schools



In addition there are 4 Integrated Primary Schools and 3 Integrated Colleges in the Greater Belfast area.

* Schools which have voted to transform to integrated status and are awaiting ministerial approval.

For further information on individual schools please visit www.nicie.org

'None of us is born intolerant of those who differ from us. Intolerance is taught and can be untaught, though often with great difficulty. But in this area, as in others, prevention is far preferable to cure. We must work to prevent intolerance from taking hold in the next generation. We must build on the open-mindedness of young people, and ensure that their minds remain open.'

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, New York, 27 November 2001

Established in 1987, The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) is a charitable organisation that was set up to develop, support and promote Integrated Education in Northern Ireland. NICIE acts as a central forum and umbrella organisation for integrated schools and groups/individuals who are interested in Integrated Education.

If you would like more information on existing integrated schools in your local area, transformation, or starting a parent group to help meet the increasing demand for places, please contact NICIE and ask to speak to a member of the Development Team or visit www.nicie.org



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A brighter future through Learning Together



A Guide to Integrated Education





In the beginning...

In 1981 a group of courageous parents opened the first integrated school, Lagan College, with 28 pupils. These parents believed that by educating their children together, Protestant and Catholic, they would learn to trust, respect and understand each other's cultures and backgrounds. In September 2006 there will be 64 integrated schools - including 2 new schools in Clogher Valley and the Saintfield/Carryduff area independently funded by the Integrated Education Fund. This will bring the number of pupils in Integrated Education to around 18,500. The growth of Integrated Education is a testimony to the thousands of parents who, by choosing an integrated school for their children, are making valuable contributions to peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. 95% of children in Northern Ireland attend segregated schools, ie either predominately Catholic or Protestant.

What is Integrated Education?

Integrated Education brings together in one school, children, parents, teachers and governors from Catholic and Protestant traditions and those of other faiths or none. Pupils experience an education that gives them the opportunity to understand, respect and celebrate all cultural and religious traditions. Parental involvement is a central value of Integrated Education, with a high level of parental representation on Boards of Governors.

'At an integrated school you discover that even though we have different faiths, opinions and backgrounds, we can live in peace. We don't have to change what we are, but we need to learn to understand and respect the culture and traditions of others.' – Sixth form student at an Integrated College.

Parental demand for Integrated Education continues

601 pupils were turned away from integrated schools in September 2005 as there were not enough places to satisfy parental demand. In the past five years, over 4,500 young people have failed to obtain places in integrated schools due to continued over-subscription. The growth of the integrated sector clearly demonstrates the need to move ahead towards a shared future where sharing, rather than segregation, is the default.

How are integrated schools created?

Parents drive Integrated Education and they have an important role in the creation of new integrated schools. Integrated schools are established by the following two routes:

Transformation

Parents or governors initiate the process to change an existing school to integrated status. This is the preferred option in a climate of falling demographics, rationalisation of the schools estate and financial constraints on education budgets. Before new build schools are considered, all existing schools in the area are asked if they will consider transforming to integrated status. Only when this route has been exhausted is consideration given to the second option.

A New Grant Maintained Integrated School (GMI)

A parent group establishes a new integrated school in their local area at an appropriate local site.

'We didn't want our children to go to a segregated school. We wanted our children to have an education where they could celebrate their differences and learn to respect each other's traditions. There wasn't an integrated school in our area, so we started our own'.

Parent group, Magherafelt



What curriculum do integrated schools teach?

All schools deliver the statutory Northern Ireland curriculum. In keeping with the integrated ethos, pupils also have the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of sports, drama and music. Extra-curricular activities are also encouraged. Integrated colleges deliver a high standard of education. They prove that all-ability education does not mean a lowering of academic achievement, with the majority achieving above the Northern Ireland average in the non-grammar school sector at GCSE and A level.

How do integrated schools provide for religious identity?

Although integrated schools are essentially Christian in character, children of all faiths and none are equally welcome. Every child is nurtured in the values of their own religious, ethnic and cultural background. The aim is to enrich individual identity through the understanding of other beliefs.

Do integrated schools cater for children with different abilities?

Integrated schools are open to all levels of academic ability and make every effort to be inclusive of all children, including those with special needs. Integrated schools have developed some excellent practices to ensure that all children reach their full potential. This all-ability, co-educational learning ethos is considered by integrated schools to be the best practice for those children who are academically gifted, as well as those who have other talents and abilities. It also encourages active citizenship and the embracing of diversity in wider society.

