



Integrated education
Opening minds

Development Plan 2014 - 2017



Contents

	Page
Opening minds to a united future	04
Communities at the heart of education Planning for the future	06
The three Rs Moving beyond sectoral separation	08
Our vision Integration not separation	10
How do we achieve our vision? Advocacy, fundraising and grant making	12
Why the Integrated Education Fund is needed	14
The impact of integrated education Learning and working together	16
Activities, Objectives and Financial Targets	18
The IEF's Commitment Conclusion	19
<hr/>	
Opening the discussion	20



In higher and further education, sharing and integration is already the norm. Why should schools be any different? We have sharing in pre-school education and youth services. We have integrated schools, naturally shared schools and many other examples of good practice in schools working together. But we can, and we must, do more.



John O'Dowd, Education Minister,
October 2013

Opening minds to a united future

Over the last few years, Northern Ireland has seen a growing impetus for change. Moving forward, we need to build on the immense efforts and courage at every level that have helped drive acceptance of a more diverse society. Together, we need to play our role in ensuring our message is not just heard – but acted on.

Opening minds to the societal, educational and economic benefit of more of our children learning together, instead of in our current religiously and culturally divided system, is key to implementing change and overcoming the challenges ahead.

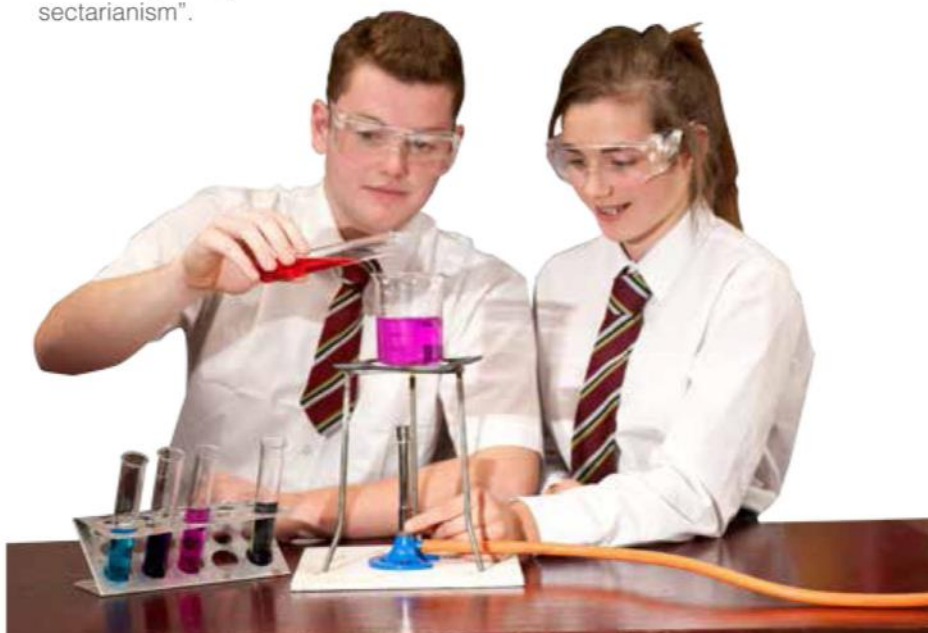
Integrated education brings together in each school, pupils, staff and governors from both the Protestant and Catholic traditions. The integrated school provides a learning environment where children and young people from these backgrounds, as well as those of other faiths and none, can learn with, from and about each other. The promotion of equality and good relations extends to everyone in the school and to their families regardless of their religious, cultural or social background.

Independent research suggests community support remains strongly in favour of children being educated together. As well as civic support there are signs of wider political acknowledgment of a need for change.

Today, the issue of how we educate children together is never far away from local political debate. The Office of the First and Deputy First Minister's strategy, 'Together: Building a United Community' (2013), recognises the segregated nature of Northern Ireland's education provision and takes the view that "achieving a full shared education system... is a crucial part of breaking the cycle of... sectarianism".

We have heard it said over and over, that if we were starting again we wouldn't design the current system that we have today. To keep the issue on the table needs pressure from civic society, to bring about change needs political will.

The task ahead is to encourage and challenge everyone to imagine just what it could be like if our children were educated together, rather than apart; and bring about the changes needed to make this a reality.



Communities at the heart of education

Planning for the future

Northern Ireland cannot afford to wait to change how we educate our children. The cost of inaction will mean another generation of children growing up with limited contact with the ‘other community’ and limited experience of diversity. We need to open minds to the benefits of educating our children together. It needs to be the norm – not the exception.

Reforming a well-established education system won't happen overnight but we have already come a long way and taken major steps forward. Further change is needed - the Integrated Education Fund wants communities to be at the heart of education planning.

EMBRACING COMMUNITY VIEWS

It is unacceptable for education planning not to take into consideration citizen demand or aspiration. And

whilst it cannot be left solely to existing education providers or sectors to determine the future of education in an area, equally, it should not be left to pioneering parents to have to establish an alternative choice. The views of young people must also be heard. Young people have important opinions and ideas, and may be better equipped to challenge sectarian norms and assist society towards a shared and reconciled future. Moreover, Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UK, 1992), confirms that children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them, and have their opinions taken into account.

A Northern Ireland High Court ruling in May 2014 considered the Department of Education's approach to long term planning and its use of an analytical tool called a needs model. The needs model assumes no growth in integrated schools, thus making it difficult for the Department of Education to be alive to its duty to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education.

To best reflect the wishes of communities, the Department of Education needs to devise an independent mechanism to measure

parental demand at periodic intervals. This is something the Department has supported with regards to cross border education in Fermanagh. So there is no reason why a similar process could not be extended throughout Northern Ireland.

SOME REALITIES WE ALL RECOGNISE

Parents want the best schools

It's a fact, parents will send their children to what they believe are the best schools. They are unlikely to send their children to a school simply because it is integrated, Catholic Maintained or State Controlled, if it isn't considered a good school. Many schools of different types perform to the highest standards and will remain popular choices for parents. All schools aim to do their best for their pupils - would they perform any less well if they were



open to, and included pupils, teachers and governors from different religious and cultural backgrounds?

Traditions are strong and valued

Schools are an essential part of any community and many have proud histories. People often feel more comfortable with what seems familiar and fear change. Doing something different or organising schools differently to benefit the community will therefore require leadership and courage. Encouragement should be given to schools to add value through integration.

Integration adds value

Children from different backgrounds learning together enhance an educational experience. Schools of all types have sought to engage in cross community work for decades, largely supported through charities and philanthropy. A new system based on integration would eventually reduce the need for seeking additional funding as support would be mainstreamed, and cross community work would no longer be an 'add on'; it would be an integral part of every school day.

“

If towns remain divided – if Catholics have their schools and buildings, and Protestants have theirs – if we can't see ourselves in one another, if fear or resentment are allowed to harden, that encourages division.

”

**U.S. President Barack Obama,
June 2013**





The three Rs

Moving beyond sectoral separation

We believe there are three core actions that will help shape the growth of a different kind of education system that moves beyond sectoral separation:

RECONCILE

Support children and young people, their parents and communities in developing their understanding of the past and learning how to build a better future together.

RESPOND

Develop a shared vision for an integrated education system with the involvement of children, young people, parents, and other citizens as well as educators and elected representatives, and not just existing institutions.

REIMAGINE

Develop our schools and institutions on the basis of integration and sharing to build understanding and trust across our religious, political and cultural traditions.



“

Any society moving forward from conflict has no choice but to address the separations that exist between its people. These separations are negative and destructive when they exist in housing, employment and social life. Specifically the arguments about the ethos or quality of education provided in the faith based sectors have to be balanced against the reality that reconciliation may never be achieved if our children continue to attend separated schools.

”

Lord Robin Eames and Denis Bradley, Report
of the Consultative Group on the Past,
January 2009

Our vision

Integration not separation

What could a different kind of education system look like?

1. The types of schools provided by the reformed education system would reflect the demands and wishes of the local community.
2. All schools in receipt of public money would have a duty to be inclusive spaces; to be open in both school policy and practice to children, staff and governors from all the religious and cultural backgrounds that make up Northern Ireland. Schools' progress and achievements would be monitored and inspected by the appropriate public authority.
3. Financial support, at least initially, would be provided for schools in order to assist continuous improvement and progression towards integration. The financial support would reflect the level of integration provided.
4. Fair Employment legislation would be extended to all schools to provide teachers with the same recruitment and employment protections afforded to every other employee in Northern Ireland.
5. Equality Legislation (Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998) would be extended to apply to schools to ensure equality of opportunity.
6. Teachers of all faiths and none would be trained together to best prepare them for working within an education system that is open and inclusive.
7. All schools would have a single framework of governance with the same 'core' for every school so that all Boards of Governors would equally reflect their wider school community. The make-up of the Boards would include flexibility to enable schools to express their particular identity and ethos.
8. An integrated model of schooling would be the presumed option for any new schools.
9. One single planning and employing authority for education would be established.
10. Publicly funded sectoral bodies would no longer be required.



“

I fully support a shared and integrated system of education.

The first party conference I ever went to back in the Seventies, I put forward the motion on integrated education, so I have been consistent. The Executive now has a policy on shared education, it's in our Programme for Government and it's moving forward. I see that as a step towards a fully integrated system as I think it's very difficult to go from where we are to where we want to be in one step.

”

Peter Robinson, First Minister,
April 2014





How do we achieve our vision?

Advocacy, fundraising and grant making

Between 2014-2017 the Integrated Education Fund will build on the momentum for moving our education system away from separation, towards greater integration.

ADVOCACY – WE NEED YOUR VOICE

The IEF Advocacy Strategy will focus on gaining increased civic support to bring about policy and structural change in education.

Our challenge is to motivate a large enough coalition of people who are organised, mobilised and willing, to put pressure on our elected representatives in order to make change happen.

The strategy will engage key opinion formers and influencers in political, media and civic spheres, working in partnership with a range of other organisations and groups.

Between 2014 and 2017 there are likely to be two major elections in Northern Ireland, to Westminster in 2015 and to the Northern Ireland Assembly in 2016.

Therefore this is a window of opportunity to advance:

- public support – community surveying and auditing, young people and community engagement
- coalition support – business, arts, unions, NGOs
- cross party political support
- international/national support – Dublin, Westminster, Brussels and Washington.

FUNDRAISING – WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

The IEF is an independent charitable trust that is entirely dependent on raising its own funds. It does not receive any core funding from the government.

To achieve all the aims we have set out in this three-year plan will depend upon raising at least £5.355 million.

The fundraising campaign will be led by the Board of Trustees, supported by a Campaign Council representing key donors and supporters.

We will continue to work with individuals, organisations and businesses as well as other trusts and

foundations to achieve our objectives and secure the funds needed.

Money will be raised as efficiently as possible while keeping costs to a minimum.

GRANT MAKING – YOUR INVOLVEMENT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

In order to support the growth in integrated school places to an initial **10%** we will promote and manage grant programmes for:

Existing integrated schools – we will provide capital enhancements to: aid growth, double enrolments and sixth form provision; create and support new pre-schools; and raise awareness.

Schools considering transforming – IEF will financially assist schools that would like to, for example, implement an awareness campaign, using community audits to outline current local education provision and the potential for transformation to integrated status. Funding for transformation-related training for school staff, school governors, and parents will also be available.



Transformed integrated schools

– funding will be available to encourage and support the development of transformed integrated schools through grants for recurrent and capital costs which are not being met by the Department of Education.

Parent groups seeking integrated education provision

– funding will be provided to the groups to help with research, delivering information sessions and growing understanding of, and confidence in integrated education in their area.

Meaningful shared education led by integrated schools

- we will support integrated schools working and partnering with non-integrated schools to create deep and sustained contact aimed at developing mutual respect and understanding.

“

Business leaders have an important role to play in wider society – any opportunity to influence change for the better is to be welcomed. A helping hand to an integrated school reaches out beyond the classroom walls, and a voice raised in support of the campaigners for integrated education cries out for progressive, positive change in the wider Northern Ireland community.

”

Margaret Mountford, Broadcaster and Lawyer, December 2013

Why the Integrated Education Fund is needed

The IEF is needed because the government does not adequately plan for the development of integrated education.

The Fund draws its mandate from parents and schools wanting an integrated education.

Over the past 20 years successive independent polls have demonstrated strong civic support for integrated education - in 2013 over 79% of those polled would support their school becoming integrated (LucidTalk, Attitudinal Survey, February 2013).

The contribution of integrated education to a more reconciled society was also enshrined in legislation in the 1989 Education Reform Order and furthermore in 1998 with the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, an Agreement endorsed by the majority of citizens in Northern Ireland. Therefore the government also needs to be held to account for its legal obligation to encourage and facilitate integrated education, as well as respond to evidence indicating a clear community desire for change.

CLOSING THE GAP

The gap between expressed citizen demand and the current supply of integrated school places must be removed. The IEF has a proven track record in leveraging government funding for integrated education by taking the financial risk and standing behind parents and schools who are continually asked to 'prove themselves' in advance of full government support. The government needs to adequately plan for the development of integrated schools and remove obstacles to growth.

- Northern Ireland educates its children separately, both by religious background and ability.
- Approximately 90% of pupils from Protestant and Catholic families remain in schools that largely or exclusively educate only one side of the community.
- There is also a largely separate system of teacher training.
- Consequently, pupil interactions are mostly with peers, teachers and others from their own community, with limited engagement with other beliefs and attitudes.

Sixty-two schools are now formally integrated and there are a small number of other schools with a significant religious mix. However, some integrated schools are over-subscribed and in many areas there is no integrated provision at all which is simply unacceptable. Without significant change the vast majority of parents will never have the opportunity for their children to be educated together.





“

What we are dealing with is a major history of segregation. Peter Robinson and I are on record that if we had a blank sheet of paper, then we would have a fully integrated education system. But we have been given a legacy with this history.

”

Martin McGuinness, Deputy First Minister, April 2014

The impact of integrated education

Learning and working together

The Integrated Education Movement is a parent-led cross-community movement in Northern Ireland with little or no mainstream political backing and yet it has not been without major consequence:

POSITIVE SOCIAL ATTITUDES

From **28** children in 1981 to **22,000** attending integrated schools in 2013 (and thousands more in between), there has been a measurable impact on social attitudes. Put simply, children who attend an integrated school have more friendships with children from other religions and cultures (Hayes and McAllister, 2009).

A SHARED FUTURE

Integrated education has made a considerable contribution to the vision of a shared future. The development of integrated schools has demonstrated that people from all religious, cultural and social backgrounds can learn and work together. Considering that not one integrated school has been established through government planning or

policy, it is a great achievement that 62 integrated schools, educating 22,000 children, now exist in Northern Ireland. But we need more.

CHALLENGING SEPARATION

The growth of integrated education to 7% of the school population has had a powerful impact. It has highlighted the fact that the majority of other children in the system are unlikely to experience day to day interaction with those from different religious and cultural traditions. Addressing this has led to initiatives for schools to work more closely together in what is termed 'shared education'. Whilst a fully integrated school represents the most inclusive form of sharing within a school, the fresh drive for shared education between schools has witnessed increased support from government. This suggests a growing political acceptance that our children can and should learn together.

However, agreement on the benefits of educating children

together does not provide a vision for the future. It falls short of showing a community the possible destination of the journey that has begun.

A question to be asked is, if more shared education is 'a step in the right direction' then what is it a step towards?

The time has come to think about what could be achieved with full government support for an education system based on children learning together.





Activities, Objectives & Financial Targets

KEY AREA	OBJECTIVE	FINANCIAL TARGETS
Transformation Support Programme	Supporting schools who are considering changing to integrated status. Estimated one new transformed school per annum over 3 years providing approx. an additional 1000 integrated places. Programme to support general Transformation awareness raising together with financial support for new and existing transforming schools. Additional policy/ legal expertise to help with implementation of judgement following 2014 Judicial Review on integrated education taken by Drumragh Integrated College.	£0.5m
Existing Schools Programme	Supporting growth of integrated school places of over 1,000 additional pupils across 24 schools through double enrolment in primary schools, increased enrolment in colleges in year 8 and sixth form, new preschools together with new parents groups and one new integrated school.	£2.115m
New Innovative Programmes of Integration	<p>A new grant programme, designed to facilitate the building of trust, mutual respect and appreciation for diversity between different schools. This will be led by integrated schools and can involve working within or beyond Northern Ireland. The programme will also support 'integration in practice' within integrated schools.</p> <p>A new programme to strengthen and deepen integrated education supporting work associated with minority ethnic pupils and challenging racism and sectarianism.</p>	£0.35m
Advocacy	Increasing wide ranging civic support to bring about policy and structural change in education. Advocating for policy changes in the run up to Westminster Elections in May 2015 and Assembly Elections in May 2016 to increase the number of integrated places and influence policy towards a unified education system as part of the Programme for Government commitment in September 2016.	£1.05m
Major Gift Fundraising	A Fundraising Campaign to reach a target of £5.355m over three years, supported by a Volunteer Campaign Council, to provide the finance to deliver the three year Development Plan.	£0.654m
Grant Making, Admin & Operating Costs	Effective and efficient grant making and administration.	£0.686m
Total Campaign Target Over 3 Years, 2014 - 2017		£5.355m

The IEF's Commitment

Conclusion

WE WILL:

- Continue to support the growth and development of integrated school places in response to parental demand to secure an initial 10% of all school places.
- Continue to support access to integrated education for those who choose it.
- Support community auditing for education to help ensure the types of schools provided reflect the demands and wishes of the local community.
- Encourage increased mainstream financial support from government to integrated and meaningful shared education.
- Support extending Fair Employment and Equality Legislation to schools.
- Support a duty on schools to be inclusive spaces in policy and practice.
- Support school governance that reflects the local community.
- Support a single administration body for schools and, ultimately, an end to the need for publicly funded sectoral bodies.
- Support a single teacher training system.



Opening the discussion

When trying to imagine and plan for a system of education based on integration there are many questions to consider. This development plan cannot answer all of them but it can attempt to address some.

HOW CAN ALL SCHOOLS BE PART OF A SYSTEM BASED ON INTEGRATION?

Given the results of recent independent surveying it is likely that any new system that includes parental preference would mean more integrated schools, more shared education solutions and the continuation of Catholic, Controlled, Grammar and Irish Medium choices.

All schools can and must play a part. Regardless of their prevailing ethos, all schools in receipt of public funding should be inclusive spaces. This does not mean neutral spaces. Their policies and practice should be able to accommodate the diverse range of religious and cultural backgrounds that make up their pupils, staff and governors. This should apply whether a school is fully integrated or just has a few children from different backgrounds.

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 it is a legal requirement for public authorities to consider equality

issues as a central part of their organisational delivery, rather than an optional extra. It is up to the NI Executive to ensure that Section 75 also applies directly to schools, which is not the case at present.

We should not be afraid of an education system where children of all backgrounds can attend the same schools. There are already a small number of Catholic schools in Northern Ireland with a substantial number of Protestant children enrolled. There are even more Controlled schools and Voluntary Grammar schools with a high percentage of Catholic children attending. Would anyone seriously suggest these schools are worse off because of this?

WHAT MORE COULD BE DONE TO ENCOURAGE MORE BALANCED INTAKES IN PUPILS, STAFF AND GOVERNANCE IN ALL SCHOOLS ACROSS NORTHERN IRELAND?

The Department of Education should enable key measurable indicators to be incorporated within the funding formula for all schools. This financial support would recognise the added value of integration with particular emphasis in the curriculum and daily routines on understanding, accepting and respecting political, cultural and religious differences. Progress could be monitored by the Education and Training Inspectorate or other objective body as appropriate.

The composition of Boards of Governors varies depending on a school's management type, and there are a number of different categories of governors. The Department of

Education's policy 'Every School a Good School' highlights the importance of schools developing links with the wider community, in particular the business community, other schools and voluntary and statutory agencies. In Northern Ireland, evidence suggests that while governors may believe that their Board is representative of the community, this is often not the case. Therefore, a single model of governance, which is reflective of wider society, should be developed by the Department of Education. Furthermore, we recommend that the recruitment and selection of governors should be reviewed and made more formal; for example drawing on professional bodies and community groups.

HOW CAN WE EDUCATE CHILDREN TOGETHER IF THEY DON'T LIVE TOGETHER IN THE SAME COMMUNITY?

It would be impossible for all schools in Northern Ireland to achieve balanced enrolments given demographic realities and community separation. However, while schools should

strive to reflect the demographic of the local community they serve, they should also be inclusive in policy and practice.

WHAT ABOUT SHARED EDUCATION?

Shared education is defined by the government as involving two or more schools or other educational institutions from different sectors working in collaboration with the aim of delivering educational benefits to learners, promoting the efficient and effective use of resources, and promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.

Increased collaboration between schools is a positive development. It represents the chance to increase contact between pupils, teachers, governors and parents from different backgrounds. Shared classes should, in theory, strengthen the potential for greater integration as pupils and schools experience the benefit of learning together.

However, shared facilities and shared campuses do not equate to shared education. They may facilitate the potential for collaboration between schools but it is the level of interaction and contact between pupils that counts the most.

Shared education cannot be considered a substitute or alternative for integrated education and it must not develop as a barrier to integrated education. The choice of a fully integrated school must be encouraged and supported if that is what is desired by the local community.

HOW COULD WE APPROACH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION?

Given that religious education in Northern Ireland is a compulsory subject in both primary and post-primary schools and that since the early 1990s schools have been obliged by law to follow the Core Syllabus for Religious Education (which was devised by representatives of the four largest Christian denominations in Northern Ireland), then in theory it should be possible to develop approaches that support greater religious diversity within the Christian perspective.

However, given the growth in minority faiths and the development of greater cultural diversity in Northern Ireland, there are strong arguments to revise current approaches to reflect and accommodate these changes.

The approach to teaching religious education in all kinds of schools appears to vary widely depending on a school's ethos, parental demands and an individual teacher's interests. Catholic schools have continued to use their existing catechetical or 'faith formation' programmes whilst Controlled school programmes tend to be very biblical in content. In many of the integrated schools there is an attempt to include both approaches as well as a more intercultural approach.

The IEF would endorse the Statement of Principles of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education in its aspiration to create an environment where those of all faiths and none are respected, acknowledged and accepted as valued members of the school community.

HOW COULD WE APPROACH SPORT?

The type of sports available in schools often reflects the particular tradition of only one side of the community. In recent years much good work has been undertaken by the Irish Football Association, Ulster Rugby and the Gaelic Athletic Association to reach out to young people and

provide opportunities to play different sports not normally available to them. In moving towards a more integrated and shared education system, extending the choice and experience of sports needs to be developed and supported.

DO WE NEED TO CHANGE THE CURRICULUM?

The existing curriculum should be enhanced to reflect integration and include the development of skills, structures and relationships that enable everyone to increase their understanding, acceptance and respect for political, cultural and religious difference. This should be an integral part of the curriculum to ensure all children

can contribute to the shared vision of building a united community. The Department should also develop age appropriate primary and post-primary anti-sectarian resources and ensure that teachers are trained, equipped and supported to deliver these effectively in the classroom.

HOW COULD WE APPROACH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION?

Given that religious education in Northern Ireland is a compulsory subject in both primary and post-primary schools and that since the early 1990s schools have been obliged by law to follow the Core Syllabus for Religious Education (which was devised by representatives of the four largest Christian denominations in Northern Ireland), then in theory it should be possible to develop approaches that support greater religious diversity within the Christian perspective.

However, given the growth in minority faiths and the development of greater cultural diversity in Northern Ireland, there are strong arguments to revise current approaches to reflect and accommodate these changes.

The approach to teaching religious education in all kinds of schools appears to vary widely depending on a school's ethos, parental demands and an individual teacher's interests. Catholic schools have continued to use their existing catechetical or 'faith formation' programmes whilst Controlled school programmes tend to be very biblical in content. In many of the integrated schools there is an attempt to include both approaches as well as a more intercultural approach.

The IEF would endorse the Statement of Principles of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education in its aspiration to create an environment where those of all faiths and none are respected, acknowledged and accepted as valued members of the school community.

HOW COULD WE APPROACH SPORT?

The type of sports available in schools often reflects the particular tradition of only one side of the community. In recent years much good work has been undertaken by the Irish Football Association, Ulster Rugby and the Gaelic Athletic Association to reach out to young people and

provide opportunities to play different sports not normally available to them. In moving towards a more integrated and shared education system, extending the choice and experience of sports needs to be developed and supported.

DO WE NEED TO CHANGE THE CURRICULUM?

The existing curriculum should be enhanced to reflect integration and include the development of skills, structures and relationships that enable everyone to increase their understanding, acceptance and respect for political, cultural and religious difference. This should be an integral part of the curriculum to ensure all children

can contribute to the shared vision of building a united community. The Department should also develop age appropriate primary and post-primary anti-sectarian resources and ensure that teachers are trained, equipped and supported to deliver these effectively in the classroom.

Integrated education
Opening minds

Development Plan 2014 - 2017

Integrated Education Fund
Forestview
Purdy's Lane
Belfast
BT8 7AR

T: +44 (0)28 9069 4099
E: info@ief.org.uk
W: www.ief.org.uk

