

Integration Works for Everybody

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Strategic Vision 2018–2021





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Our Vision


A Northern Ireland where, increasingly, children from different traditions learn and play together at school, helping to build a society where there is respect and celebration, not fear, of religious and cultural diversity.

The Integrated Education Fund (IEF) shares the vision, held by the overwhelming majority of people in Northern Ireland, of a united community and a shared future. Many believe that more integration and mixing between communities are essential to building a better and more reconciled society.

67% of people want more integrated education (LucidTalk 2018) - where children from Protestant, Catholic, other faith backgrounds and none, are educated together in the same schools and where the symbols, ethos and traditions of the entire community are valued and respected.

The IEF sees the development of more integrated education in a reformed education system as an essential ingredient of this future—a system which also ensures that young people, including newcomer pupils, LGBTQ pupils, and pupils with additional needs, feel confident and welcome in the school environment. The IEF wants an education system which fully prepares its young people to contribute positively to a modern democracy and be successful citizens in an increasingly complex global society.

The aspiration of parents for more integration must be acted upon. To achieve this needs meaningful reform of the way education is planned, managed and delivered. There have been too many well intentioned projects and minor adjustments which do not sufficiently impact on the core nature of Northern Ireland's archaic, segregated system of schools.



**Integration works for everybody.
The education system needs to change.**



I made a spider for...



Where We Are Now: Divided and Costly

Children attend different schools according to their religious or cultural background →

93% of schools reflect largely one religious or cultural tradition →

Two separate education systems for Catholics and Protestants →

Two separate statutory planning authorities for schools →

Two separate teacher training colleges →

7 separate government funded school sector support bodies →

71,000 empty school desks due to over-provision of places →

400 schools (30% of all schools) in financial deficit →

No measurement of parental preference for type of school →

New schools presumed separate schools →

Housing and education planning takes place separately →

Recruitment of teachers is exempt from Fair Employment legislation →

Where We Want To Be: Integrated and Effective

More children of all religious and cultural backgrounds attend and feel welcome in the same school

30% of children attend integrated schools by 2031

One education system for everyone

One statutory planning authority for schools

One single teacher training system

One single education authority supporting all sectors

Reduced empty desks through cross community solutions

More funding for schools through reducing costly over-administration

School planning includes parental preference for type of school

New schools are presumed integrated

Mixed housing and integrated education are planned together

Fair Employment legislation extended to recruitment of teachers

The Benefits of Integrated Education



1. Social Benefit: Positive Attitudes

Independent research indicates that children who attend integrated or mixed religion schools are more likely to have positive social attitudes to, and have more friendships with, pupils with a different background to their own.

Integrated schools are more likely to reflect the makeup of society at large, thus helping to prepare children for life after school where many are likely to work and socialise in a mixed environment whether in third level education or employment.

2. Educational Benefit: Preparation for Life

The development of integrated schools has demonstrated that people from all religious, cultural and social backgrounds can work, learn and play together, successfully. It has contributed to the growing acceptance that learning together can enhance an educational experience, adding value to a child's education.

This is not just evidenced by integrated schools. Schools of all types have sought to engage in cross community projects and shared education for decades, because of the very benefits they believe it can bring.

3. Economic Benefit: Effective and Efficient

Maintaining separate school systems based on religious or cultural background comes at a high price for government and many local communities. Having too many schools with too few pupils can make ineffective and inefficient use of resources and put these limited resources under further budgetary pressure. More children attending the same schools which respect and celebrate all traditions will help alleviate some of these pressures.

Moreover, a school system based more on integration would eventually reduce the need for external charitable funding as integration would be mainstreamed, and cross community work would no longer be an 'add on'; it would be an integral part of every school day.



How Can We Make Change Happen?



1. Empowering Parents

The majority of parents in Northern Ireland aspire to integrated education.

Parents want to send their children to what they believe are the 'best schools'.

However, would any school perform less well if it welcomed, and included pupils, teachers and governors from different religious and cultural backgrounds?

Most parents think not, but do not know how they can become involved in creating such a positive change. Even fewer know that legislation allows parents to initiate a process of change in their school, and that almost any school is able to transform to integrated status.

25 schools have already successfully transformed, a number of which are the fastest growing schools in Northern Ireland.

The 'Integrate My School' initiative of the IEF is an innovative way for parents to register their support for integrated status for their child's school.

'Integrate My School' has been created to enable parents to gain information and declare their support whilst providing confidentiality and anonymity in the process.

When 20% of parents from the same school register then, by law, their school must at least consider transforming to integrated status and hold a secret ballot of parents. Schools can only transform with parental support and approval.

Hundreds of parents have already declared their support and there are schools across Northern Ireland of all management types exploring transformation, including Catholic, Controlled and Grammar.

Education planning and provision in Northern Ireland must engage not only with existing education providers and their sectoral bodies, but also with local communities. Local community groups and organisations have an important role to play in our society and are often well placed in understanding the needs of a local area.

To best reflect the needs of communities, education planners need to implement an independent consultation and audit to measure demand for the type of schools in any given area.

The IEF, working with the Education Authority and other education sectors, has invested in piloting a number of local area based consultations and audits across Northern Ireland. This work provides an evidence based approach which we want to see refined and adopted as part of any area based planning process.



The IEF aims to:

- Increase awareness among parents of how they can make change happen**
- Increase the number of parents registering their support for 'Integrate My School'**
- Increase the level of engagement, awareness and support for integrated education solutions amongst local community groups**

Lagan College



2. Empowering Schools

The IEF and the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) will support any school in Northern Ireland embarking on the journey to integrated status.

The Department of Education (DE) has a statutory duty to “encourage and facilitate” integrated education and, following a successful legal challenge by Drumragh Integrated College in 2014, now “needs to be alive to this duty at every level, including the strategic”.

New guidance from the DE published in 2017 and entitled *Integration Works* provides a positive and encouraging framework for all schools seeking to transform.

NICIE will provide additional advice and practical support for any school seeking integrated status.

The IEF will provide further support through a focused grant programme which will provide financial assistance to schools exploring and embarking on transformation.

Integrated schools do not receive any additional funding from the DE simply for being integrated. The IEF will continue to support all integrated schools in their development, with particular regard to those integrated schools increasing their enrolments in response to demand. Growth brings with it many challenges and the IEF is often needed to pump prime this growth through the provision of additional teaching resources, equipment and even accommodation until such time as the DE provides the necessary funding.

An integrated ethos does not happen by simply having a mix of pupils. Schools need to continually consider ways to deliver integration in practice. They need to not only reflect on but also develop their practice to ensure all pupils, staff and governors feel welcome and their identity is celebrated, irrespective of their cultural or religious background.

The IEF aims to:

Encourage all schools to consider the new Department of Education guidance *Integration Works* and support them on their transformation journey to integrated status

Support growth in existing integrated schools to enable parents to access an integrated education for their child

Strengthen ethos by supporting work in integrated schools that celebrates diversity

3. Effecting Policy Change

The IEF wants to see a day when it is no longer needed. That will only happen when integrated education is adequately planned for and the parental demand for it is being met. To bring this day closer we need to continually work with policy makers, influencers, politicians and government. To answer the widespread desire for integrated education, we need to see a government strategy with ambitious targets to grow the numbers of pupils in integrated schools. This strategy needs to be reflected in education planning and in a commitment to reform the structure of the education system.

The 2016 *Independent Review of Integrated Education*, commissioned by the Minister of Education, recommended a series of steps to support the growth and development of integrated education - adopting these steps would go some way to progressing the IEF vision of the future education system.

To contribute to a more united community and to ensure the most efficient use of the resources available in education the Government must commit to developing integrated education through a **growth strategy**, major **structural change** and **other specific measures**.

Growth Strategy

- The Government should set a **target** to increase the percentage of pupils in integrated schools from **7% to 10% by 2021**, and to **30% by 2031** and plan to meet it.
- The Government plan should include strategic use of the £500m **Stormont House Agreement Funding** for capital development of shared and integrated education.
- The Education Authority should make integrated education the priority focus of the **area planning** process where there is clear demand. Planning teams should work with communities and challenge vested interests to ensure such a focus.
- There should be a presumption that any **new schools to be established should be integrated**, subject to community consultation.

Structural Change

- There are currently two separate statutory planning authorities for education provision in Northern Ireland (the Education Authority and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools). There should be **one single authority** for the administration and planning of education.
- The DE should develop and introduce a single **model of governance** for all schools in Northern Ireland, representative of the wider community and of a range of skills and perspectives.
- The Government should end the duplication and segregation of initial teacher training and establish a **single teacher training system** open to students of all religions and none.

Other Specific Measures

- The '**Section 75**' non-discrimination provisions of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) should be extended to cover all schools.
- **Fair employment legislation** should be extended to cover the recruitment of teachers.
- Equality and inclusivity should become issues considered in the process of **inspection of schools**.
- Integrated education should be a significant consideration in the **planning of new housing** developments, and the Department for Communities and the Department of Education should establish **a collaborative, strategic approach to mixed housing and integrated education**.

The IEF aims to:

Engage with policy makers, political leaders and government to present the case for building a quality education system based on greater integration



How Much Will It Cost?

Key Area	Objectives and Targets	Costs
Empowering Parents	<p>Support awareness raising and engagement with parents</p> <p>Increase parental registrations through the 'Integrate My School' website, supporting change to integrated status</p> <p>Hold 30 workshops / focus group meetings with parents</p> <p>Undertake a minimum of 12 micro-polls and surveys to measure and demonstrate parental demand</p> <p>Host 15 information events for parents</p> <p>Organise 9 regional information events for schools</p> <p>Advocate for community consultation to be part of area planning of schools</p> <p>Organise a further pilot community consultation to demonstrate how such consultations can be carried out effectively</p> <p>Hold 30 meetings with local community groups</p> <p>Be represented at 15 community events</p>	£0.800m
Empowering Schools	<p>Encourage all schools to consider the benefits of the new Department of Education guidance <i>Integration Works</i></p> <p>Provide a grant programme supporting at least 15 schools which are exploring or starting the journey to integrated status</p> <p>Support at least 15 existing and growing transformed schools</p> <p>Help to provide an estimated additional 2,500 integrated places in transformed schools over three years</p>	£0.475m
A. Integration Works: Transforming Schools Support Programme		
B. Going for Growth: Existing Integrated Schools Support Programme	<p>Support 15 growing integrated schools</p> <p>Support 3 integrated schools submitting a Development Proposal for growth to the Department of Education</p> <p>Support the development of at least 3 new integrated pre-school facilities</p> <p>Support the growth of integrated school places in existing integrated schools by over 2,500 additional pupils over three years</p>	£0.400m
C. Strengthening Integrated Education	<p>Support 'Integration in Practice' in integrated schools through targeted grant making and the Carson Awards Programme</p> <p>Share and disseminate development models of best practice in integrated schools</p> <p>Strengthen and deepen integrated education by supporting work which recognises and respects diversity and ensures that young people, including newcomer pupils, those with additional needs and LGBTQ pupils, feel confident and welcome in the school environment</p> <p>Support the development of the Integrated Alumni Association of former students and supporters as advocates and ambassadors</p>	£0.340m

Key Area	Objectives and Targets	Costs
Effecting Policy Change	<p>Secure support for the IEF's 2018 Alternative Manifesto which sets out the Fund's aims for reform of the NI education system and maps out steps for structural change which will ultimately bring about the growth of integrated education</p> <p>Bring about a positive change in government policy towards integrated education, raise awareness of transformation and encourage even more positive attitudes from parents, existing schools and government agencies towards integration</p>	£0.370m
Major Gift Fundraising	<p>Implement a fundraising campaign, supported by a volunteer Campaign Council, to reach a target of £3.600m over three years to provide the finance to deliver the IEF's three year Strategic Vision</p>	£0.565m
Grant Making, Administration and Operating Costs	<p>Provide effective and efficient grant making, administration and operational support for the IEF</p>	£0.650m
Total Campaign Target Over 3 Years 2018 - 2021		£3.600m

The IEF's Commitment

We will:

- Empower parents to express their support for integrated education
- Empower local communities to be an essential part of education planning to help ensure the types of schools provided reflect the wishes of the local community
- Encourage and support all schools considering transformation to integrated status
- 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 by 2021 and a government target of 30% by 2031
- Support extending Fair Employment and Equality Legislation to schools
- Support a duty on all schools to be inclusive spaces in policy and practice
- Support a single model of school governance representative of the wider community
- Support a single authority for the administration and planning of education
- Support a single teacher training system



Glossary

DE Department of Education
IEF Integrated Education Fund
LGBTQ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning
NICIE Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education



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