

# **A Strategy for Integrated Education in Northern Ireland**

**Department of Education  
26 April 2023**

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## Foreword

The first integrated school, Lagan College, opened in 1981 with 28 pupils, a principal, one full time teacher and five part time teachers. By 2001, there were 46 integrated schools educating 15,000 pupils. This remarkable growth has continued and Integrated Education continues to be a thriving and vibrant part of the wider education system with 27,000 (8%) of our children and young people currently enrolled in 70 integrated schools.

During 2022, the Northern Ireland Assembly passed the Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland)(NI) 2022 (the IE Act). This legislation updated the legislative framework that had underpinned Integrated Education since 1989 and sets out a range of requirements for an Integrated Education Strategy and Action Plan.

This first strategy sets out the actions the Department and its key Arms Length Bodies, the Education Authority (EA) and the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) currently take to encourage, facilitate and support Integrated Education. It highlights a range of further work that will be taken forward to implement the Act and, as required by the Act, sets out a Plan containing details on the delivery of those actions by the Department (DE) and its delivery partners.

Since the IE Act came into force in October 2022, officials have engaged with a wide range of stakeholders and organisations across the education system. This has shaped the development of this first strategy, which sets out the vision for Integrated Education and the strategic context in which the IE Act and its associated outworkings will be taken forward.

Working to deliver positive outcomes for our children and young people and supporting our children to be happy, learning and succeeding are the key drivers of all the Department's policies and set the context in which delivery of this Strategy will be taken forward. Supporting our learners to contribute to society and the economy through a relentless focus on quality of delivery must continue to be our mission and the implementation of this Strategy will have that same focus.

This Strategy is an important step in contributing to our vision for Integrated Education which is to create 'a vibrant and supported network of sustainable integrated schools providing high-quality integrated education to children and young people'.

As we proceed with implementation, we will do so in the spirit of collaboration and partnership – building on the engagement that has already begun through the development of this Strategy. We will be seeking views on the Action Plan following the Local Elections and a short consultation questionnaire will be made available to support this. I would invite you to use that opportunity to share your views and help to support the ongoing implementation of this Strategy.

Dr Mark Browne

Permanent Secretary

# Chapter 1 – Introduction

## What is Integrated Education?

- 1.1. Section 1 of the IE Act provides a legal definition of Integrated Education which has been extended beyond that laid out in previous legislation around reasonable numbers of Protestants and Catholics to include the education of those from different cultures, differing socio-economic backgrounds and abilities.
- 1.2. *“Integrated Education” means the education together, in an integrated school, of*
  - *Those of different cultures and religious beliefs and of none, including reasonable numbers of both Protestant and Roman Catholic children or young persons;*
  - *Those who are experiencing socio-economic deprivation and those who are not; and*
  - *Those of different abilities.*
- 1.3. The IE Act defines an integrated school as:

*A school which intentionally supports, protects and advances an ethos of diversity, respect and understanding between those of different cultures and religious beliefs and of none, between those of different socio-economic backgrounds and between those of different abilities, and has acquired grant-maintained integrated status, or controlled integrated status under the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989.*
- 1.4. Part VI and Schedules 5 and 6 of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 set out the management and governance arrangements for integrated schools.

## The development of Integrated Education

- 1.5. 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 Education (Northern Ireland) Act 1978 allowed existing schools to transform to integrated status.
- 1.6. Lagan College was established as the first independent, integrated school in 1981. By 1987, there were seven newly established integrated schools. In that year, the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (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.
- 1.7. The Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 provided a statutory framework for the development of integrated schools. Integrated Education was defined in the Order as ‘the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils’ and a statutory duty was placed on the Department to encourage and facilitate Integrated

Education. The Order continued to set out the arrangements for the establishment, management and governance of grant maintained and controlled integrated schools. Subsequently, in 1991, Brownlow College in Lurgan became the first existing school to transform to controlled integrated status.

- 1.8. In 1992, the Integrated Education Fund was co-founded by the Department of Education, the Nuffield Foundation and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, as an independent charity to be a financial foundation for the growth and development of Integrated Education. Since its establishment, the Department of Education has donated over £4.3 million to the IEF.
- 1.9. In 2014, in a judgement relating to a legal challenge by Drumragh Integrated College, 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 faith, together with a balanced representation on the Board of Governors.
- 1.10. In 2016 an Independent Review of Integrated Education was undertaken at the request of the then Minister, Peter Weir. The report was published in March 2017 and its recommendations informed operational work throughout the period until the restoration of the Assembly in 2020. Consideration of its recommendations relating to significant policy and legislative change were then included in the Terms of Reference for the Independent Review of Education which is ongoing.
- 1.11. A key outworking of the Independent Review of Integrated Education was the subsequent development of "Integration Works". This updated guidance for schools considering transforming to integrated status, was published by the Department in 2017. The aim of the guidance was to refresh and reinvigorate the Transformation Process to make it a rewarding and enriching process for schools and their communities that provides unique opportunities to enhance children and young people's educational experiences. Six schools have transformed since the publication of the guidance.
- 1.12. Most recently, the NI Assembly passed the Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (the Act), updating the legislative framework that underpins Integrated Education in Northern Ireland with the intention of supporting future growth of the integrated sector. The Act obtained Royal Assent on 26 April 2022 following its passage through the Assembly. All provisions, unless otherwise specified, came into force six months after the Act received Royal Assent: 26 October 2022.
- 1.13. The Department of Education has taken a key role in encouraging and facilitating the development of Integrated Education since its inception. It was a co-founder and key funder of the IEF and now provides annual recurrent funding to support NICIE. Significant capital investment has been provided to develop new integrated schools and provide modern fit for purposes facilities. Most recently this has included provision of up to £500 million of investment in Shared and Integrated Education and housing through the Fresh Start Programme. Financial support is also provided to transforming schools.

### *Integrated Education today*

1.14. Integrated Education has grown remarkably in the period since 1981. Today, there are 70 integrated schools educating over 27,000 children and young people (8% of all pupils). Parent-led growth at this scale, and in a society emerging from conflict, is unique in the world.

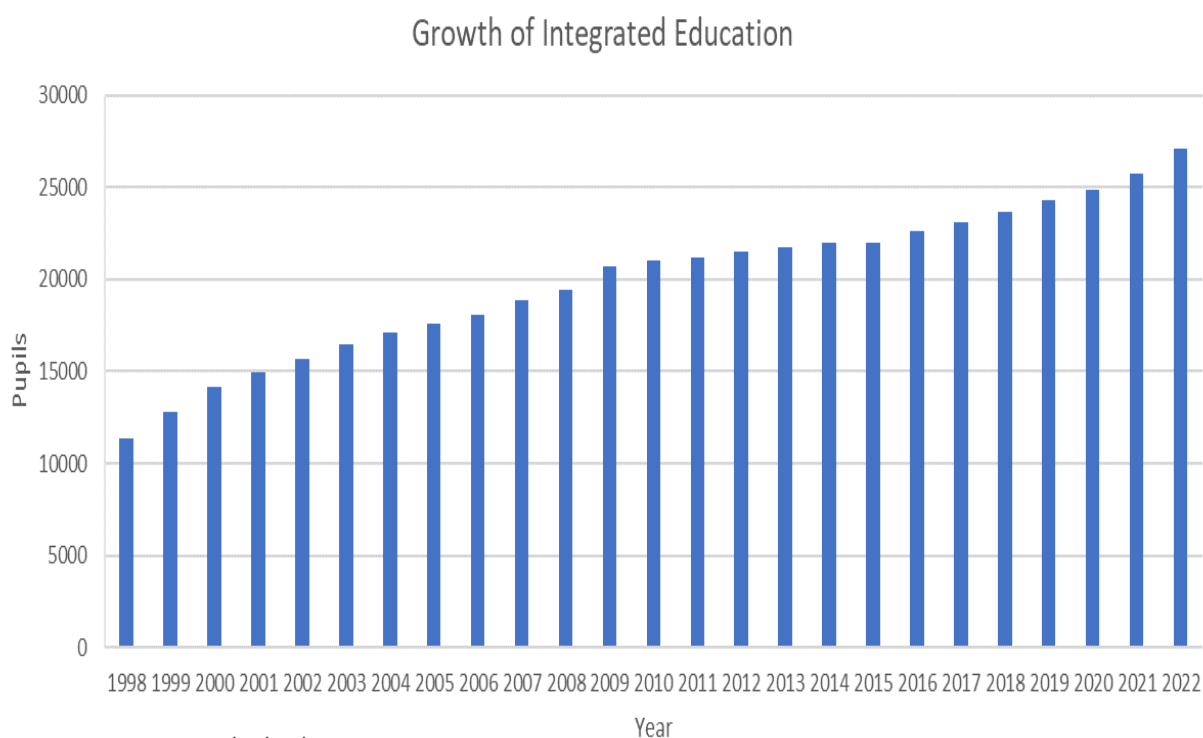
1.15. The tables below set out the overall growth in both integrated schools and the pupil population. They also highlight the consistent ability of integrated schools to attract significant numbers of pupils from Protestant, Catholic and other backgrounds.

*Table 1: Growth of Integrated Schools at 10 Year Intervals*

Number of Integrated Schools				
1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
1	16	46	62	68

1.16. There are currently 70 integrated schools.

*Figure 1: Growth of pupils in Integrated schools 1998-2022*



Source: NISRA Annual School Census.

**Table 2: Religion of pupils by management type of school 2022/23**

<b>Primary</b>	Protestant	Roman Catholic	Other
Controlled	46,003	6,744	29,514
Voluntary	460	226	711
Catholic Maintained	710	75,585	4,991
Other Maintained	284	3,369	522
Controlled Integrated	1,584	1,325	1,933
GMI	1,937	2,738	2,439
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,978</b>	<b>89,987</b>	<b>40,110</b>
<b>Post Primary</b>	Protestant	Roman Catholic	Other
Controlled	31,742	3,284	11,154
Voluntary - Other	11,672	3,223	6,117
Voluntary - RC Managed	414	28,168	1,414
Catholic Maintained	742	37,780	2,302
Other Maintained	4	1,109	64
Controlled Integrated	2,298	688	1,272
GMI	3,714	4,381	2,770
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,586</b>	<b>78,633</b>	<b>25,093</b>

Source: Annual School Census

The 'other' category includes pupils that are classified as other Christian, non-Christian, no religion or where religion is unknown or not provided.

**1.17. The 70 integrated schools in 2022/23 include:**

- **38 Grant-Maintained Integrated Schools consisting of:**
  - 23 primary schools;
  - 15 post-primary schools
- **32 Controlled Integrated Schools consisting of**
  - 2 nursery schools
  - 24 primary schools;
  - 6 post-primary schools

**1.18. In some areas existing schools are unable to provide places for all those children who have expressed a preference for an integrated school. Of the 21 integrated post-primary schools, 13 are above their approved enrolment with 8 being below their approved enrolment. There are 47 integrated primary schools with 28 being above their approved enrolment and 19 below.**



1.19. The maps below show the location and distribution of integrated schools today.

Figure 2: Integrated primary schools by management type

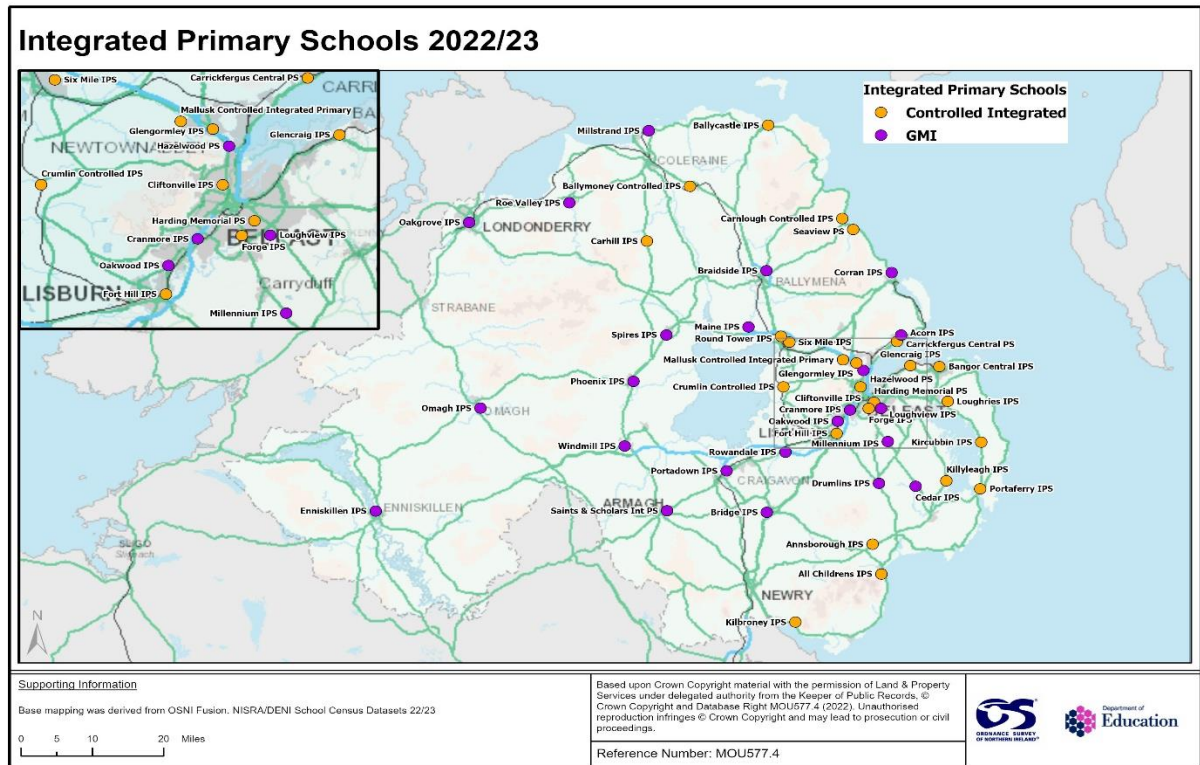


Figure 3: Integrated post primary schools by management type

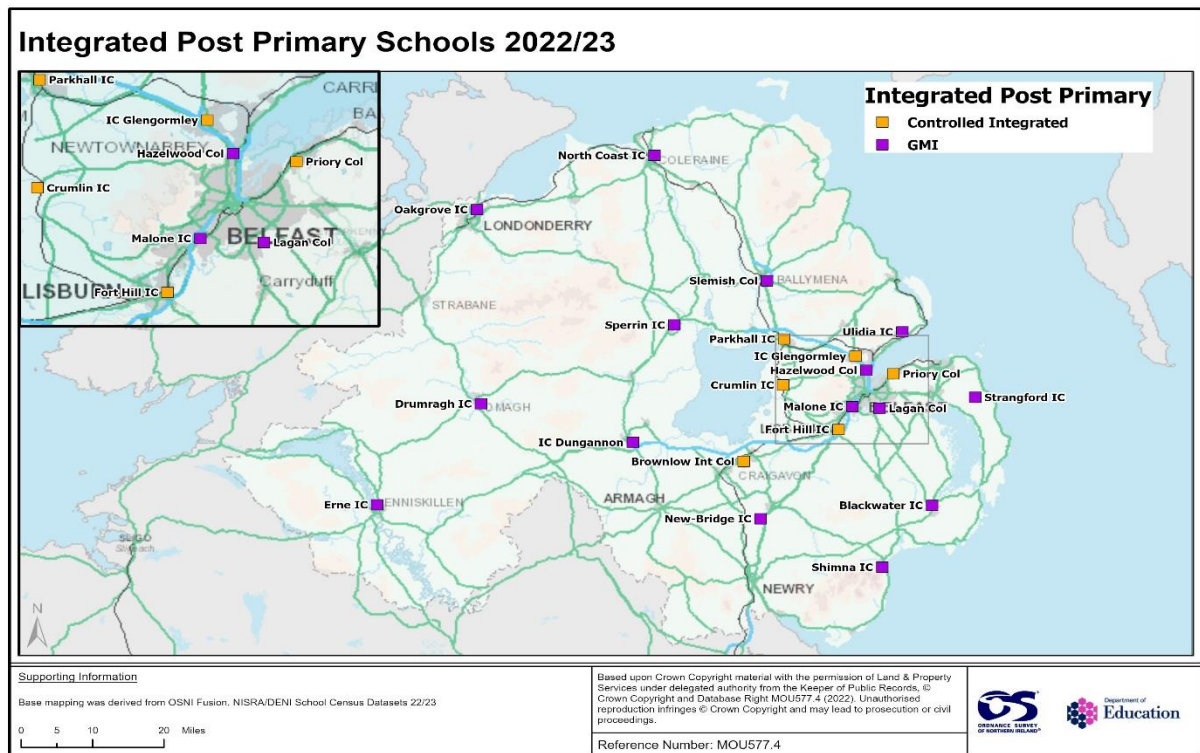


Figure 4: Integrated primary schools over and under subscription

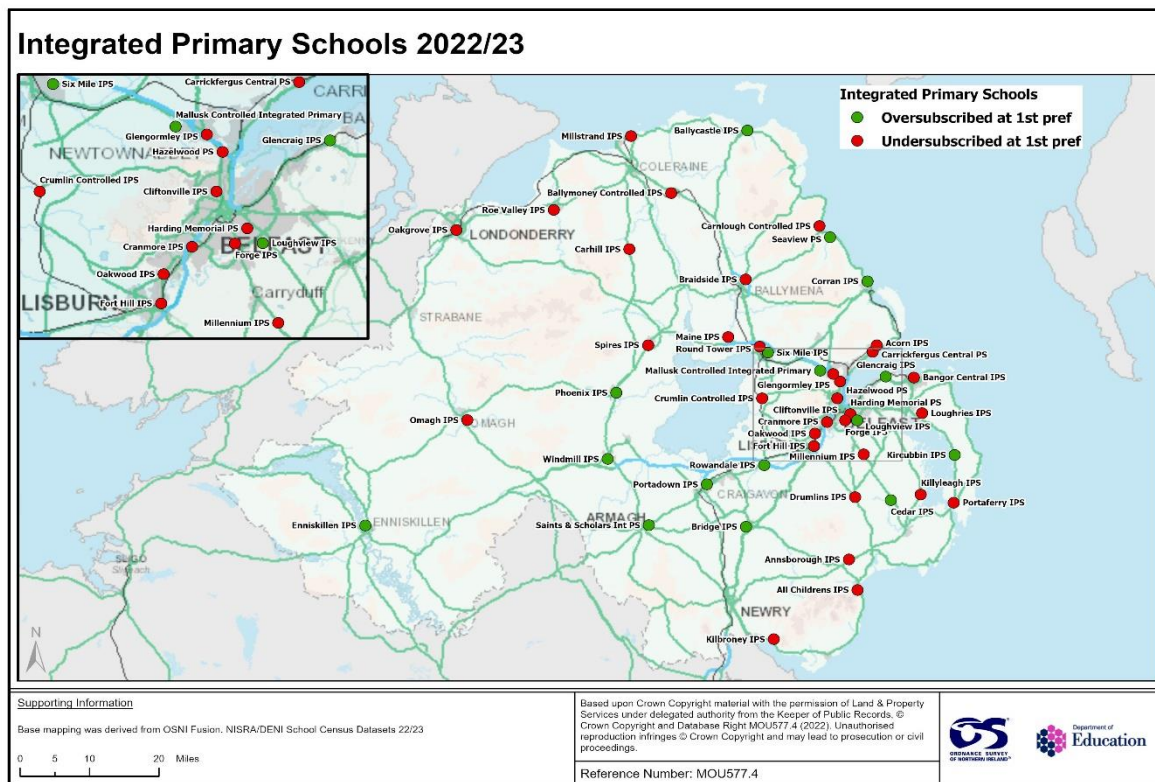
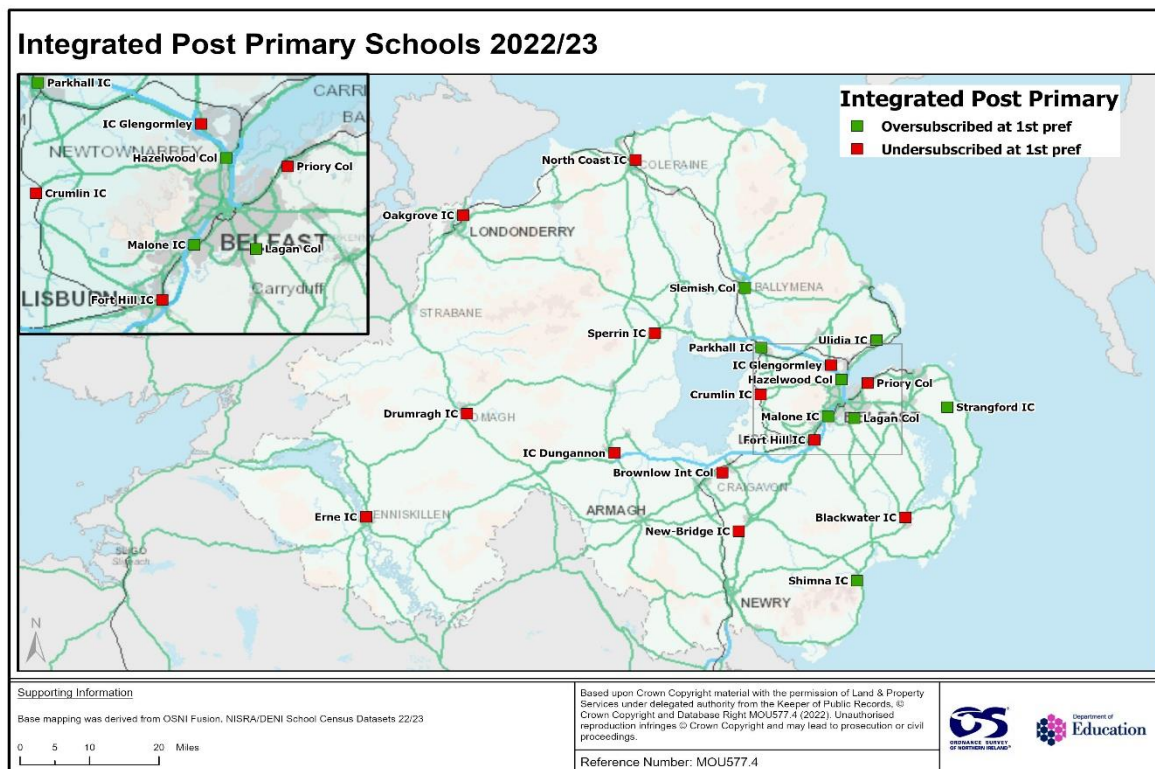


Figure 5: Integrated post primary schools over and under subscription



## Societal Change

- 1.20. The social and political landscape has changed since 1981 when the first integrated school was established in the form of Lagan College.
- 1.21. We know that our community has become increasingly diverse and the more traditional community designations have evolved to reflect wider changes in society. Coupled with this is an increased secularisation, evidenced by the most recent NI Census Statistics that show in 2021, 17.4% of the NI population had 'No religion' – representing a marked increase on 2011 when 10.1% had 'No religion'.
- 1.22. In tandem, there is some evidence that the views of society towards educating children from different religious backgrounds together have evolved in recent years. The Northern Ireland Life and Times survey, undertaken over the period 2001 to 2021, consistently shows that those surveyed are more open to pupils of different religious backgrounds being educated together. Around 70% of respondents report that if they were sending a child to school, they would prefer a mixed-religion school. That said, public understanding of specific terms used in such surveys including Integrated Education, mixed education and shared education, may be imprecise.
- 1.23. There remains a gap between such broad support, as expressed at a societal level in such surveys, and parental preferences as expressed during the school admissions process. This is an issue which we will examine further as we consider in detail how we identify, assess, monitor and aim to meet demand for integrated education.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/census-2021-main-statistics-for-northern-ireland-phase-1-statistical-bulletin-religion.pdf>

## Chapter 2 – Integrated Education in context

### Strategic Context

- 2.1. DE is responsible for setting policy, strategy and for the central administration of education and related services in Northern Ireland and has a wide and complex range of functions, impacting on all areas of a child's education and wellbeing. It is supported in delivering its functions by a range of Arm's length Bodies, each of which is accountable to the Department.
- 2.2. This first Integrated Education Strategy is set within the context of a number of existing principles, policies and processes that underpin the running of schools, admissions and enrolment and the educational offer to our children and young people. These include:
  - Schools for the Future (Sustainable Schools Policy)
  - Open Enrolment;
  - Area Planning;
  - Every School A Good School; and
  - The Entitlement Framework
- 2.3. As with all Departments, the work of the Department of Education is set within the context of the draft Programme for Government – playing a key role in contributing to ensuring that our children and young people have the best start in life.
- 2.4. As the Department with responsibility for policies that impact on our children's lives from the earliest years of life through to adolescence and young adulthood, the Department of Education and the wider education family plays a crucial role in supporting a range of cross-cutting benefits and ultimately to improving outcomes for children and young people.
- 2.5. The Children & Young People's Strategy (2020-2030) provides the framework for action across all Departments in improving the lives of children and young people across society and in encouraging cross-departmental and cross-sectoral collaboration in supporting better outcomes. This Integrated Education Strategy, along with the wider suite of DE policies will play an important role in support of the outcome that children will learn and achieve.
- 2.6. The Department recognises the immense contribution that education makes to shaping the society of today and to building the world of tomorrow. Supporting our children and young people to thrive and ensuring they enjoy an enriched and fulfilled educational experience today is matched by the ambition of equipping them for the challenges and opportunities of a changing world – providing them with the knowledge and skills to contribute to society and the economy. It is our role to support the social, cultural, intellectual, and academic development of the individual person preparing them for life, work and citizenship in the 21st century.
- 2.7. At a local level our schools play a crucial role as hubs within the community – providing a safe and trusted space and maintaining an all important continuity in

changing times. Increasingly schools are leading the way in building relationships and connections within and across communities – at the forefront of co-ordinated action to improve the lives of children and their families.

- 2.8. As society continues to grapple with the legacy of the pandemic and with other complex social challenges, the role of education has never been as important as now in shaping a better future for our children.
- 2.9. It is within this context that the Department recently published its draft Corporate Plan for the period 2023-28: 'Every CHILD'. The Plan is structured around five Strategic Priorities for education, using the CHILD acronym, as follows:
- CHAMPIONING the needs and aspirations of all our children and young people and the positive impact of education;
  - HELPING all our children and young people by supporting their well-being and learning;
  - INSPIRING all our children and young people to make a positive contribution to society;
  - Meeting the LEARNING needs of our children and young people and developing their knowledge and skills, enabling them to fulfil their potential;
  - DELIVERING an effective, child-first, collaborative and high-quality education system.
- 2.10. The vision is that 'Every child and young person is happy, learning and succeeding' regardless of their background, experience or needs. This positive vision for our children and young people sets out clearly our aspiration for all and lays down a challenge to place our children at the centre of our planning, our policymaking and our practice.
- 2.11. The Department has an ambitious policy agenda to support delivery of the vision and objectives articulated in the draft Corporate Plan – with a particular emphasis on:
- The design and delivery of the NI Curriculum in supporting the learning of our children and young people;
  - Supporting the delivery of high quality teaching and learning through an increased focus on Teacher Professional Learning through the Learning Leaders' Strategy;
  - School Improvement and the Review of Every School A Good School;
  - Improving outcomes for children with Special Educational Needs;
  - Concentrating our efforts on tackling educational disadvantage;
  - Implementation of the 14-19 framework; and
  - Increasing our children and young people's readiness to learn through building their emotional health, well-being resilience.
- 2.12. The golden thread woven through this ambitious programme is the focus on the child and the drive for improved outcomes and high quality provision. It is within this context that the Integrated Education Strategy must be read and understood.



2.13. The Department is supported in delivering its vision, policies and services by a range of Arms Length Bodies. These bodies are:

- Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CNaG)
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)
- Education Authority (EA)
- General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland
- Middletown Centre for Autism
- Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)
- Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)

2.14. The Department also has a close partnership role with the Controlled School Support Council (CSSC) who it funds to support controlled education and Catholic Schools' Trustee Service (CSTS) which acts as a sectoral support body for Catholic schools.

2.15. Each of these organisations across the education system plays an important role in the delivery of services to children and young people. The delivery of high quality services, set within the context of a clear and coherent policy framework offers significant opportunities to impact positively on children and young people's educational experience and outcomes.

2.16. Partnership and collaboration are important enablers in improving outcomes for our children and young people. Within the context of increasingly constrained financial resources, these principles will become increasingly important and will underpin the delivery and implementation of this Strategy. The relationships that have already been established with the Integrated Education sector over many years and the engagement that has developed in bringing forward this Strategy offer a solid foundation on which to continue to build as we seek to achieve the vision set out for Integrated Education here.

## Chapter 3 – Structures and Approaches to Encouraging, Facilitating and Supporting Integrated Education

### Introduction

- 3.1. As the development of Integrated Education has evolved, so too has the range of support provided by the Department and its Arms Length Bodies. Our understanding of the statutory duties has advanced in recent years, as we aim to continually develop our awareness of what constitutes best practice. The clarification provided by important case law, such as the Drumragh Judgment of May 2014, has supported us to be increasingly pro-active in fulfilling our statutory obligations.
- 3.2. The Department implements a range of sector specific support for Integrated Education which currently comprises three core elements. Firstly, core funding of NICIE as a dedicated organisation to promote, grow and support Integrated Education. Secondly, a range of bespoke sector specific funding to further enhance the development of the sector. This ranges from the Fresh Start funding for large scale capital works to resource funding for transforming schools. Thirdly, policies and processes have been adapted and applied flexibly to support the ongoing growth of the sector in line with parental demand.
- 3.3. There is also active and ongoing engagement within the Department across all policy areas in monitoring and developing approaches to the delivery of the statutory duty to encourage, facilitate and support the development of Integrated Education.
- 3.4. As noted above, a key aspect of the Department's work in terms of discharging its statutory duties in relation to Integrated Education is through the sponsorship of NICIE, which in turn plays a key role in supporting the wider development of Integrated Education.
- 3.5. The underpinning principles of partnership and collaboration are important outworkings of the sponsorship role undertaken by the Department. Regular engagement with schools, practitioners and other key stakeholders across the integrated sector is a feature of the Department's approach and we will build on this to enhance these important relationships through the implementation of this Strategy.
- 3.6. The development and publication of Integration Works, the transformation guidance document, in December 2017 represented a significant step forward for Integrated Education and in particular began to embed the development of collaborative working and co-design. This important document was developed in partnership with a range of stakeholders across the sector. In this same spirit of partnership and as a result of this Strategy, the Department commits to reviewing this guidance in the context of the IE Act (see Chapter 4 below).

### The role of the Department of Education

- 3.7. Since the passage of the IE Act, the Department has reviewed its procedures to reflect the need to fulfil the revised duties under the Act including the duty to encourage,

facilitate and support the development of Integrated Education when developing, adopting, implementing, or revising policies, strategies and plans; and designing and delivering public services.

- 3.8. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department collated evidence regarding implementation of the statutory duties on an annual basis. Whilst this was paused during the pandemic, this annual internal exercise has now recommenced. It provides an important central inventory of key policies and programmes; the steps taken to consider the duties and any adjustments made in light of the statutory duties. The inventory acts as an up-to-date and definitive point of reference for the Department to ensure that the statutory duties are being considered across all key areas.
- 3.9. In addition, refresher training is carried out by the DE Sponsor team for new entrants to the Department and Arms Length Bodies on the importance of the statutory duty and an internal Departmental desk aid provides advice on how the duty should be applied in developing new policy. The role of the Sponsor Team is important in this regard and it works closely with NICIE on any emerging issues arising from the annual exercise.
- 3.10. Engagement and dialogue with all sections of the education system are prerequisites of effective policy development and its successful implementation. In delivering its draft Corporate Plan, the Department views strategic partnership, collaboration and effective engagement as key enablers. Representatives and advocates of Integrated Education are included in departmental working and strategic groups providing a vehicle for dialogue, input and for their views to be considered. This engagement will be an ongoing feature of the Department's approach and the integrated sector will continue to be an important voice alongside others in shaping policy design.
- 3.11. In recent years, the Department has been increasingly proactive in adapting a wide range of policies and processes to take account of the statutory duties and to support the development and growth of the integrated sector.
- 3.12. For example, Temporary Variation (TV) policy has been adapted to treat Integrated Education as a standalone sector. Therefore, where an Integrated School requests a TV to its admissions or enrolment the Department only examines the availability of places in Integrated provision rather than provision that may be available in other sectors. An Area Planning Notice<sup>2</sup> was issued by the Department to state that, 'The Department intends to review and revise its guidance in relation to DPs i.e. Circular 2017/09 in due course, in light of the Act and consult with the appropriate advisory bodies, as per the requirements of the Act'. This notice sets out the interim steps being taken by the Department and the requirement for the IE Act to be considered in future proposals in relation to Integrated Education.
- 3.13. Several policy areas have a particular impact on the growth and development of Integrated Education. The following sections provide a brief outline of their role and how Integrated Education is encouraged, facilitated and supported.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/iea-area-planning-notice>



## Area Planning and Sustainable Schools Policy

- 3.14. Area Planning is the process of strategic planning of primary and post-primary education provision. This process has been developed to support the implementation of the Sustainable Schools Policy (SSP). The Department requires the statutory planning authorities (EA and CCMS), managing authorities and the sectoral support bodies (NICIE, CnaG, Governing Bodies Association, CSSC, Catholic Schools' Trustee Service and the Transferors Representatives' Council) to collectively identify future education needs and develop solutions to meet those needs on an area basis.
- 3.15. Development Proposals (DP's) are the means through which the provision in an area is shaped to deliver the strategic vision outlined in the Strategic Area Plan. All DPs are considered in the wider context of the Department's statutory duties and policies to ensure that they support the implementation of the Area Plans. When a significant change to a school is proposed, and significantly altering its size or character, the publication of a DP is a statutory requirement. "Significant changes" are not defined in legislation, but the Department has power to determine what is significant, and for the purposes of the DP process deems the proposed changes listed in paragraphs 5.8 - 5.11 of its published guidance ([Circular 2017.09 DP Guidance updated 14 September 2018.pdf \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](#)) to be "a significant change in the character or size" (which may have the potential to have "a significant effect on another grant-aided school" - paragraph 5.12) which will require the publication of a DP.
- 3.16. In all Integrated Education DPs, full consideration is given to the requirements of the statutory duty. The Department takes account of the unique needs and position of the IE sector when considering proposals for new or additional provision or to transform to an integrated school, by considering the level of provision of an integrated management type separately and in addition to considering the level of provision overall.
- 3.17. Since 2012 the Department has taken decisions on 61 published proposals covering a broad spectrum of changes to integrated provision including, but not limited to: establishment and/or expansion of statutory integrated pre-school provision; establishment of new integrated schools; increases to approved admission/enrolment numbers; establishment of post-16 provision; and acquisition of integrated status by schools in the controlled and maintained sectors through the Transformation process.
- Between 2012 and 24 April 2023, decisions have been taken on 61 Development Proposals relating to Integrated Education provision (this includes proposals for transformation of schools in other sectors).
  - Of the 61 decisions, 44 (72%) have been approved and 17 (28%) not approved.
  - By phase, 12 (27%) of the 44 approvals relate to pre-school provision, 18 (41%) to primary provision and 14 (32%) to post-primary provision.
  - In total, through the DP process, 5,089 places have been added to integrated schools (in this respect where transformation to integrated status has been

approved, we have used the approved enrolment for the transformed school for the number of places added) as follows:

- Pre-school 416
- Primary 1,783 (1,937 added and 154 removed)
- Post-primary 2,890

3.18. NICIE represents the interests of integrated education at a strategic, operational and local level within the Area Planning structures and assists grant-maintained integrated schools within the planning process. In addition, the EA and the CSSC also have a role for planning for controlled integrated schools in this process.

#### School admissions

3.19. Admissions and enrolment numbers are set annually for primary and post-primary schools and the Department oversees the EA operation of the primary school admissions and post-primary transfer processes.

3.20. Admission to schools is undertaken under open enrolment arrangements. These arrangements allow parents to express a preference for the schools they wish their child to attend, however, parental preference is not absolute and is constrained by the physical capacity of each school. Each school has approved admissions and enrolment numbers set by the Department which sets limits on the number of children a school can admit.

3.21. If a child has a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN), they may be placed in a school if that setting is deemed to be appropriate to meet their needs following consultation between parents, the school and the EA as set out in the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 and reflected in the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (1998).

3.22. Where a school wishes to exceed their approved admissions or enrolment number to enable it to admit named children, it must seek the Department's prior approval by way of a Temporary Variation (TV) request.

3.23. The Department's aim is to ensure that as far as possible every child can access a place in a grant-aided school within reasonable travelling distance of their home address and within the family's preferred sector.

3.24. Significantly, in respect of integrated schools, no account is taken of available places in any other type of school when considering a TV request from an integrated school. Therefore, availability of places in other types of schools are not considered and TVs from integrated schools will only be turned down if availability exists in other integrated schools in the area.

3.25. In recent years the Department has been undertaking detailed analyses of area demographics in order to cater for anticipated pressures in the post primary transition cohort. In order to ensure a smooth transition for P7 children through to year 8 an additional places exercise has been implemented since 2019. The table below shows

the total number of additional year 8 places allocated to schools in each year as well as the number and proportion allocated to integrated schools. In the period 2019 – 2022 11% of additional year 8 places were allocated to integrated schools and, looking forward in the period 2023 – 2025 68% of additional year 8 places have been allocated to integrated schools. The purpose of this exercise was to ensure that sufficient places were allocated to schools in advance of the admissions process, to allow the process to complete successfully. Further places were added through the Temporary Variation process (during the post primary transfer process). Between April 2022 and March 2023, 100% of TV requests from integrated schools were approved resulting in a further 95 places in integrated schools in 22/23.

*Table 3: Additional year 8 places allocated 2019-2025*

Year of Transfer	Number of Additional Places	Number of Additional Integrated Places	% of Integrated Places
2019	413	123	29.8%
2020	443	20	4.5%
2021	361	0	0.0%
2022	234	20	8.5%
2023	137	85	62.0%
2024	95	65	68.4%
2025	55	45	81.8%

#### Temporary Variations

*Table 4: Approved primary Integrated TVs 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023*

Year	Number of Admission TVs Requested	Number of Admission TVs Approved	% of Places Approved
2022/23	15	15	100.0%

*Table 5: Approved post primary Integrated TVs 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023*

Year	Number of Admission TVs Requested	Number of Admission TVs Approved	% of Places Approved
2022/23	80	80	100.0%

## Early years provision

- 3.26. The Department aims to provide one year of funded pre-school education for every child in their target pre-school year whose parents want it. Learning to Learn – a policy framework for early years education and learning – was published in 2013 and remains the Department’s extant early years policy.
- 3.27. Pre-school education is provided through statutory and non-statutory providers participating in the universal Pre-school Education Programme (PSEP).
- 3.28. NICIE are represented on the EA Pre-School Education Group who are responsible for determining the levels of pre-school provision required to meet demand for places in all areas, including making decisions on the allocation of funded places within non-statutory pre-school providers. DE has advised the EA that the PEG should strive to meet demonstrated parental demand for provision of an integrated management type. This is an important factor in PEG consideration of funding of local provision, advice on temporary flexibility and advice on Development Proposals for all new or additional pre-school provision.
- 3.29. In addition to funded pre-school provision in statutory settings of an integrated management type (nursery schools and nursery units attached to primary schools), the Department, through the EA, also funds pre-school provision in a number of non-statutory providers linked to integrated schools. This provision helps provide flexibility and timely support to the sector to meet new or emerging demand for pre-school provision of an integrated management type.
- 3.30. Statutory nursery school and nursery units in primary schools may request Temporary Flexibility (TF) for up to four additional places per class (ie from 26 up to a maximum of 30). TF is available to address a shortage of pre-school places for target age children within an area which cannot be met by any other pre-school provider as part of the Pre-School Education Programme (PSEP). When considering a request for TF from an Integrated school, specific and explicit consideration is given to the availability of pre-school places in other Integrated schools in the area. Where a parent has listed Integrated education provision as their first or only preference, only alternative Integrated education pre-school places are included in the consideration of ‘alternative places’, even where provision of other management types is available in the area.
- 3.31. DP’s for early years statutory provision are considered through the area planning process. The duties in relation to Integrated education are an explicit consideration in every early years proposal.
- 3.32. The former Minister announced in September 2022 her intention, over time, to standardise pre-school education sessions to 22.5 hours per week for all target-aged children. A scoping exercise to inform this work has commenced. Representatives from the integrated sector have been involved in the preparation for this exercise, and all pre-school settings and representative bodies will be involved.

3.33. DP's for new or additional pre-school provision of an integrated management type considered during the planning and implementation of pre-school standardisation will take the unique position of the integrated sector into consideration. Where proposals are not approved initially, the Department will take the proposed provision into account again when implementing pre-school standardisation in the local area. This is intended to minimise the administrative burden on the sector, by enabling proposals to be reopened without additional work carried out by the school or its managing authority.

#### Capital investment - Fresh Start Funding

3.34. The Fresh Start Agreement (FSA) set out a commitment by the UK Government to release up to £500 million of new capital funding over a ten year period to support shared and Integrated Education and housing.

3.35. In March 2016, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland announced 23 separate education projects to be funded through the Fresh Start funding. In November 2018, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a further five projects. Of the 28 projects announced to date, five are shared education campuses and 23 are major capital works projects at integrated schools.

3.36. Fresh Start funding is entirely additional to the usual Executive capital funding stream and it represents a significant level of unique investment in integrated and shared education which will benefit pupils for many years to come.

3.37. To date, modern state-of-the-art new school builds have been completed for Braidside, Drumlins and Enniskillen Integrated Primary Schools and seven further new build projects for integrated schools are in construction contract.

3.38. The additional injection of Fresh Start investment will modernize the integrated schools estate and provide fit-for-purpose education facilities to support delivery of the curriculum in the 21st century.

#### Departmental Arms Length Bodies

3.39. The Department requires all its Arms Length Bodies to support the delivery of this statutory duty, and to report back on actions taken during the business year. However, two bodies play a key part in encouraging, facilitating and supporting Integrated Education.

#### The Education Authority

3.40. The EA is an executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) of DE and is responsible for securing adequate provision for primary (including pre-school) and secondary education; and for recreational, social, physical, cultural and youth service activities for grant-aided schools and other grant-aided educational establishments. The EA's duties and responsibilities include:

- ensuring there are sufficient schools providing primary and post-primary education to meet the needs of all the people in NI;
- ensuring that provision is made for pupils who have Special Educational Needs (SEN);
- statutory duty to encourage, facilitate and promote shared education as well as promoting the community use of school premises;
- securing the provision of adequate youth service facilities and funding the provision of regional youth service activities; and
- assisting the Department as appropriate in discharging its statutory duties, including those relating to the encouragement and facilitation of both integrated and Irish-medium education.

3.41. The EA is 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.

3.42. The EA is accountable for the funding provided directly to it and for the funding delegated to controlled schools and Catholic maintained (and other maintained) schools. The EA is the statutory funding authority for grant-maintained integrated and voluntary grammar schools. The EA is responsible for ensuring schools achieve good outcomes for their pupils in return for the money invested.

3.43. As the overall Planning Authority for the schools' estate, the EA aims to identify realistic and creative solutions to address educational needs, including opportunities for shared schooling and creating integrated or jointly managed schools.

3.44. The EA has established a Shared Education and Sectoral Support Team which works with NICIE to support integrated schools, including those who are in the process of transforming. The Controlled Schools Support Council also works with both NICIE and the EA to support controlled integrated schools.

3.45. EA has reviewed its systems and processes in light of the IE Act and will bring forward a range of actions in support of the legislation. The EA will report on delivery of its actions to the IE Steering Group.

The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)

3.46. NICIE is a non-statutory executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) of DE. The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 placed a statutory duty on the DE to encourage and facilitate the development of Integrated Education. The 1989 Order enables the Department to pay grants to any body appearing to the Department to have as an objective the encouragement or promotion of Integrated Education. This is the basis on which the Department funds NICIE.

3.47. NICIE's Strategic Plan 2022-25 is firmly linked to the DE Strategic Priorities, the Programme for Government and the Children and Young People's Strategy. It includes a vision of "A society where children are educated together; confident to express their own identity and culture; respectful of, and prepared to engage with, the identity and culture of others".

3.48. Underlying this vision, NICIE has three strategic priorities for the period 2022-2025:

1. Promote Integrated Education  
Promote Integrated Education to create measurable change in awareness and understanding, leading to an increase in demand for integrated schools.
2. Grow Integrated Education  
Support the growth and development of Integrated Education to be an accessible option in all geographical areas in Northern Ireland.
3. Support Integrated Education  
Support the development of the integrated ethos to help governors and leaders to advance sustainable and exemplary integrated and transforming schools.

3.49. The Department funds NICIE to encourage, facilitate and promote Integrated Education. NICIE carries out a support role for grant maintained integrated schools (see Chapter 1) as well as supporting schools considering transformation and for at least 5 years post-transformation. It represents Integrated Education at all levels of the Area Planning structures which look strategically at where sustainable, high quality educational provision is needed in each area for each phase of education.

3.50. NICIE also works with other partner organisations to: support ethos development in existing integrated schools; provide anti-bias training and support to existing integrated schools; and support schools considering transforming to integrated status.

## RESOURCES

Common Funding Formula and how it operates across all schools.

3.51. All grant-aided schools are funded under the Common Funding Scheme. The Common Funding Formula (CFF) is the Department's mechanism for allocating budgets to schools funded through Local Management of Schools arrangements.

3.52. The Common Funding Scheme has been developed in accordance with the following key principles:

- Sustainable schools should be funded according to the relative need of their pupils, and in a way that enables the effects of social disadvantage to be substantially reduced. [Note: the term "sustainable" refers to the DE Policy on sustainable schools, '[Schools for the future - A policy for sustainable schools](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/sustainable-schools)' (<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/sustainable-schools>);
- Sustainable schools should be funded on a consistent and fair basis, taking full account of the needs of pupils;
- The formula should support schools in delivering the curriculum;

- The formula should underpin and reinforce wider education policy and objectives; and
- The formula should be as transparent and comprehensible as possible and predictable in its outcome.

### Funding integrated schools

3.53. All grant-aided schools are funded under the Common Funding Scheme and there is no additional specific funding under the CFF for integrated schools. However, grant maintained integrated and voluntary grammar schools are allocated an amount of funding for 'Landlord Maintenance' and 'Administration Costs' under the CFF based on the equivalent spend on comparable functions by the Education Authority for controlled and maintained schools. The distribution of funding under these factors takes account of the additional responsibilities and associated costs to these schools which are funded centrally for controlled and maintained schools.

3.54. The Aggregated Schools Budget for all schools is distributed under two funding streams, the Nursery & Primary Funding Stream and Post Primary Funding Stream. Each have their own formula and funding factors. The formula for each funding stream is made up of a range of factors developed to reflect the main costs associated with schools, namely numbers of pupils; their ages and profile; the relative size of schools; costs associated with school buildings; together with a range of other factors which recognise the distinctive features of individual schools and certain pupils that give rise to significant and unavoidable costs.

3.55. The total funding for integrated schools in 2022-23 was £111.59m. This represents 8.07% of the Aggregated Schools Budget of £1,383.35m. The funding was split between the two funding streams as follows, Nursery & Primary Funding Stream (£40.24m) and Post Primary Funding Stream (£71.35m). To provide context, this funded what were 70 integrated schools (2 Nursery, 47 Primary and 21 Post Primary) at the time of the October 2022 schools census (i.e. 6.6% of our 1,067 grant-aided schools). These 70 schools educate 27,079 pupils (FTE), being 8.1% of the total 335,387 pupils (FTE) at the October 2022 census.

### Capital Funding

3.56. The Department invests capital funding to improve and upgrade the school estate, including meeting the needs of integrated schools. The capital programme particularly aims to support the development and delivery of the Northern Ireland curriculum and a network of viable and sustainable schools support high quality effective learning for our children and young people.

3.57. Funding is delivered through a number of programmes including Minor Works, the School Enhancement Programme and the Major Capital Programme. As noted earlier in the chapter, Fresh Start funding is entirely additional to the usual Executive capital funding stream and represents a significant additional capital investment stream for Integrated and Shared Education.



- 3.58. As of March 2023, approximately £47m will have been spent on integrated schools through the Fresh Start Programme. This is as expected given that the early work on capital projects focuses on procuring design teams, identifying site options, preparing business cases, completing the design and procuring a contractor, which is not capital intensive.
- 3.59. With a significant number of projects now on site, including those for Shimna, New-Bridge and Ulidia Integrated Colleges and Millstrand, Phoenix and Roe Valley Integrated Primary Schools, the projected spend profile will increase significantly from 2023 onwards and the Department envisages that all Fresh Start funding will be utilised.

#### Resourcing Implementation of the Statutory Duty

- 3.60. The Department invests in fulfilling its statutory duties on Integrated Education in a number of ways – directly and specifically through the provision of core funding to NICIE and additionally through the provision of funding to support implementation of Integration Works.
- 3.61. Staffing resource within the Department is in place to oversee the work necessary to fulfil statutory duties in relation to Irish Medium, Integrated Education and Shared Education. In recognition of the additional and changing requirements under the IE Act, the Department has established an additional team to take forward implementation of the legislation. This level of resource will continue to be kept under review to ensure effective maintenance of the Strategy in line with the requirements of the legislation.
- 3.62. The implementation of the IE Act and the consequent development and delivery of this strategy are set within an extremely constrained and challenging financial context characterised by significant budgetary pressures across the education system and indeed beyond.
- 3.63. A budget allocation has been identified to support implementation of this initial strategy. As the implementation of the Strategy develops, a fuller and more detailed assessment of budget requirements will be needed.

## Chapter 4 – Delivering Integrated Education

### The role of Integrated Education

- 4.1. The Department is responsible for setting policy, strategy and for the central administration of education and related services in Northern Ireland. In delivering this, the Department, in line with parental preference, aims to encourage, facilitate, and support a vibrant and supported network of sustainable integrated schools providing high-quality integrated education to children and young people.
- 4.2. Allports (1954) contact theory is based on the premise that increased meaningful and collaborative contact between people helps increase understanding and support the breaking down of prejudices and intolerances. Extended contact between children and young people from different community backgrounds, such as that provided in integrated schools, creates the conditions for generating mutual respect and understanding.
- 4.3. This principle underpinned the development of the Together: Building a United Community Strategy that focuses on increasing opportunities for relationships to be established across all sections of society.
- 4.4. Continuing to build a transformed and more shared society is a key priority for government. Our education system has a key role to play in contributing to the vision and objectives of the Together: Building a United Community Strategy and to the shared aim to continue to improve attitudes amongst our young people and to build a community where they can play a full and active role in building good relations.'
- 4.5. Schools across all sectors are preparing our children and young people to live and work in a global, multicultural and pluralistic society. Many schools are now educating children and young people from diverse religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Schools often collaborate through Area Learning Communities or Shared Education Partnerships, which aim to provide opportunities for pupils from different religious and socio-economic backgrounds to be educated together.
- 4.6. Integrated Education, which provides exciting opportunities for children and young people from different community backgrounds to learn together on a daily basis, has a key role to play in building a shared society. Integrated schooling has a significant and positive social influence on the lives of those who experience it. This is most notable in fostering cross-community friendships, reducing prejudicial attitudes and promoting a sense of security in religious, racial or ethnically diverse environments. As we aim to become a shared society that respects diversity, Integrated Education has much to offer the school system and society as a whole.

### Integration and Shared Education

- 4.7. Northern Ireland has a diverse schools system and all types of school are valued for the contribution they make to the education of children and young people here. Integration and Shared Education encourages schools to collaborate to provide

opportunities for pupils from different religious and socio-economic backgrounds to be educated together. Schools retain their individual ethos collaborating together in partnership for the benefit of their pupils.

- 4.8. Together, Sharing Works (2015) and the Shared Education Act (Northern Ireland) introduced the following year, provide a policy and legislative framework which seeks to enable collaborative working between educational settings, on a cross sectoral basis, providing children and young people from different religious and socio-economic backgrounds with opportunities to learn with and about each other. The aim is to improve educational attainment, promote efficient and effective use of resources and break down the barriers arising from the conflict here.
- 4.9. Shared Education very much includes integrated schools, who are encouraged to share their knowledge, experience and good practice in educating children together with others through Shared Education. In addition, NICIE provides anti-bias training to practitioners participating in Shared Education.
- 4.10. Both Shared and Integrated Education have valuable roles to play in continuing to shape a united, shared and reconciled community. Providing opportunities to learn together is crucial to forging the relationships that will underpin a future based on mutual respect and understanding and one in which diversity is embraced and celebrated.

#### The Northern Ireland Curriculum

- 4.11. The Northern Ireland Curriculum provides an enabling framework for the work of schools in supporting the vision and objectives of the Together: Building a United Community Strategy.
- 4.12. The NI Curriculum aims to empower young people to develop their potential and to equip them to contribute to society and the economy. Through education, via key areas of learning, young people will:
- Develop as responsible citizens who show respect for others;
  - Understand different beliefs and cultures; and
  - Develop informed, ethical views of complex issues.
- 4.13. The NI Curriculum is underpinned by three curriculum objectives, which are to help young people develop as individuals; as contributors to society; and as contributors to the economy and environment. It is designed to give schools and teachers as much flexibility as possible in what they choose to teach, and to use approaches that best suit their pupils.
- 4.14. Topics such as diversity and community relations can be addressed in areas of learning such as Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU), Local and Global Citizenship, and Learning for Life and Work (LLW).

## A vision for Integrated Education

- 4.15. There is no doubt that much progress has been made across our society in moving towards a shared and united community. As a society that continues to build on the peace we now enjoy, there is still an important role for education to play in continuing to build good relations at a local level and to foster positive relationships that will form the foundations for the future. Within this context, Integrated Education alongside the other sectors in education, can play a critical role in continuing to build trust, mutual respect and inclusivity.
- 4.16. This Strategy is an important step in contributing to our vision for Integrated Education which is to create:

**'A vibrant and supported network of  
sustainable integrated schools providing  
high-quality integrated education to children  
and young people'**

- 4.17. The IE Act includes a range of areas that must be included within this Strategy. In considering these areas and the associated Actions to be taken forward, there is an important opportunity to bring an outcomes focus to implementation.
- 4.18. In the time since the IE Act came into effect, the focus has been on developing this first Strategy and setting out the short-term actions that need to be taken to lay the foundations for longer-term delivery of the vision we have set out for Integrated Education here. To this end, the Department will work with the Steering Group to define outcomes, indicators and performance measures that will inform an outcomes-based Strategy following review of this initial strategy in 2024.
- 4.19. This work will enable the development of a more detailed outcomes framework that will include appropriate metrics that can be used to measure and review progress.
- 4.20. As has already been articulated in this Strategy, improving outcomes for our children and young people and giving them the best possible start in life is the key driver for all areas of the education system. Bringing an outcomes focus to implementation of this Strategy for Integration Education is vital in ensuring our attention is appropriately directed to those actions that will deliver all elements of our vision.

## Objectives of the IE Strategy

- 4.21. Given the short gestation of this Strategy following implementation of the IE Act, the Department recognises that the process will be an iterative one building on the review

of this initial strategy. The initial focus of this first Strategy is on the following objectives:

- To put in place the appropriate processes and mechanisms to enable implementation of the IE Act;
- To set out clearly the roles and responsibilities of DE and its NDPBs in delivery of this Strategy; and
- To provide clear actions to support the initial phase of implementation.

4.22. The Integrated Education Act (NI) 2022 specifically states the following in Section 9 (2) (e) in regards to Action Planning:

...include an action plan, which must—

- (i) Be prepared in consultation with persons with knowledge and experience of integrated schools including teachers, governors, pupils, families, and sectoral and community bodies;
- (ii) Include targets (including timetables);
- (iii) Include measurable benchmarks against which the success of the strategy (including progress towards meeting targets) can be assessed;

4.23. The following Key Areas for action have been identified:

- Key Area 1 – Effective engagement and consultation
- Key Area 2 – Demand for Integrated Education
- Key Area 3 – Measuring Progress
- Key Area 4 – Ethos, Information and Guidance
- Key Area 5 – Regulation and Compliance

4.24. A range of actions have been identified across the key areas and compositely these are reflected in the Action Plan appended to this Strategy.

#### *Key Area 1: Effective engagement and consultation*

4.25. Section 3 of the IE Act provides that the Department must consult with any body appearing to the Department of Education to have as an objective the encouragement or promotion of Integrated Education and if required any other body the Department of Education considers appropriate.

4.26. Article 64(1) of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, as amended, places a duty on the Department to encourage, facilitate and support the development of Integrated Education and Section 7 of the Act states that the Department of Education must take account of that duty when developing, adopting, implementing, and revising policies, strategies and plans.

4.27. In the development of this Strategy and associated Action Plan, the Department has established an Integrated Education Act Implementation Team. An Integrated Education Steering Group and Strategy Working Group have also been set up as a means of engaging broadly across the education sector and particularly

with representatives of Integrated Education. These are key mechanisms for communication and collaboration.

#### Action 1

The Department will continue to utilise the Integrated Education Steering Group and Integrated Education Strategy Working Group as the key delivery architecture in the refinement of the Action Plan and implementation of the Strategy.

#### Action 2

The Department will continue to review on an ongoing basis its existing internal processes and procedures relating to the development, adoption, implementation and revision of policies, strategies and plans and ensure that due regard is given to its duties under the Act.

#### Action 3

The Department will continue the consultative process with all partners in respect of implementation of the IE Act and will engage with representatives of integrated education, including school leaders and practitioners on key educational issues. There will be a particular focus on consultation with NICIE as the DE NDPB charged with encouraging and promoting Integrated Education. The Department will draw up an engagement and consultation protocol that sets out the basis for consultation and the extent of its coverage.

#### *Key Area 2- Demand for Integrated Education*

4.28. The Act defines support in Section 5 as: identifying, assessing, monitoring and aiming to meet the demand for the provision of Integrated Education within the context of area planning and the overall sustainability of the school estate (including, in particular, monitoring the number and success of applications for Integrated Education), and providing sufficient places in integrated schools to aim to meet the demand for Integrated Education within the context of area planning and the overall sustainability of the school estate (including examining evidence of expected future demand).

4.29. Section 6 of the Act requires the EA, for the purposes of its strategic planning for the provision of education, to take steps to ascertain demand for Integrated Education and this is defined as: the extent to which parents would prefer their children to be educated at an integrated school rather than at a school that is not grant-maintained integrated or controlled integrated.

4.30. It is likely that no single data source or measure is likely to be sufficient to measure demand and be capable of being measured and monitored. Our expectation is that this may result in a suite of measurable indicators in order to get an accurate picture of demand. We have had some initial discussions through the Integrated Education working group around undertaking additional survey work that would explore parental preferences and the factors that underly these. This approach is in line with the initial findings of the ARK research report on assessing demand for integrated education funded by IEF.

#### Action 4

The Department will work with the Steering Group to produce an operational definition of demand for Integrated Education that is measurable and valid, drawing on a range of appropriate data sources.

The Department will, in carrying out this exercise, assess any current gaps in data and seek to address those.

#### Action 5

The Department will work with its education partners to develop an Outcomes Based Accountability Framework to accompany this Strategy, to include appropriate metrics to measure progress taking into consideration available research and data.

#### Action 6

The Department will routinely publish data relating to the demand for Integrated Education. The Education Authority working in partnership with CCMS and collaborating with CSTS, CnaG, CSSC, GBA, NICIE and TRC will consider this material when developing and updating future Strategic Area Plans and associated Operational Plans.

#### Action 7

The Department will review its existing internal processes and procedures relating to the development of new schools and ensure that due regard is given to its duties under the Act.

### *Key Area 3 - Measuring progress*

#### Action 8

The Department will report on this strategy within two years of the commencement of the Act and at subsequent intervals in line with Section 10(1)(b) of the Act. The Department will review and revise the Integrated Education Strategy in light of that report and publish and lay a revised version with the Assembly.

While this first strategy has necessarily focused on implementation of the Act, future iterations of the Strategy will be outcomes-based complete with associated outcomes/indicators and performance measures, including a Data Development Agenda for those areas where data are not available.

#### Action 9

The Department will, through the IE Steering Group, monitor and review delivery of the Action Plan in line with the metrics established through the Outcomes Based Accountability Framework.

### *Key Area 4 - Ethos, Information and Guidance*

#### Action 10

The Department will review the Integration Works Transformation Guidance including an assessment of the resources required to support transforming schools.

#### Action 11

The Department will work with NICIE to support integrated schools to confidently understand and fulfil the updated definition of Integrated Education.

#### Action 12

The Department will work with EA to implement arrangements to ensure Integrated Education has appropriate access to services and that professional learning programmes are available to leaders and teachers within Integrated Education as required by the Act.

#### Action 13

When making decisions with respect to DPs for new, transforming or significant changes to integrated schools, the Department has to be satisfied that each proposal provides sufficient robust and verifiable evidence that the school can demonstrate sustainability and how it meets the new definition.

As per the Area Planning Notice, the Department will review and update existing Development Proposal guidance to ensure it is clear in setting out the nature of evidence that should be considered and provided to reflect the requirement of the Act when bringing forward a proposal relevant to Integrated Education.

#### Action 14

The Department will continue to work with EA, NICIE and other educational partners to review and update information and guidance on Integrated Education and schools for parents and guardians navigating the admissions process.

#### Key Area 5 – Regulations & Compliance

4.31. The Act provides the Department with the power to make regulations and to produce guidelines in support of the Act and requires the Department to utilise these powers to make regulations.

#### Action 15

The Department will prepare regulations and guidance to support delivery of the Integrated Education Act as required.



## Chapter 5 – Supporting Implementation and Monitoring Progress

### Next Steps

- 4.32. Section 9 (1) (e) of the IE Act requires that the Action Plan be prepared in consultation with persons with knowledge and experience of integrated schools including teaches, governors, pupils, families and sectoral and community bodies. In line with this requirement, the Department will carry out a public consultation on the Action Plan following the conclusion of the local election period on 18 May.
- 4.33. The consultation will run until the end of September 2023 to allow sufficient opportunity for engagement with schools and practitioners. It will take the form of both face-to-face engagement with interested stakeholders and an online questionnaire that will be developed in partnership with NICIE and other representatives of integrated education. Contributions and responses to this consultation will be considered as implementation of the Strategy develops.

### Implementation of the Strategy

- 4.34. The Steering Group, established to support development of the Strategy, will continue to help inform implementation. The Steering Group will receive updates on progress and will help to shape implementation of actions. At an operational level, the Working Group will continue to support the Department in taking forward the actions within this first IE Strategy.

### Monitoring of Progress

- 4.35. During this initial phase of implementation, we will monitor progress on delivery of the Action Plan through the Steering Group.
- 4.36. Following the review of the Strategy in 2024 and the development of the associated outcomes framework, we will monitor progress using the agreed metrics that have been identified.

## Glossary

The IE Act	The Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 broadened the definition of Integrated Education and amended the statutory duty on the Department of Education to encourage, facilitate and support (as defined) the development of Integrated Education. The date of Royal Assent of the Act was 26 April 2022.
The 1989 Order	The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 - legislation passed by the UK Parliament that reformed the education system in Northern Ireland. This included establishment of the Education Authority and the creation of new types of schools (such as grant-maintained integrated schools). It also provided for the establishment of special schools for children with special educational needs.
IE	Integrated Education is a system of schooling that brings together children from different religious, cultural, and social backgrounds in the same classroom. Integrated schools bring together children, staff, and governors from all religious and cultural traditions within a single school community where they celebrate diversity and inclusivity.
EA	The Education Authority is a non-departmental public body responsible for the administration of education in Northern Ireland. It is responsible for a wide range of educational services, including the provision of support services to schools, the management of school budgets, the delivery of special educational needs services, and the development of education policies and strategies. It also has a role in promoting professional learning opportunities for staff and in supporting the development of youth services.
DE	The Department of Education is responsible for setting policy, strategy and for the central administration of education and related services in Northern Ireland. The Department's primary statutory duty is to promote the education of the people of Northern Ireland and to ensure the effective implementation of education policy. The Department's main statutory areas of responsibility are 0-4 provision, primary, post-primary and special education and the youth service.
NICIE	The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education is a non-profit organisation that encourages and promotes integrated education in Northern Ireland. Established in 1989 and funded by DE, NICIE works closely with schools, parents, and education partners to increase the number of integrated schools in Northern Ireland. The organisation provides support and advice to schools that are interested in becoming integrated as well as support to existing integrated schools.
IMIE	Irish Medium and Integrated Education Team is the Departmental team tasked with supporting NICIE and CNaG

IM	Irish-medium education is where the curriculum is taught through the medium of Irish in either an Irish-medium school or unit.
CNaG	Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (Council for Irish-medium Education) is an independent statutory body established in 2000 by the Department of Education to encourage and promote Irish-medium education and support Irish-medium schools and units.
CCMS	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools is the advocate for the Catholic Maintained schools' sector in Northern Ireland. CCMS supports trustees in the provision of school buildings and governors and principals in the effective management and control of schools. CCMS also has a wider role within the Northern Ireland education sector and contributes with education partners to policy on a wide range of issues such as curriculum review, selection, pre-school education, pastoral care, and leadership.
General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland	Established by the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland acts as a professional body for teachers in Northern Ireland to enhance the status of teachers and promote standards in professional conduct and practice.
Middletown Centre for Autism	The Middletown Centre was established in 2007 by The Department of Education and Skills Ireland and the Department of Education Northern Ireland to support the promotion of excellence throughout Northern Ireland and Ireland in the education of children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders
CCEA	Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment advises government on what should be taught in Northern Ireland's schools, monitors standards in examinations and awards qualifications. It was established in 1993 under the Educational and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1993.
CSSC	Controlled Schools Support Council is an advocacy body for almost half of all schools in Northern Ireland. It supports controlled schools, which are open to all faiths and none, in providing high quality education for children and young people to enable them to learn, develop and grow together, within the ethos of non-denominational Christian values and principles.
GBA	Governing Bodies Association is the representative organisation of the voluntary sector in Northern Ireland. They provide policy information, advice and support for member schools as well as representing their views to politicians, policymakers, media, and other stakeholders.
CSTS	The Catholic Schools' Trustee Service is the sectoral body for the Catholic School sector. It was created to provide the Trustees (Diocesan, Religious and Lay) of Catholic managed

	schools with a professional support body to assist them in carrying out their responsibilities within the network of Nursery Primary and Post-Primary Schools in Northern Ireland.
TRC	Transferors Representatives' Council - The TRC represent the interests of the original churches who transferred their schools to the Dept under the 1943 Education Act.
DP	Development Proposals are the statutory means by which proposed changes of significance to education provision can be effected. The changes proposed must align with the current Area Plan and Operational Plans for education provision. A Development Proposal is required under Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 before any significant change can be made to a school.
SSP	Schools for the Future - A Policy for Sustainable Schools (Sustainable Schools Policy) - The SSP aims to ensure that children and young people have access to high quality education that is delivered in schools that are educationally and financially viable and sustainable.
CFF	Common Funding Formula - The Common Funding Formula (CFF) is the Department's mechanism for allocating budgets to schools funded through Local Management of Schools arrangements.