

The Council for Integrated Education formal written submission to the Panel for The Independent Review of Education

23 November 2021

Introduction

The Independent Review of Education Panel has asked NICIE to provide comment on the following four areas as part of their deliberations:

- I. A vision of education – i.e., what education in Northern Ireland should aspire to be in the 21st century.
- II. The strengths and weaknesses in the current system.
- III. Key issues to be considered during the Review.
- IV. What the term “a single education system” means to NICIE and what the key characteristics of a “single education system” might entail.

NICIE is pleased to provide comment at this stage of Independent Review and looks forward to ongoing engagement throughout the process. In formulating this paper, NICIE has taken briefings from partners involved in Integrated Education, however this response has been formulated based on the experience of staff and Board members and is reflective of our experience as the leading public body for Integrated Education. We will encourage Integrated schools and others involved to provide further evidence at the appropriate juncture. NICIE is conscious that in parallel to the Review’s early work, an Integrated Education Bill is also making its way through the legislative process in the NI Assembly. Although NICIE are supportive of the Bill and hope that it will become law, our comments regarding future action and vision are based on the current context. Some issues identified may be addressed should the Integrated Education Bill become law.

Executive Summary

Integrated Education deliberately and intentionally brings together children and adults in the one school community. The public in NI understand that Integrated Education is about educating children and young people from perceived Protestant and Roman Catholic and others together.

For over forty years, Integrated Education practice has been refined and shared among the now established 68 Integrated schools. Many schools in NI have diverse

populations but not all schools in NI have a significant number of both students from the Protestant and Catholic traditions.

According to DE (Department of Education) statistics, 143 (14.4%) schools out of the 996 have at least 10% of the minority community. Sixty of this number are Integrated schools. Only 83 other schools (8.3%) in the Grammar and Primary sector have this level of mixing or more. This statistic has not significantly changed over the last 30 years.

NICIE believe it is important that all schools contribute to enabling children and adults in school communities to learn, play and develop positive intergroup relations together daily. Integrated Education has evolved over the last 40 years and has developed practice on how to do this effectively¹. NICIE would welcome the opportunity to share the learning and practices including the NICIE training suite and the Quality Framework for Excellence in Integrated Education² with the panel if that would be helpful.

Integrated schools are very conscious of the mix in their pupil, staff and governor bodies and intentionally decide how to best use that diversity within the school calendar (events celebrated), curriculum, assemblies, guests, participation in Community events and so on. Integrated schools' market themselves to all communities that they are proactively, and intentionally, ensuring equal respect for both major traditions as well as those of other beliefs, cultures, and communities. Integrated enables sharing of the one school and in this COVID era, this model does not depend on moving large numbers of children from one school to another.

By adopting and refining an Integrated ethos, using the tried and tested methodologies developed over the last 40 years by Integrated Education, school communities that want to become more Integrated, could be supported to do so thus over time resulting in more mixing of students and adults (staff, governors, and parents) from Catholic and Protestant perceived backgrounds in individual schools. NICIE would be delighted to share how we think mixing can be achieved in the short, medium, and long-term requiring genuine collaboration between sectors. We strongly believe that the Independent Review should develop recommendations that are pro-active in this regard, through either legislation or policy. If left to chance there is little evidence to suggest schools will become more diverse in relation to governance, staff, and pupil intake. There is public support for Integrated Education, yet the system still relies generally on individuals and school communities to initiate Transformation or develop a new Integrated school.

NICIE recognise the genuine intention of other school sectors to welcome and be inclusive of children and young people from Protestant and Catholic backgrounds in the one school. However, NICIE think that there should be more acknowledgement of the limited mixing in individual schools in Northern Ireland.

A wealth of experience of integration in practice exists within the current staff team in NICIE and the wider Integrated schools. NICIE would welcome the opportunity to

¹ [NICIE Online Training Programme 2021-2022 | Integrated Education Northern Ireland](#)

² [Excellence in Integrated Education – EIEA | Integrated Education Northern Ireland \(nicie.org\)](#)

demonstrate those practices including marketing and public relations, admissions criteria, governance, leadership, recruitment, Teacher Professional Learning, whole staff training and development of the Integrated ethos as well as policies and processes for recruitment of staff and governors and admissions criteria.

Finally, NICIE would like to suggest to the panel that Integrated Education that delivers shared institutions is supported, encouraged, and facilitated as much as Shared Education which is a route to similar outcomes but as two or more schools in partnership retaining their own character and ethos. NICIE supports both approaches but would not support the notion that Shared Education would suffice and therefore would do instead of Integrated Education. The two concepts are quite different, one being about the development of an individual school, the other being about school-to-school collaboration involving pupils for some periods over time. Both are needed to give children and young people the best opportunity of a shared experience through their education.

1. About NICIE

The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) was established in 1987. It is a company limited by guarantee and a Charity. NICIE is also a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB). The Department of Education fund NICIE to promote the development of Integrated Education under the Education Reform Order (NI) 1989 Article 64³ general functions of Department and boards in relation to Integrated Education

64. (1) It shall be the duty of the Department to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education, that is to say the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils.

(2) The Department may, subject to such conditions as it thinks fit, pay grants to anybody appearing to the Department to have as an objective the encouragement or promotion of integrated education.

(3) It shall be the duty of [the Authority] to provide free of charge to any person seeking advice and information about—

(a) the procedures for acquisition by a school of controlled integrated status.

(b) the implications for a school of the acquisition of that status.

NICIE also accesses limited funding from other sources as a charitable body to help meet our Business Plan Objectives.

NICIE has a board of 16 Directors representing the different constituencies including the Trusts that founded several schools.

^{3 3} [The Education Reform \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1989 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

We facilitate existing Integrated schools through training and support focused on the development of their Integrated ethos with an emphasis on an Anti-Bias Approach to education.

For Grant Maintained Integrated schools, NICIE provide a representation function on their behalf on several key educational forums including Area Planning⁴, Teacher's Negotiating Council, Local Management of schools to name but a few. Integrated provision is grown and developed through work with parent groups who want to establish a new school in their community, and we support existing Integrated schools who wish to expand their enrolment as demand increases over time.

We enable further growth through providing support, advice and training to existing schools who want to 'Transform'⁵ to Integrated status. NICIE have a staff team of 12 people, including four part-time members of staff (see appendix 1.)

NICIE Vision

A society where children are educated together, confident to express their own identity and culture; and accepting of, and prepared to engage with, the identity and culture of others.

NICIE Mission

To promote reconciliation in Northern Ireland through Integrated Education

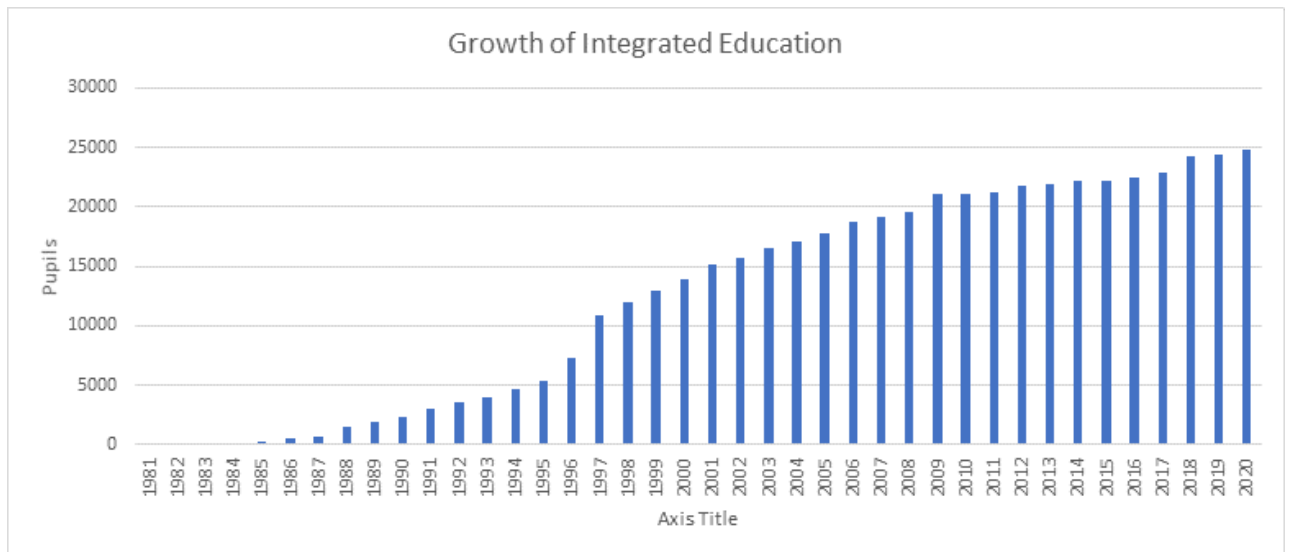
2. Integrated Education in 2021

Since the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, the numbers of students being educated in Integrated Education has more than doubled. By 2021, approx. 25,000 students attend Integrated schools or 7.3% of the school aged population. There are 68 Integrated schools (6% of the total schools in NI). This is outlined in Graph 1 below.

⁴ Note NICIE do not represent the 30 Controlled Integrated schools at Area Planning only schools going through the process of Transformation-once Transformed they are represented by EA as the Managing Authority of all Controlled schools

⁵ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Integration%20Works%20-%20Transforming%20your%20School%20December%202017.pdf>

Graph 1: The growth of Integrated Education in last 40 years



Whilst the growth of the number of schools grew exponentially until the mid-2000s, it has begun to take incremental jumps over the last 10 years. This year four newly Transformed schools were established through successful Development Proposals including the first Maintained and the first Integrated Nursery school.

NICIE are currently providing ongoing advice, support, and guidance to 28 schools exploring Transformation in partnership with the Integrated Education Fund (IEF) and the Education Authority Sectoral Support in 2021/22. There is demonstrated demand and NICIE would argue that a strategic plan by DE and the lead planning authorities to assess, identify and meet the demand for Integrated Education would be helpful. Presently, NICIE respond to requests from schools or parents for Integration. Research conducted by Ulster University- ‘Parental choice of primary and post-primary schools: myth or reality published in 2021⁶ concluded that ‘...over a quarter of households (28%) are in areas of Northern Ireland where access to Integrated primary schools is limited and a similar percentage (26%) are remote from Integrated post-primaries...’ NICIE think the identification of areas where there is no Integrated provision or not enough would go some way in determining proper planning to have the right size of school in the right place giving the opportunity for parents to consider when making their preference.

⁶ [Ulster University - ‘Parental choice of primary and post-primary schools: myth or reality?’ Available at https://www.ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/809019/TEUU-Report-08-Parental-Choice.pdf](https://www.ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/809019/TEUU-Report-08-Parental-Choice.pdf)

Table 1 showing pupils educated in Integrated Education (NI) as percentage of total enrolment

Sector	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Nursery Schools/Units*	3.9%	4.2%	4.2%	4.6%
Primary	5.8%	5.9%	6%	6.1%
Post-Primary	8.6%	8.7%	8.8%	8.9%
Integrated Enrolment as % of Total Enrolment	6.9%	7%	7.1%	7.3%

Source: DE www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications

*Does not include pre-school education in other centres such as playgroups and reception in Integrated schools

Thirty maintained or controlled schools that already existed have taken on Integrated status since 1991 (30 years) through a legal process known as Transformation:

- 25 Controlled Integrated (CI) Primaries
- 5 Controlled Integrated Colleges

The Education Authority (EA) is the Managing Authority for Controlled Integrated schools supported also by the Controlled Schools Support Council (CSSC) and NICIE.

There are 38 Grant Maintained Integrated (GMI) schools founded by parent groups (excluding two developed by parents but chose to be designated Controlled Integrated and cited in CI numbers above.)

NICIE represent these 38 schools on many forums as their advocate⁷.

Integrated schools span two management types/sectors, Grant Maintained and Controlled. Now that the first maintained school has Transformed, the Catholic Trustees are also involved.

The following table shows the limited mixing across the different management types of schools. This will be explored further in the Strengths and weaknesses section of this paper.

⁷ Note Controlled Integrated schools are managed by the Education Authority. NICIE do support Controlled Integrated schools with their integrated ethos.

Table 2 showing 5 management types of schools and the religious breakdown (DE 2020/21) is as follows⁸:

Management type of school	% Protestant	% Catholic	% Other/No Religion/Unknown
Controlled Integrated	42	23	35
Grant Maintained Integrated	33	40	27
Controlled	64	8	28
Catholic Maintained	1	94	5
Other Maintained	6	85	9
Voluntary	26	60	14

Table 3 showing growth of Integrated Education in the last four decades:

	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
Cumulative no of schools	1	16	46	62	68
No. of schools established this year	1	4	1	0	4

Despite the huge growth in Integrated Education over the last 40 years, it will require more than the effort of parents and schools to encourage already existing schools to Transform to Integrated status and thus perceived to be an option for all, which is what the public in many independent surveys have clearly stated that they want. It is difficult to ensure meeting the demand for Integrated Education without the support of political parties and faith-based organisations.

It is important also to note that Grant Maintained Schools do not have Church Representation on their Board of Governors but do actively strive to have a balance of people from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds in their governing bodies (enshrined in their constitution). Controlled Integrated schools do however have both Transferor Representatives and Catholic Trustee Representatives on their Boards of Governors although Catholic Trustee Representatives choose not to nominate to Controlled Integrated Boards. Instead Controlled Integrated schools ensure Catholic representation on their governing body.

Please see more information in Appendix 5 regarding the makeup of Governors in all schools.

⁸<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Integrated%20Education%202021.pdf>

Table 4 showing make up of Church representatives in some management types

Type of school	No of governors	No of transferors	No of trustees
Controlled	9	4	0
Controlled Integrated	14	2	2
Catholic Maintained	9	0	4
Grant Maintained	16	0	0

As well as intentionally mixing the governors and staff in Integrated schools, NICIE would assert that a truly shared and inclusive institution will have a reasonable mix of children from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds, a socioeconomic mix and a mix of ability as set out in the NICIE Statement of Principles.

Integrated Education caters for children and young people from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds.

There are many myths perpetuated about Integrated Education. One such myth is that Integrated schools are not popular, whereas in fact, they have a lower percentage of unfilled places in both primary and post primary schools than do the other sectors (not including grammar schools) and some of the Integrated post-primary schools are among the most oversubscribed in NI.

Table 5 below showing percentage of all places in schools available:

2020/21	Integrated	Non-integrated
Primary	12.2%	20.6%
Post-primary (non-grammar)	11.0%	16.5%

Another myth is that Integrated schools are 'middle class'. In fact, DE figures on Free School Meals show that Integrated schools are close to the average for the other non-integrated schools. Among integrated primary schools, 19 of the 45 schools have FSM levels of between 30 and 70%, much higher than the average, and 7 out of 20 Integrated post-primary schools have FSM rates of between 40 and 57 %, again higher than the average.

Table 6 Free School Meal figures 2020/21 Key Statistics

Free Schools Meal Entitlement	Integrated	Non-integrated
Primary	27.8%	28.5%
Post-Primary	35.6%	37.4%

The Free School Meals figures presented are close to the average for the other schools. However, it should be noted that 7 of the 20 post-primary schools have Free School Meal rates of between 40 and 57 % i.e., much higher than the average figure. As regards the Integrated Primary schools, 19 of the 45 schools have FSM levels of between 30 and 70%, much higher than the average. These statistics are likely to rise with the addition of the recently transformed schools.

The disparity in Free School Meals accounts for 30% of the educational attainment gap as identified in the 'A Fair Start' Report on Educational Underachievement. Although Integrated schools have relatively high levels of Free School Meals, the results at GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) and A' Level positively compare with other post primary schools.

Integrated Schools cater for children and young people of different abilities.

Table 7 showing percentage of children on the SEN register from pre-school to post 16

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
	% SEN stages 1-5	% SEN stages 1-5	% SEN stages 1-5	% SEN stages 1-5	% SEN stages 1-5
Primary - Integrated	22.2%	23.0%	22.7%	19.3%	18.6%
Primary - All schools	21.0%	21.7%	21.2%	18.5%	18.0%
Secondary - All schools	30.9%	31.6%	30.8%	25.1%	25.8%
Grammar - All schools	9.9%	10.3%	10.9%	7.3%	7.4%
Post-primary - Integrated	32.8%	33.3%	32.6%	24.3%	25.7%
Post-primary - All schools	21.5%	22.1%	22.0%	17.3%	17.9%

Source: DE Statistics supplied to NICIE July 2021

In terms of Special Educational Needs, Integrated schools have a slightly higher percentage than the primary average, in line with the secondary average and considerably higher than the Grammar sector.

3. A vision of education – i.e., what education in Northern Ireland should aspire to be in the 21st century

Reconciling Function

We believe that NI needs a system, which will enable children and young people to have the best start in life and one that seeks to transform our deeply divided society and promote reconciliation. Education, alongside other aspects of life, has a responsibility to play a substantial role in improving the relationships between the cultures and communities who live here.

NICIE is conscious that there are many views on how the education system has developed and who is responsible. We offer some historical context in Appendix 4. Integrated Education grew as a grass roots movement from the early 1970's, led by parents from across the religious divide. These parents wanted schools where a co-created ethos could enable children from Catholic, Protestant and other backgrounds to be educated together every day, with religiously mixed governance and staff. In promoting this idea, the organisation 'All Children Together' attempted to build change through lobbying state institutions as well as churches - in effect to transform the existing system, rather than to create a new type of schooling. Despite their best efforts, there was little movement. This led to them founding the first Integrated school in 1981. In 2021, a vision of schools where children are educated together remains core to NICIE and is central to what we believe the Independent Review of Education should be working towards. More detailed analysis on the barriers to mixing and to Integrated Education are offered throughout this paper.

NICIE believes that Integrated Education provides the most optimal form of school that can enable sharing by diverse communities at every level. However, we recognise that there are different school types and management arrangements that are also committed to the education and ethos they offer, and which parents are seeking. Whilst we will remain committed to promoting, supporting, and growing Integrated Education, we believe with proactive measures, there is room for multiple school types in the NI education system. This would require a concerted and intentional effort to increase the diversity of pupils, staff, and governors across every type of school, particularly in relation to the representation of those from a perceived Protestant and Catholic background. It is not enough to state that a school or sector is open to all, and this is borne out in the statistics on mixing in schools (see 'Issues' section below). In areas where demography makes mixing a challenge, there are still pro-active measures that schools could take to address imbalance at the level of governance, ethos, staffing and curriculum.

What we have learned over the last 40 years, is that the task of creating a truly shared institution involves the representation of both cultures in the adult and student population. This requires a framework that teachers and leaders can turn to when challenges arrive (and they frequently do). Therefore, celebrating the Queen's Jubilee and Remembrance can sit alongside celebrations on St. Patrick's Day and Catholic Sacramental celebrations. Like any whole school development, leaders in Integrated

schools can turn to their ethos when challenged on reasons for including certain events and celebrations. There are so many considerations for a proactively inclusive, shared institution, which is why it can take even longer for an existing school to Transform than it does to create a *new* Grant Maintained School. NICIE are happy to provide more information on this if required.

Public Views on Education

In considering a vision of what education should aspire to be in the 21st century, NICIE notes the considerable survey work that has been undertaken over several years seeking the views of the public.

A recent NI Attitudinal Poll by LUCID Talk⁹ launched in July 2021 shows 71% of NI people questioned in this survey by Lucid Talk believe Integrated Education, which sees children of different faiths, backgrounds and cultures educated together, should be our main model of education. This is an increase of 5% since the last Lucid Talk poll conducted in 2013 (66%).

The Ark Life and Times Survey¹⁰ asked participants ‘If you were deciding where to send your children to school, would you prefer a school with children of only your own religion, or a mixed-religion school?’ A majority of 69% said they would prefer mixed religion over 22% who would prefer a school with children only of their own religion in 2019. The gap has steadily widened since 1998 yet efforts to address this by schools that are not Integrated show limited signs of parents choosing a school outside of their own tradition.

According to the Good Relations Indicators Annual Update,¹¹ in 2018/19, 21% of first preference applications to post-primary integrated schools did not result in admission to that school. For admissions in September 2020 and 2021 it appears around 23% of applications continue to not result in a Post Primary Integrated school admission¹².

In 2021 four schools transformed to Integrated status including the first ever Catholic primary school (Seaview Primary School in Glenarm) and the first Nursery school.

The results of the democratic ballots held in schools, coupled with the Lucid Talk survey, as well as the number of young people not being able to access a place in an Integrated school, and are an indication that the desire for change in the NI education system is strong.

⁹ [Integrated Education Fund - Northern Ireland Attitudinal Poll - Page 1 - Created with Publitas.com](#)

¹⁰ https://www.ark.ac.uk/sol/surveys/community_relations/time_series/CRencyperceptions.htm

¹¹ [Northern Ireland Good Relations Indicators Annual Update 2019 – Report \(executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

¹² Using Application data supplied to NICIE by EA in June 2020 and June 2021

In particular, and with reference to the key issues you wished us to consider, NICIE would encourage you to look at the possibility of one employing authority for staff in schools, planned diversity in governance of schools, support for teachers to develop inclusive, anti-bias approaches in education and strong visionary leadership in our divided society. We hope that because of the implementation of your recommendations, the system will realise the value in the planned and intentional education of children from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds together with those of other beliefs, cultures, and communities in shared institutions.

NICIE firstly approached the question of what education should aspire to be by thinking about what outcomes society and NICIE would want rather than the specific structures. A fuller version is available in Appendix 2, but below is a snapshot pertaining to reducing sectarianism and promoting inclusion.

An education system that enables children and young people...

To have access to a range of curricular and extra-curricular experiences, varied teaching methodologies, approaches and resources which meet their needs and ensures success and prepares them for life in a global world

An education system that enables educators...

To have high expectations and set attainable academic and personal goals with all pupils

To equip students, educators, and leaders to positively deal with all sections of a multi-cultural society and respecting the rights of all sections of society including those in a minority or at a disadvantage

An education system that enables schools...

To have inspirational and diverse leadership at every level, which creates, sustains, and evolves a culture of inclusivity across the school community

An education system that contributes to a society...

Where there is equitable access to high quality education inclusive of different faiths, cultures, and identities

4. The strengths and weaknesses in the current system.

There are many strengths about the education system in NI including that it is free for all citizens at the point of entry. There are a diverse range of schools catering for a diverse range of pupils, an excellent teaching force, a fit for purpose Curriculum and inspirational leadership. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, we have witnessed the incredible efforts by schools to support pupils and provide as much continuity of

learning as possible in the most challenging operating environment they have ever faced.

Other organisations, whose role is to support school: improvement; administration; curriculum; services; finance; special educational needs etc... will, no doubt, be best placed to offer suggestions on the strengths and weaknesses in these areas.

For the purposes of this paper, NICIE would cite the following weaknesses in the current system and will develop thoughts on those that are relevant to NICIE and Integrated Education:

1. Limited mixing of those identifying as Protestant and Catholic in the same school
2. Teacher Education in relation to preparedness to teach in mixed learning environments
3. Inspection measures in relation to Inclusion and Diversity
4. Religious Education Curriculum
5. Educational Underachievement
6. Selection and separation of children academically whilst using academic measurements to assess performance
7. Policies of Shared Education and Integrated Education
8. Economic weaknesses and cost of division
9. Lack of planning for areas

1. Limited Mixing in Schools

The main weakness of the system from NICIE's perspective is the relative lack of mixing between pupils from Protestant and Catholic backgrounds across the entire estate. DE statistics show that there is little mixing of Catholics and Protestants within primary and post primary controlled and maintained schools.

- Just over 1% of Protestant children and young people attend Catholic Maintained schools
- Just over 8% of Catholic children and young people in Controlled schools (excluding Special, Integrated, Irish Medium and Grammar schools from Controlled school statistics)

Northern Ireland remains a highly divided society in terms of culture and religion, politics, and historical identities. We expand further on the specific aspects of mixing in the section 'Key Issues' below.

2. Teacher Education (Initial and Continuous Professional Development) in relation to preparedness to teach in mixed learning environments

NICIE suggests that there is a need for a strategic review of initial teacher training and post qualifying continuous professional development in respect of how well-prepared educators are to teach in mixed learning environments. This is essential so that schools can develop policies, practices, and processes that ensure the children and young people have a positive and effective experience of engaging with children from other identity groups, as well as in addressing sensitive or controversial issues. Within Integrated Education specifically, teachers are often ill prepared for this aspect of their role and rely on external support from organisations, such as NICIE. Investment in this area will benefit all school types and shared education approaches.

NICIE notes evidence that there is still considerable work required to uphold high standards of teaching and learning in these areas. We cite two reports by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI).

1. Inspection Reports on Community Relations Equality and Diversity (CRED) Policy, 2015

'In the inspection period 2012-2014, one-quarter of the PDMU (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding) lessons in primary schools and one-third of Citizenship and Personal Development lessons in post-primary schools were not effective'. (Page 10)¹³

2. The Shared Education Signature Project Evaluation Report, 2018 stated:

'Across the sector, there is a limited consensus and understanding of what is meant by reconciliation outcomes. In addition, some of the partnerships did not recognise sufficiently the potential of key curricular areas such as PSE, PDMU, LLW and history education to support their shared learning.'

'Others stated that they did not have the confidence and skills needed to handle sensitive and controversial issues and reported the need for ongoing professional learning and up-to-date resources. (Page 19)¹⁴

NICIE recognises that in the period since these reports, the EA has made a considerable effort to provide professional development with respect to teaching controversial issues.

^[1] See <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/%5Bcurrent-domain%3Amachine-name%5D/an-evaluation-of-the-impact-of-the-cred-policy-in-schools-and-youth-organisations.pdf>

^[2] <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/shared-education-signature-project-evaluation-report.pdf>

3. Inspection measures in respect of Diversity and Inclusion

NICIE would contend that inspection and school improvement measures could be adopted to support ongoing reflection on and refinement of diversity and inclusion practice, based on the experience of Integrated Education. NICIE's Quality Framework for 'Excellence in Integrated Education' through the development of Self Evaluation Indicators has been shared with ETI and we would be happy to engage further with them or you on this matter.

The ethos of an Integrated School is built on the NICIE Statement of Principles and is underpinned by values of inclusivity which aim to reflect the diversity and promote an anti-bias approach and inclusive practices.

Anti-Bias¹⁵ approaches encourage schools to be aware of the diversity in their school (and aspects that are absent) as well as the wider community and ensure they are aware of bias that exists – intentional or unintentional. This approach allows staff in Integrated schools to reflect on their own bias and their own experience of inclusion and exclusion. It requires them to look at how their practice may be reinforcing bias. In the training NICIE focus on Sectarian bias but we also explore other bias such as classism, disablism, racism¹⁶ etc. Since an Integrated school has an intentional mix in its population, this is a perfect environment to address the various kinds of bias and to develop a school ethos that openly talks about and addresses it. NICIE feel that this is important for developing a shared society.

NICIE's Quality Framework of Excellence¹⁷ in Integrated Education (EIEA), utilises a self-evaluative auditing toolkit which allows schools to assess their current good practice and identify the areas that need to be developed. Schools are encouraged to assess their policy and practices through the lens of Integration and to see how the ethos flows through all aspects of school, subsequently developing an Action Plan. With NICIE support, the school works through this action plan until they are ready for external assessment, which is carried out by two NICIE Associates (former Integrated Principals). The process is important as it allows schools to truly assess and develop their ethos across policy and practice. This can take anywhere between 18 months and 3 ½ years. The Toolkit reflects 'Every School a Good School¹⁸,' the ETI 'Self-Evaluation Framework' and it is reviewed regularly to ensure it is reflecting relevant policy and Teacher Professional Learning. NICIE believes this may provide a blueprint that could be adapted and mainstreamed across School Inspections.

¹⁵ [Bias Busting for Beginners – For Teachers | Integrated Education Northern Ireland \(nicie.org\)](https://www.nicie.org/bias-busting-for-beginners-for-teachers-integrated-education-northern-ireland)

¹⁶ [NICIE Online Training Programme 2021-2022 | Integrated Education Northern Ireland](https://www.nicie.org/nicie-online-training-programme-2021-2022-integrated-education-northern-ireland)

¹⁷ [Excellence in Integrated Education – EIEA | Integrated Education Northern Ireland \(nicie.org\)](https://www.nicie.org/excellence-in-integrated-education-eiea-integrated-education-northern-ireland)

¹⁸ [Every school a good school - a policy for school improvement | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/every-school-a-good-school-a-policy-for-school-improvement)

4. Religious Education (RE) Curriculum

There are various approaches to the teaching of Religious Education in Integrated schools. They all offer Religious Education as part of the curriculum as agreed by the four main churches, like all grant-aided schools in NI. However, the RE Curriculum could be strengthened by a review of the current RE curriculum in partnership with other faiths and those of no faith to bring forward best practice for a more secular (inclusive of all religions) curriculum that schools can adapt to the needs of the children and young people in schools.

5. Educational Underachievement

The issue of educational underachievement has been well document in Northern Ireland as evidenced by the setting up of a specific panel and their subsequent 'A Fair Start'¹⁹ report. Likewise, the issue of academic selection and the use of transfer tests at aged 11 remains controversial and divisive. However, when this is coupled with the overall fragmentation of the education system, the weaknesses are further exposed.

The fragmentation of the education system at worst perpetuates underachievement and at best prevents a more holistic system-wide response. This includes the structural separation of children across perceived religious background, academic ability, biological sex, and educational needs. Whilst addressing the separate nature of schooling will not on its own alleviate underachievement, a more diverse and inclusive culture at school level could provide a more supportive environment that nurtures achievement. In our experience an ethos that values the talents and needs of children who are diverse in community background and academic ability is a key factor in addressing overall attainment. We recognise that specialist school provision is required to meet the needs of some young people, however inclusion and diversity should be an aspiration across all schools.

For young people who attend non-selective schools, we note there is often not appropriate school-based post-16 provision in certain geographic areas. This leaves only grammar schools and regional colleges as viable options for post-16 provision, depending on subject choices and perceived ability. Some young people are more appropriately supported in an environment with which they are familiar. This can also affect enrolment levels for '11-16-year-old' schools, as some parents prefer a school with provision extending to 18 years old. A lack of positive '6th Form' role models within a school can also impact on the aspiration of young people coming through the school.

¹⁹ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/fair-start-final-report-action-plan>

Examination Focus

The wider emphasis on public examination results, particularly for post primary schools has led to a disjointed approach to teaching and learning. From foundation to Key Stage 3, there is significant emphasis on developing skills, attitudes, and dispositions. However, when high stake public examinations are introduced at Key Stage 4, there is some tendency for teaching and learning activities to focus on exam technique. This may cause additional barriers for young people's achievement. The extent to which current examination and assessment methods reflect the ability of children and young people should be reviewed. We note also that many schools have young people who have recently arrived in Northern Ireland with little previous schooling or limited use of English. For these young people, how attainment is measured must consider their situation. For a young person who has recently arrived in NI, achieving an 'F' grade at GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) may be considerable achievement. However, the pupil and the school may be perceived as having failed. We note that the headline aim of the NI Curriculum is to 'empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives.' We question the extent to which this is measured and valued through current assessment procedures.

Curricula Access

For many young people, the curricula offering or emphasis within a school is not always appropriate for their needs. This does not necessarily require a review of the statutory curriculum, but the resources available at school level to deliver it in a way that is meaningful for their pupils. At Key Stage 4, where cost can be a barrier to more vocational educational routes, this issue has been amplified by decreased funding for Area Learning Communities.

Poverty and Exclusion

In our experience, there is a clear relationship between issues of poverty and educational attainment. Whilst there are young people who will achieve well despite economic barriers, they are often the exception to the rule.

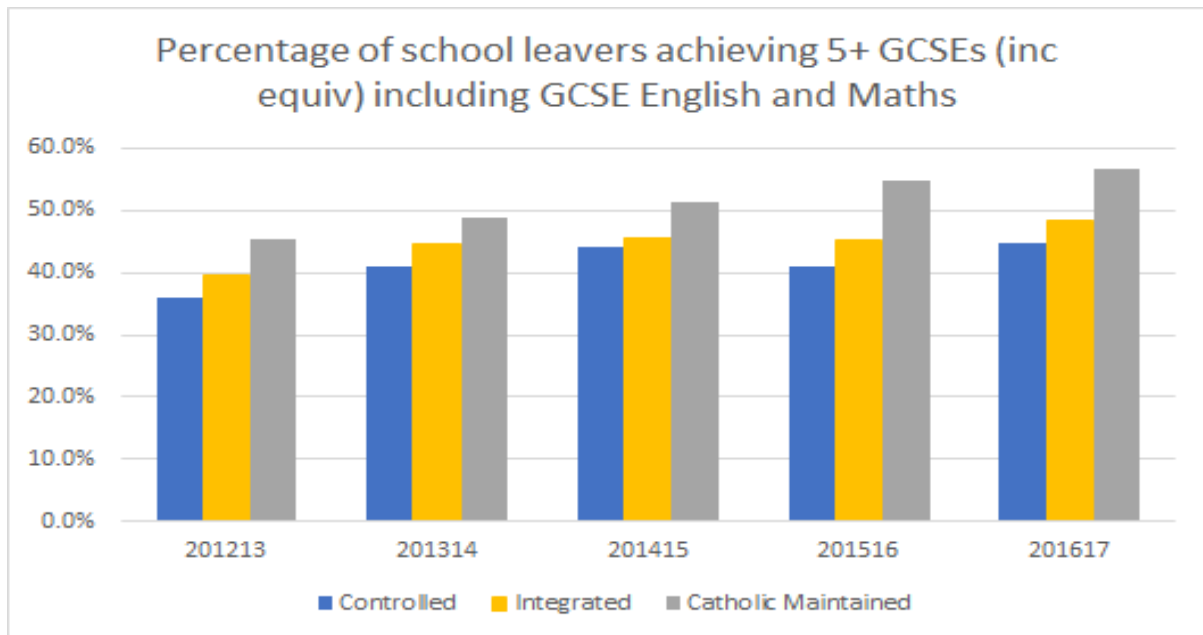
6. Selection and separation of children academically whilst using academic measurements to assess performance

NICIE would contend that all post primary schools should offer the young people a range of pathways best suited to their desires and needs enabling their development at every stage.

Integrated Education promotes comprehensive schools with appropriate pathways for children and young people in education. The three bar charts below refer to non-

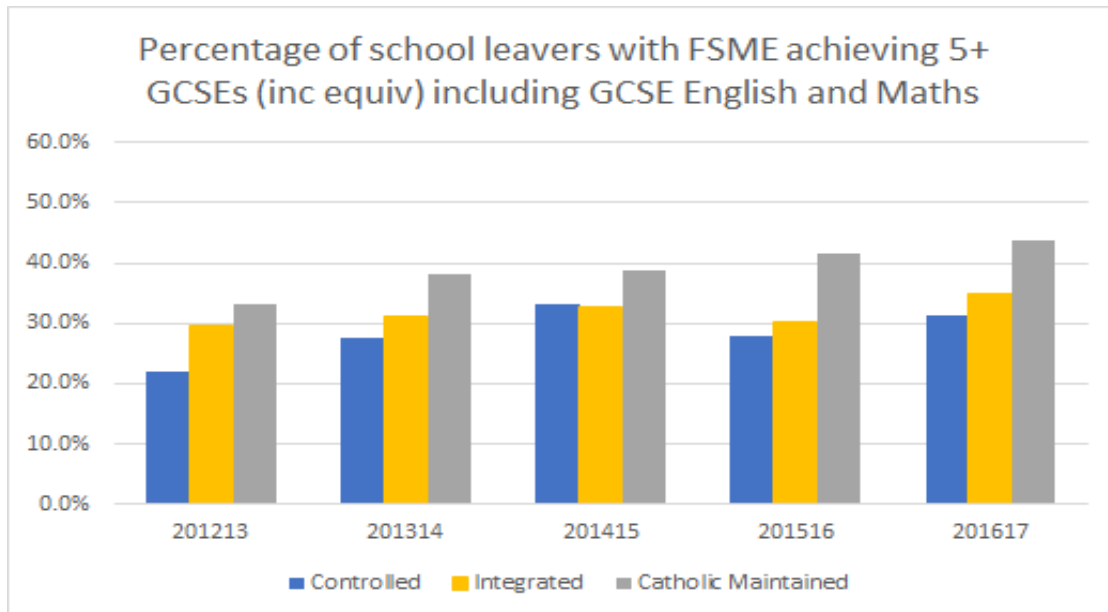
selective schools. This chart shows that whilst the Catholic Maintained pupils achieve the best results in the non-selective schools, the Integrated schools are achieving results which place them in the middle between the Controlled and Maintained schools.

Graph 2 showing percentage of school leavers achieving 5+ GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education) including GCSE English and Maths



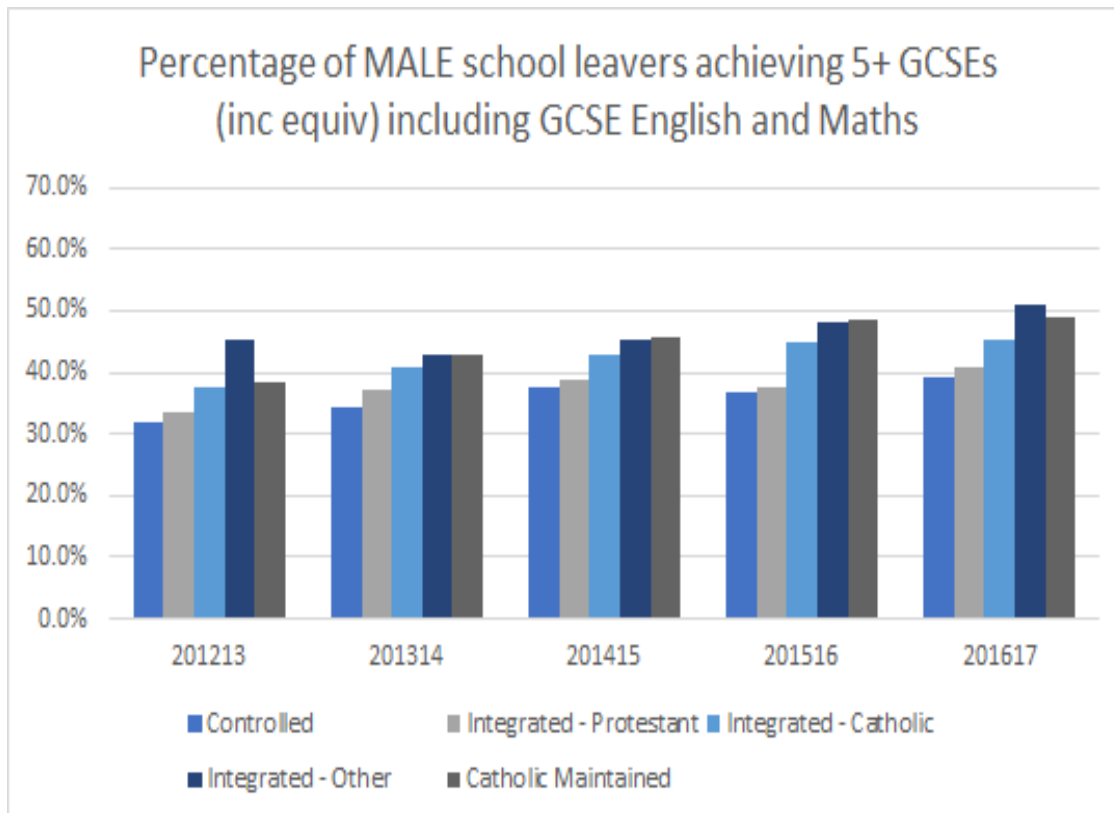
This second bar chart refers to those students who have a Free Schools Meals Entitlement and the same pattern pertains with the Integrated schools achieving in the mid-range between the Controlled and Maintained schools. What is good to see is that the results are improving over time.

Graph 3 Showing percentage of school leavers with FSME (Free School Meal Entitlement) achieving 5+ GCSEs including English and Maths



A particular area of concern in NI is the achievement of Protestant boys, and it is interesting to note that the GCSE results for Protestant boys are heading in the right direction in Integrated schools.

Graph 4 showing percentage of Male school leavers achieving 5+GCSEs including English and Maths



All- Ability Environment

Within the Integrated sector at post primary level, there is a specific emphasis on educating children of all abilities together in one school. This all-ability environment has been cultivated by post primary colleges in several diverse ways. Most colleges do not use any form of selection, however there are some exceptions. In the case of two schools, there is the use of 'bi-lateral' admission whereby a limited number (35%) of children are enrolled according to attainment via the transfer tests. Two other schools have used a pupil profile to create a grammar band post admission. A further two schools have incorporated a grammar stream as part of entry criterion, which requires the submission of relevant evidence of academic ability but does not utilise the current transfer tests. It is the experience of many leaders across the Integrated sector that an all-ability enrolment has a positive effect on building social and emotional resilience. Likewise, it creates a supportive environment and fosters empathy for all learners. In this model young people, who may require additional support, are valued within a wider school community, and face less stigma than may occur in a purely selective environment. We would suggest that additional research into this model may provide important learning for the Review. This model, which is standard at primary level, enables young people to experience learning with others who have diverse types of need. It enables siblings to go to school together and encourages healthy competition alongside an understanding of why equity and equality are not the same thing.

NICIE believe a review of post 16 provision could better facilitate young people to access appropriate pathways.

7. Policies of Integrated Education and Shared Education

The Department of Education have a duty to encourage and facilitate Integrated Education and recognise that Integrated Schools are a type of school that proactively and intentionally educate children and young people from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds, together in the one school. Shared Education is the deliberate bringing together of children and young people from Protestant and Catholic backgrounds together, through collaboration by two or more providers. NICIE see merit in Shared Education as it shares some of the characteristics of Integrated Education. Legislation requires all educational support bodies to promote Shared Education whilst DE fund NICIE to promote Integrated Education as outlined in Article 64 of the 1989 Education Reform (NI) Order²⁰. As outlined in 8 below, Integrated Education is a more cost-effective model.

²⁰ [The Education Reform \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1989 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

8. Economic weaknesses and cost of division

Two professional studies have estimated the cost of having a divided school system in Northern Ireland:

1): UU (Ulster University) Economic Policy Centre ("Cost of Division" 2016) on the UU website²¹

2): Deloitte ("Research into the Financial Cost of the NI Divide" 2007) on the CAIN (Conflict Archive on the Internet) website²²

Each report gives a median estimate that the additional cost of our divided Education system is in the upper £50 million per year – more than £1 million per week.

At the same time, to counteract this separation, the Education Authority's report²³ on "Shared Education" records that in the years 2017 and 2018 some £285 million was spent on encouraging contact between Controlled, Maintained, and Integrated schools.

1): The May 2018 Advancing Shared Education Report to the Northern Ireland Assembly²⁴ covers the 2-year period 2016-2018. But some of the funding earmarked for it (i.e., not yet actually spent) extends to 2022.

As you will see, the figures (£25m + £35m + £170m + £55m) add up to £285 million over that 6-year period.

2): The June 2020 report²⁵ covers the 2-year period 2018-2020 but the £168.2 million funding referred to, clearly includes a great deal of the £285m funds already mentioned in the 2018 report.

Teachers are specifically exempt from the Fair Employment laws. (The law allows all schools to discriminate on religious grounds in their recruitment of teachers).

The Government funds its Education Authority and a separate Council for Catholic Maintained Schools.

The Government does fund the NI Council for Integrated Education £618K 2021/22. But this "essential aspect of the reconciliation process" of educating Protestant and Catholic children together, is left to individual parents and charitable fund-raising. The Integrated Education Fund charity has to date raised some £25 million to support parents who want their children to have an Integrated Education.

²¹ https://www.ulster.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/86524/Cost-of-Divis...

²² <https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/segreat/docs/deloitte0407.pdf>

²³

²⁴ [Shared Education - Report to Assembly May 2018 2.pdf \(ioe.ac.uk\)](#)

²⁵ [Advancing Shared Education Report to the Northern Ireland Assembly June 2020 | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

9. Lack of planning for areas

NICIE would like to see more strategic planning for educational provision in areas in Northern Ireland rather than sectors planning in silos with almost no cross-sectoral solutions having come forward even though the shared options have been speculated about since the Bain Report 2006 Schools for the Future.²⁶

Whilst legislation may be required for some of the shared options, Transformation to Integrated Education is a tried and tested successful option for existing schools to be perceived as an option for both main traditions. NICIE would suggest strategic area planning should include:

- Assessing, identifying, and meeting the demand for educating children together including via Integrated Education strategically.
- To hold the system to account for the development of Integrated Education in a planned strategic way that involves all educational partners.

Given the EA's role as both lead planning authority and managing authority for Controlled schools, NICIE would question whether this leads to a potential conflict of interest, particularly in relation to the duty to 'encourage and facilitate the development of Integrated Education.' This was an issue highlighted by the Strategic Investment Board's recent report (accessible via the EA). The Review should consider if another mechanism may provide a fairer system within the context of school rationalisation, which to date has been almost entirely on a sectoral basis. There seems to be a proliferation of bodies represented at the area planning table: EA and the Transferors Representative Council and the Controlled Schools Support Council (CSSC,) representing the Controlled schools, the Council for Catholic Maintained School (CCMS) and the Catholic Schools Trustees Service (CSTS) representing Catholic education. This slows the process down and can make it difficult for smaller sectors to be heard.

5. Key issues to be considered during the Review.

There are many issues to be reviewed as set out in the Terms of Reference for the review. From NICIE's perspective, the following needs to be addressed through the Independent Review of Education:

1. To support the intentional integration of adults and pupils in school communities in NI by finding ways to ensure Protestants and Catholics those of other beliefs, cultures, and communities can expect to be educated together in one school. Children and young people from all backgrounds being educated together and

²⁶ [Cover Schools for Future spine \(ioe.ac.uk\)](http://ioe.ac.uk)

at ease with each other, in the same classroom, by teachers of different faiths, cultures and communities in a school managed by governors of different faiths, cultures and communities as already demonstrated successfully through Integrated Education.

2. Reduction in available places through bringing forward a range of 'shared cross sector' solutions including Integrated Education (new schools and Transformations) as well as Federations, Confederations, Jointly Managed Schools and Shared Campuses. These ideas have been suggested since the Bain Report on Schools for the Future (2006) and yet only a few cross-sectoral Shared Campuses have emerged, no Jointly Managed schools, Federations or Confederations.
3. Joined up strategy between government departments: Mixed housing and Integrated Education are planned together

NICIE believe that data on religious affiliation as collected should continue to be monitored, reported, and tracked over time. The NISRA (Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency) Census places 'other Christians' in the 'Protestant/Other Christian' category but the DE places them in the 'other' designation. Thus, NICIE suggest that this is reviewed. Another helpful addition might be the creation of a 'mixed Christian' category, like that used by the NI Housing Executive. NICIE has anecdotal evidence from many schools that a 'mixed Christian' identity would describe some family backgrounds more accurately than the current choices. NICIE does not believe that an increase of those designating as 'other' indicates that there is less division in society. There appears to be a disconnect between how data is collected, monitored, and used, in the Housing Executive and by NISRA (Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency) in the NI Census. NICIE believe that further coordination is required between public bodies regarding how religious/identity statistics are captured and utilised. NICIE would suggest that this is investigated under this review and recommendations made for best practice for education in NI.

The Independent Review should set out a *roadmap* to assess, identify and meet the desire of parents for their children to be educated together in one school. NICIE would suggest the Review could shape a new education system that is focused on early childhood development and student achievement as well as on equity, inclusion, and reconciliation.

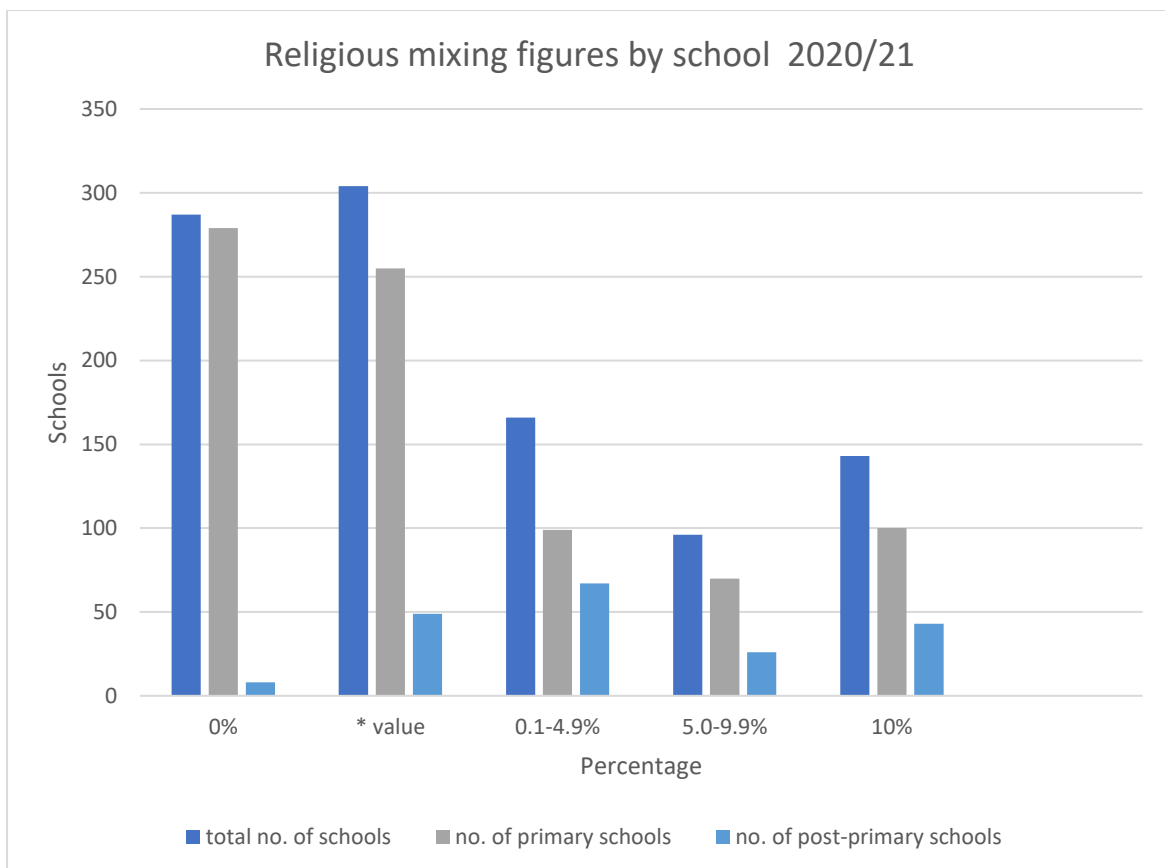
Regardless of culture, ability or socioeconomic background, all children should have access to the best education possible. The economic, educational, moral, and social arguments for an innovative approach to education, which brings children together in the one school, are compelling.

Putting children first means being aware of the reality for most children from perceived Catholic and Protestant backgrounds.

There are some schools that are not Integrated but that are mixed. NICIE analysis of the 2020/21 school census data shows that these schools are limited in number.

There are 996 Primary and Post Primary schools in NI and of those, only 143 reach a base criterion of 10% mixing i.e., a minimum of 10% of pupils from the ‘minority tradition, either Protestant or Catholic. If we remove the Integrated schools, only 83 schools reach this low criterion. There are 287 schools (across Primary and Post Primary) that have no pupils from the other main tradition within their enrolment (i.e. A Controlled school with no Catholic pupil or a Catholic Maintained with no Protestant pupil).

Graph 5 religious Mixing figures from 2020/21 school Census by schools



*Refers to less than five cases where data is considered sensitive

In 28.8% of schools there are no pupils from the other main tradition.

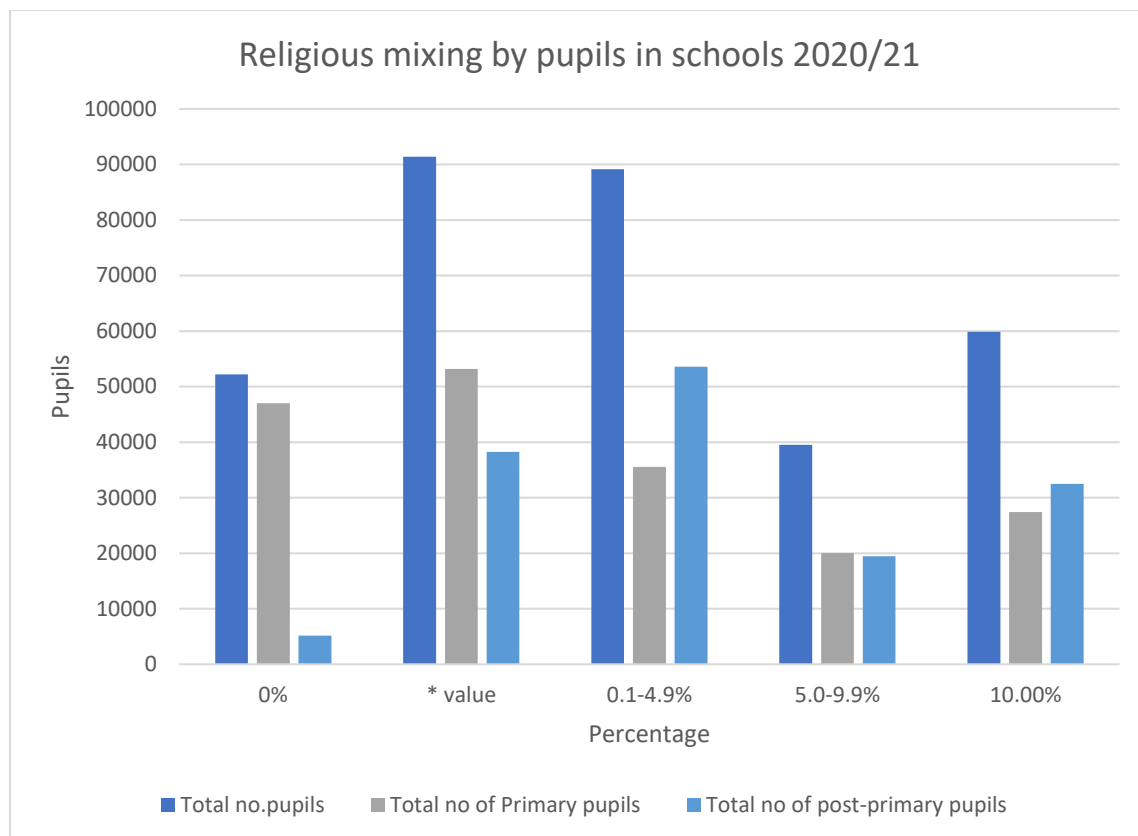
In 76% of schools there is less than a 1 in 20 chance for a child to meet a pupil from the other main tradition.

We see value in adults, students and communities working together in the same school.

Unless intentionally planned for, levels of mixing of those from perceived Catholic and Protestant backgrounds will remain low.

Whilst 'natural mixing' within a school population is very much to be applauded and welcomed, if this were to be the only mechanism to achieve mixing together of those from the two main communities culturally/religiously, it may be a very long time before there would be substantial mixing between the two communities in the same school.

Graph 6 Religious Mixing by pupils in schools 2020/21



What does this mean to the individual child? What is their chance of mixing with someone from the other tradition in their own school?

Only 18% of pupils attend schools where there is a 1 in 10 chance of meeting someone from the other main tradition.

Circa 70% of pupils attend schools where there is less than a 1 in 20 chance of meeting a pupil from the other main tradition in their own school.

6. What the term “a single education system” means to NICIE and what the key characteristics of a “single education system” might entail

NICIE believes a single education system should lead to the effective and efficient use of the finite resources in education to ensure the best educational outcomes for children and young people. Children and young people deserve access to the best education possible. Leadership and Governance should be supported to provide the culture of the school wherein children can be nurtured and have their identity respected. To achieve this, NICIE believe that there should be one Employing and Administrative Authority to support all schools centrally, with opt out/in options for Grant Maintained, Other Maintained and Voluntary Grammar Schools. Beyond that there is opportunity for ethos support bodies. See Chart 1 showing visual representation below.

Have we, as an education system, asked parents if they would like their school to be more mixed or, have we relied on parental preference based on the existing school estate? Integrated schools represent 6% of schools that already exist and therefore NICIE would argue 6% is not an accessible choice for all parents that would be in favour.

NICIE would suggest that the panel, recommend that things are put in place to carry out the assessment and identification of the demand for children being educated together in the one school and how the system will know this is being met.

NICIE, as a people led movement, wholeheartedly believe that communities should be consulted and engaged with regarding decisions on educational provision in their local area. NICIE suggests the continued quest to find tried and tested methods of engagement with local communities to agree how to achieve sustainable educational provision in local areas and over time helping the system to make that a reality.

NICIE is suggesting the Integrated model, but we have no doubt there are other models out there that may come to fruition if the lead planning authorities and sectoral bodies are serious about addressing this fundamental issue that will continue to keep those who identify as Catholic and Protestant apart. Is there anything this review could and should do about that?

NICIE believe that the system would be more effective if the following key characteristics were put in place:

- One Employing Authority (including administration and services for all schools.) The removal of the Teachers’ Exception in the Fair Employment and Treatment Order (FETO) would be a precursor to this. The technical platform EA One²⁷, part of the Transforming Education would support this transition. EA One is an online recruitment, Human Resource and Payroll solution for schools, aimed at

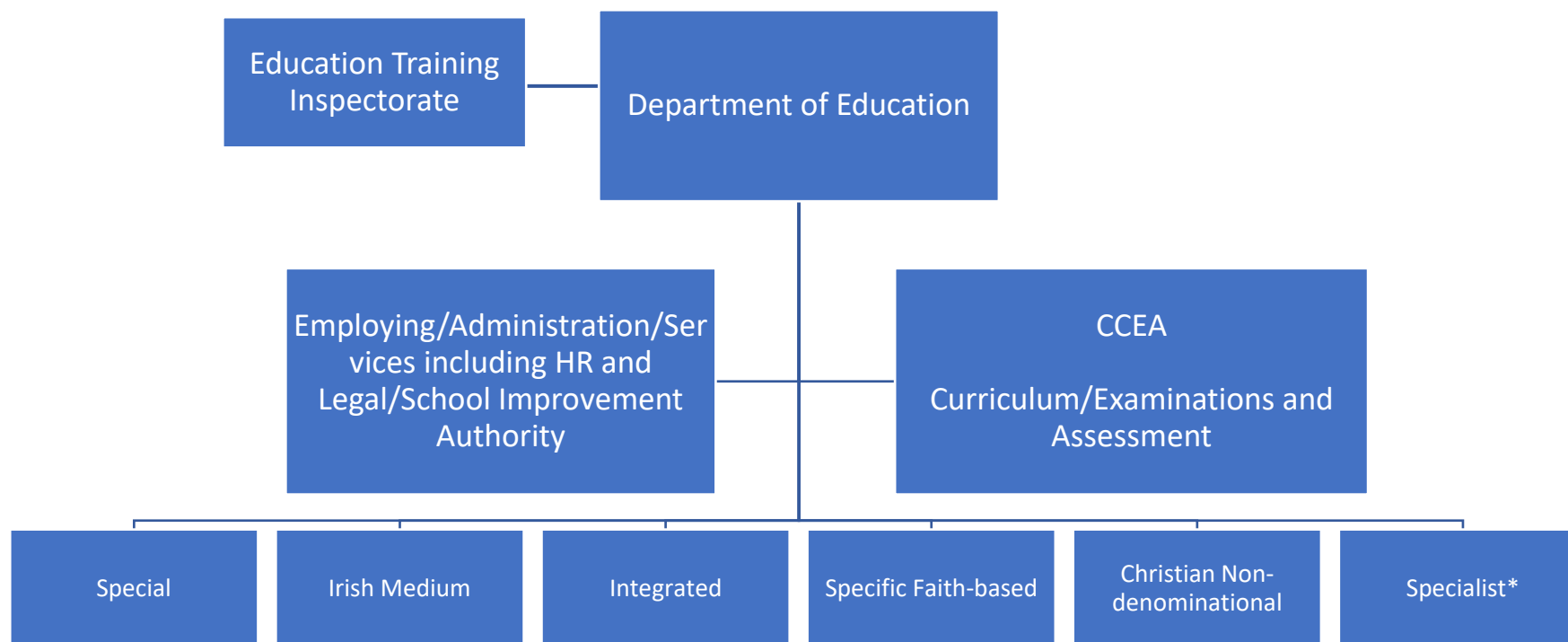
²⁷ [EA Transformation Programme Update \(January 2020\) | Education Authority Northern Ireland \(eani.org.uk\)](#)

reducing the bureaucratic burden and shortening the timescale for recruiting teaching and non-teaching staff.

- Underneath this single administration, system could sit a diverse range of school types providing the ethos that works for the school community whether Integrated, Specific Faith-Based, Non-denominational Christian, Multi Denominational, Specialist (may include Academic/Vocational/Technical, Irish Medium, and Special).
- Initial Teacher Education support for teachers to promote inclusive practices in Integrated/mixed schools/all schools who aspire to be shared institutions.
- An agreed way to assess, identify and meet the demand for Integrated Education in society.
- Support for Leadership and Governance centrally with agreed categories that would capture and reflect the diversity in the school better. An increase in the religious and ethnic diversity of representation on boards of governors and appointment on merit against an agreed skills set would have the potential to create a more open and diverse system over time. This could still be consistent with the support of a particular ethos as this could be included in the application criteria. Consideration should be given to including representation of support staff.
- Each geographical area provides and ensures that pathways for all young people are accessible
- A system whereby an Integrated school should be considered if a brand-new school is required and, if not possible, other shared solutions/options should be considered. A review of Area Planning, NICIE would suggest, should be carried out to ensure that Integrated and Shared options are considered before actions are agreed regarding a school(s.)

The Independent Review of Education is an opportunity to reframe the schooling system in Northern Ireland highlighting what works well but noticing what needs to be different and putting steps in place to make that happen. Children and young people need the best start in life.

Chart 1 Visual representation on how the diverse school types may be more streamlined into a single education system



*Please note specialist may include Academic/Vocational/Technical/Music etc...

There may be other/more types of school to be included but these NICIE believes represent broadly the diversity of schools that exist in NI. The categories along the bottom of the chart would have a clear role and responsibility for Leadership, Governance and Ethos of the schools supported within that category.

NICIE propose a set of principles underpinning this system as follows:

Governance-The constituents on governing bodies could reflect the diversity of the school as well as ensure the skill set required to ensure effective governance.

Staff-recruitment processes in place to ensure the right person for the job (merit principle) and shares the ethos and values of the type of school, tested at interview.

Pupils-realistic targets set for mix of Protestant/Catholic/Other or whatever best practice in data capture is recommended by the review panel investigation for all schools.

The balance and Inclusive practice of all schools self-evaluated by all schools and audited by the Education Training Inspectorate. The NICIE Quality Framework as described earlier might form a useful basis for this.

We aspire to creating an inclusive and integrated education system fit for the 21st century including more children of different religious and cultural backgrounds attend and feel welcome in the same school. It should follow that those statistics showing mixing of Catholics and Protestants changes over time.

Final comments

NICIE respect parental preference and therefore a diversity of schools is to be valued. NICIE do want to see a system whereby all schools should be inclusive of both main traditions in NI as part of their ethos, policies, and practices as appears to be the stated desire from across ethos and management bodies, based on our analysis of the submissions to the Education Committee on Kellie Armstrong's Private Member's Integrated Education Bill²⁸.

Presently, the Integrated Education Fund, and NICIE promote the concept of Integrated Education. However, as it is likely that most growth of Integrated schools will come through Transformation to Controlled Integrated status, the managing authority for Controlled schools i.e., the Education Authority has a responsibility to meet as well as assess the demand for Integrated Education. Some innovative work has already started on this in the form of Community conversations involving the EA and CCMS. NICIE would suggest this is a model worthy of further investigation.

NICIE would also suggest that the option of Integrated Education as well as other shared options should be examined collectively at Area Planning Local Group level before any actions are agreed. This would curb NICIE having to complete nugatory work with schools exploring Transformation after they realise that they are named on an action plan for closure. This has happened in a small number of cases. However, it leads to a lot of effort on behalf of NICIE and the Integrated Education Fund (IEF), the EA and CCMS with limited prospect of a resulting sustainable Integrated school. NICIE suggest that it would be more effective if the planning authorities and support bodies collaboratively explored the potential of sustainable Transformations to Integrated status at an early stage in the Area Planning process. NICIE represents the

²⁸ [Committee for Education - Northern Ireland Assembly TV \(niassembly.tv\)](http://niassembly.tv)

GMI (Grant Maintained Integrated) schools in Area Planning as well as schools exploring Transformation. However, the development of existing schools Transforming would have more support if all bodies worked together to assess, identify, and meet the need for more Integrated schools.

In the meantime, to encourage parents to choose the best, inclusive schools, NICIE and the IEF should continue to call for the lead planning authorities and DE (Department of Education), along with the support bodies to encourage, facilitate and support the development of Integrated schools as an accessible option for all children and young people. These should be within an acceptable travel distance. Where existing Integrated schools are oversubscribed, further development should be assessed, identified and the resulting demand met, either by developing new Integrated schools, or preferably through the Transformation of existing schools. The latter is a much more cost-effective option.

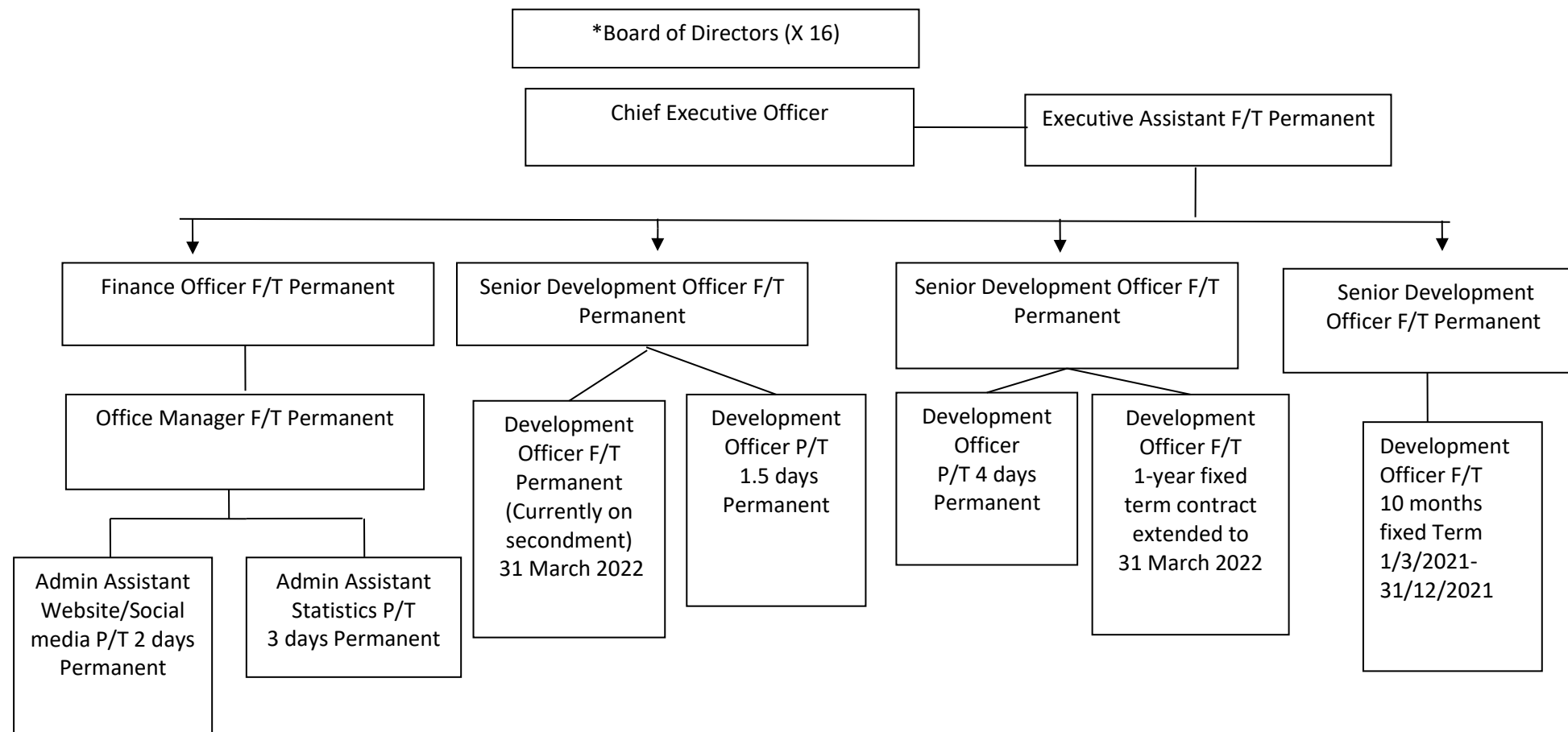
NICIE would ask you examine the themes that emerged from the Independent Review of Integrated Education included in the terms of reference for this review (Appendix 6.)

NICIE thank you for considering this paper and we look forward to your final report. NICIE are happy to engage further or to clarify anything in this submission.

Roisin Marshall
Chief Executive Officer
Council For Integrated Education

Appendix 1

NICIE Organisational Chart



Appendix 2

Specific messages from NICIE on what an education system fit for the 21st century should aspire to:

An education system that enables children and young people...

1. To be at the heart of the organisation processes, strategic planning, and structures of the school
2. To be in a school where they are empowered with the skills and confidence to make their voice heard and relevant and where their views are respected and valued and lead to change
3. To learn from, with and about each other, all day, everyday
4. To experience success and have their achievements recognised across the school and beyond
5. To have access to a range of curricular and extra-curricular experiences, varied teaching methodologies, approaches and resources which meet the needs and ensures the success of a diverse cohort of children that prepares them for life in a global world
6. To have access to a range of diverse adults from a wider range of backgrounds that represents all sections of society to support their learning
7. To have access to a school at a location that is accessible and safe
8. To be prepared to fully contribute to the social and economic life of society

An education system that enables educators...

9. To be prepared and confident to work in a diverse environment with access to initial and continuous professional development
10. To enable educators to pro-actively and effectively work with the diversity in their schools providing equitable high quality learning opportunities to students from diverse backgrounds, with diverse interests and learning requirements via initial and continuous professional development.
11. To have High expectations and set attainable academic and personal goals for all pupils

12. To equip students, educators, and leaders to positively deal with all sections of a multi-cultural society and respecting the rights of all sections of society including those in a minority or at a disadvantage

An education system that enables schools...

13. To have inspirational leadership at every level which creates, sustains, and evolves a culture of inclusivity across the school community
14. To effectively respond to shifting demographic issues across the school and wider community
15. To recognise, support and respect the range of social, cultural, political, and religious backgrounds that exist within it
16. To have High expectations for all pupils
17. To have governance structures that reflect the diversity of the school and wider society
18. To welcome and creatively work with key stakeholders such as the Business Community, Trade Unions, Faith Institutions and Community Organisations from diverse backgrounds and sections of society

An education system that contributes to a society...

19. Which is at ease with, recognises and celebrates difference
20. That provides equitable access to high quality education inclusive of different faiths, cultures, and identities
21. That provides strategies for sustainable development of Northern Ireland politically, socially, economically, technologically, and environmentally sustainable
22. Which tackles sectarianism and builds respect for cultural identities
23. Provides strategic initiatives for teacher distribution to improve the diversity of teachers and teaching in schools
24. That hold leaders accountable for providing a more equitable and holistic approach to the development and success of children and young people
25. That supports young people to contribute to sustainable peace in the future and a culture of trust, collaboration, and respect in NI

26. That is innovative, forward thinking, and self-reflective with evidence-based approaches to educational and societal advancement

Appendix 3

Further notes on NICIE's role and functions

The role of NICIE is to promote Integrated Education and to perform a wide range of roles in facilitating the development of Integrated Education in Northern Ireland for the public benefit.

NICIE's aim, approved by DE, is to assist the development of Integrated Education in Northern Ireland.

The following broad areas of operation have been identified to support the achievement of the Department of Education's strategic priorities

- NICIE, in collaboration with DE, EA and other children's authorities, as defined by the Children's Services Co-operation Act 2015 (CSCA,) will work to shape, where possible, educational policies in conjunction with, other Government Departments, their Non-Departmental Public Bodies, community and voluntary providers and employers, with a view to improving the well-being of children and young people, as outlined in the CSCA (Children and Young people's Strategy Outcomes)
- NICIE will provide advice and support to Integrated schools, through working with the EA, CCMS, CCEA, DE, ETI as appropriate, to contribute to raising standards in Integrated Education at (i) pre-school, (ii) primary and (iii) post-primary
- NICIE will provide advice and support services to schools, parents and communities wishing to develop or expand Integrated Education provision at (a) pre-school, (b) primary and (c) post-primary school
- NICIE will advocate on behalf of and support the development of the education workforce within the Integrated Education sector
- NICIE will ensure that its workforce receives the professional development and support it requires, delivered in a cost-effective manner
- NICIE will provide effective representation on behalf of the Integrated Education sector by engaging with stakeholders that contribute to the improvement of the learning environment

- NICIE will provide strategic input to the area planning process to ensure that children and young people have access to high quality Integrated Education that is delivered in schools that are educationally and financially sustainable
- NICIE should encourage schools within the Integrated sector to engage in Shared Education and working with the EA, CCMS, CCEA, DE and ETI as appropriate, provide advice and support to implement Shared Education with partner schools. At a date specified by the Department NICIE should provide details as to the extent to which it has exercised its powers

The functions of NICIE

The functions of the Council for Integrated Education can be summarised as follows:

- To provide advice, assistance, and information in relation to IE to voluntary, private sector and public bodies, to groups seeking to establish Integrated schools and to advocate for appropriate and high-quality sites and accommodation for the sector
- To promote, facilitate and encourage the development of Integrated schools in a co-ordinated, planned, educationally efficient and cost-effective manner
- To effectively represent the interests of the IE sector (specifically GMI schools and Transforming schools) at all levels of the Area Planning process
- To advise and provide guidance to Integrated schools on Integration in practice and the Integrated Ethos
- To identify the training needs of the sector and, in conjunction with the Education Authority Sectoral Support, to contribute to the development of bespoke training for IE teachers and other staff, principals and governors
- Working closely with the IEF, to identify and access sources of additional funding to support the development of NICIE and associated projects

The role of NICIE is to promote Integrated Education (IE) on behalf of the Department of Education and to perform a wide range of roles in promoting the development of Integrated schools for the public benefit. Integrated Education brings additional public benefits relating to peace and reconciliation through building good community relations between the adults and the students in IE.

Appendix 4

The historical development of Integrated Education

A system of “national” education in the Ireland was established under the “Stanley Letter” in 1831²⁹, when all of Ireland was governed by the Westminster parliament. The aim was for all children to be educated together in schools that would provide “combined literary and separate religious education.” However, the schools had become almost entirely integrated along denominational lines by the 1860s due to resistance from the various churches to the idea of joint management.

Over a period (from the 1930s to the 1950s), the Protestant churches transferred almost all their schools to state control on the understanding, enshrined in an Act of Parliament, that the Christian ethos of these schools would be maintained. As a result of this, Transferors were given rights of representation on school management committees (equivalent now to Boards of Governors) and Education Authorities (now EA).

During the 1970s, increasing parental demand for children to be educated together gave rise to campaigns that resulted in new school types being established north and south where children could be educated together. In NI, a small group of parents from both sides of the religious divide came together with the aim of educating Catholic and Protestant children together. Motivated by a shared belief that learning side-by-side could foster understanding, these parents became the campaigning group *All Children Together*³⁰. The group faced opposition from churches and politicians. Despite these obstacles, and significant financial restraints, these determined parents set up Lagan College in 1981, the first Integrated school in Northern Ireland.

Since the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in 1998³¹ the numbers of students being educated in IE in Northern Ireland has more than doubled. Whilst there was a huge surge in the number of schools established between 1985 and 2005, the numbers slackened off after the economic crash of 2008, when NICIE could no longer borrow money. Focus then turned to the establishment of integrated schools through the process of “Transformation”. This process can take up to four years from positive parental ballot to eventual approval of the development proposal by the Minister of Education.

In 2021 four schools transformed to integrated status, including the first ever Catholic primary school (Seaview Primary School in Glenarm). The trajectory is turning upward again due to an increased desire in schools to enhance their sustainability by attracting

²⁹ [4.2 The Stanley Letter 1831 | Irish National Schools Trust](#)

³⁰ <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Struggle-Shared-Schools-Northern-Ireland/dp/1903688876>

³¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-belfast-agreement>

parents from both sides of the community. NICIE and the IEF are working with up to 30 schools at various stages of the journey towards Integrated Education status.

For the first time since 2009, NICIE and the IEF are working with a parent group in the Mid Down area to establish a new Grant Maintained Integrated school. NICIE is also partnering with the Education Authority and the Controlled Schools Support Council (CSSC) to establish a new Controlled Integrated school from the amalgamation of a Grant Maintained Integrated school and two Controlled schools. These developments indicate a new surge in the growth of Integrated Education as it continues to create safe spaces for children and adults to encounter one other, fostering courage to build respectful relationships and replacing fear with curiosity.

Regarding the development of Integrated schools in NI, it is helpful to reflect on the community context:

- Only 31% of Northern Ireland people regard themselves as living in "mixed" neighbourhoods and 80% of public housing is segregated.
- 90% of public housing in Belfast is segregated.
- Up to 100 "Peace Walls" still divide neighbourhoods.
- Up to 60,000 people have moved house because of fear or actual intimidation.

Appendix 5

Table showing how Integrated schools developed and who is responsible for the management of Integrated schools

School management type	Managing authority	No. of these schools	Also supported by	Developed by
Grant Maintained Integrated	Each GMI board of governors	38	EA and NICIE	Parents
Controlled Integrated Schools	Education Authority	30 25 Primary 5 Post Primary	CSSC and NICIE	Schools, governors, parents, staff
	DE statutory duty to 'encourage and facilitate Integrated Education.'			

Tables showing the makeup of all school Board of Governors

School Boards of Governors Membership

Controlled schools in public ownership	Number of governors on the Board	Foundation governors	EA governors	DE governors	Parent governors	Teacher governors
Primary and Secondary	9	4	2	None except for model schools	2	1
	16	6	4		4	2
	24	9	6		6	3
Nursery, Grammar and Special	8	0	3	2	2	1
	16	0	6	4	4	2
	24	0	9	6	6	3
Integrated Primary and Secondary	14	2 transferors 2 trustees	4	0	4	2
	21	3 transferors	6	0	6	3
		3 trustees				
Integrated Grammar	14	0	4	4	4	2
	21	0	6	6	6	3

Schools in private ownership	Number of governors on the Board	Foundation governors	EA governors	DE governors	Parent governors	Teacher governors
Primary and Secondary (voluntary maintained 100% capital grant)	9	4*	2	1	1	1
	18	8*	4	2	2	2
	27	12*	6	3	3	3
*Trustee governors must include at least 1 parent in their nominees.						
Primary and Secondary (voluntary maintained 85% capital grant)	10	6*	2	0	1	1
	18	10*	4	0	2	2
	27	15*	6	0	3	3
*Trustee governors must include at least 1 parent in their nominees.						
Primary and Secondary (grant maintained integrated)	16	6	0	4	4	2
	24	9	0	6	6	3
Voluntary Grammar (100% capital grant)	9	4*	0	3	1	1
	18	8*	0	6	2	2
	27	12*	0	9	3	3
	36	16*	0	12	4	4
*Trustee governors must include at least 1 parent in their nominees.						

Appendix 6

Independent Review of Integrated Education

NICIE are aware that this was an Independent Review of Integrated Education requested by the Minister of the day, Peter Weir, and NICIE were grateful for the report and the 39 recommendations highlighted.

NICIE would suggest there are a few themes that emerge and could be considered in the Review of Education 2021-2022

1. How the planning authorities engage with communities/audit the appetite by parents for children being educated together daily in one school
2. Capital funding should follow approved Development Proposals
3. Review existing legal definition of Integrated Education to ensure it is appropriate for 21st century
4. Pre-school and 6th form provision should be reviewed in relation to ensuring mixing and best opportunities available for children and young people
5. The need to proactively assess, plan for and monitor progress towards meeting the demand for Integrated Education
6. The recognition that it is challenging to try to grow and develop Integrated Education in a context of rationalisation
7. Transforming schools need financial help to enable such a significant change to the school community for facilitation/ training/ support/ marketing/ visiting centres of good practice
8. That schools are encouraged to report on good practice in catering for children, young people, staff and governors from Protestant, Catholic other beliefs cultures and communities contributing to increasing mixing through the ETI Inspection process.
9. Schools' exemption from Fair Employment Treatment Order (FETO)
10. Teacher Education at all levels includes support for teachers to teach in mixed schools