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Education

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Dear Peter

INQUIRY INTO SHARED AND INTEGRATED EDUCATION

Thank you for your letter of 15 May 2015 seeking further clarification and information following DE officials briefing to the Committee on 13 May, as part of the Committee's Inquiry into Shared and integrated education. I will respond to your requests in the order of your letter.

Levels of Progression

The aims of the Delivering Social Change Shared Education Signature Project are to improve educational, including reconciliation, outcomes through schools working collaboratively on a cross-community basis. Key Stage data is the only consistent means of reporting attainment against the cross-curricular skills as defined in our curriculum. Key Stage data is, therefore, necessary in order to evaluate the success of the programme at school and system level. Consequently, schools will be required to comply with the statutory assessment process, as a condition of funding.

Equality of Identity

The use of the phrase 'Equality of Identity' within the Shared Education policy refers to equality in respect of the set of characteristics that somebody recognises as belonging uniquely to himself or herself and constituting his or her individual personality for life.

Religious Balance Pupils and Boards of Governors

Existing schools wishing to transform to integrated status must demonstrate reasonable prospects of achieving, over the longer term, a minimum of 30% of their enrolment drawn from the relevant minority tradition. No pre-existing level of integration is

necessary, but to ensure that transformation is well grounded from the outset, schools must attract at least 10% of their first year intake from whichever is the minority community within the school before final approval is granted.

A new grant-maintained integrated school should aim to attract 30% of its pupils from the minority community in the area where the school is situated.

I enclose, therefore, at **Appendix A** details relating to non-integrated schools that have a minimum of 10% of pupil enrolment from the minority community at the school. I also enclose at **Appendix B** details of relating to current integrated schools that have less than 10% of pupil enrolment from the minority community at the school.

The Department does hold information relating to the overall religious background of the Boards of Governors of individual schools.

Information is requested on the community background of the governors the Department appoints to voluntary grammar and grant maintained integrated schools, although appointees are not obliged to provide this. However, this represents a maximum of one third or two ninths of the governors of a voluntary grammar school and a maximum of one quarter of the governors of a grant maintained integrated school. It does not, therefore, provide an indication of the overall religious balance of a school's Board of Governors.

Shared Education Consultation Events

Four public consultation events were held on the Shared Education Policy and Bill during February 2015, including an event for young people. In total, approximately 63 people attended these events.

Special Schools

Under Articles 68 and 90 of the 1989 Order, Special Schools (and schools established in hospitals) are not eligible to obtain grant maintained and controlled integrated status.

The current intake criteria to Special Schools are based on the special educational needs of each individual child. Integrated schools can include community background as an intake criterion in order to have a reasonable mix of children from each community background. If applied in a Special School, this could mean that children could be admitted, or not, based on their religion rather than to a school that was the most appropriate place for their educational needs to be met.

The prohibition within the legislation recognises the complex needs of children within the special education sector. Special Schools provide a pupil-centred service to a religious mix of children. That approach places children and their individual needs, regardless of their community background, ahead of the needs of institutions.

Early Years and Youth Shared Education Continuum

I enclose a copy of "Developing Shared Education in Early Years Settings: A Framework for Collaborative Partnerships", the continuum developed by ETI specifically

for the early years sector. The continuum model for the Youth Sector is not yet finalised. I will provide a copy when available.

Yours sincerely

Russell

RUSSELL WELSH
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer

Figures relating to all non-integrated schools with a minimum of 10% pupil enrolment from the minority community in 2014/15

Category	Total Number of Schools
<i>Primary</i>	
All Non-integrated Primary Schools	794
Non-integrated Primary Schools with a minimum of 10% pupil enrolment from minority community	46
<i>Post-Primary</i>	
Non-integrated Post-Primary Schools	188
Non-integrated Primary Schools with a minimum of 10% pupil enrolment from minority community.	19

Source: NI school census

Primary School figures includes pupils in nursery, reception and Years 1 – 7 where applicable.

Figures relating to all Integrated schools with less than 10% of pupil enrolment from the minority community at the school

Category	Total Number of Schools
<i>Primary</i>	
All Integrated Primary Schools	42
Integrated Primary Schools with less than 10% pupil enrolment from minority community	2
<i>Post-Primary</i>	
All Integrated Post-Primary Schools	20
Integrated Post Primary Schools with less than 10% pupil enrolment from minority community	1

Source: NI school census

Primary School figures includes pupils in nursery, reception and Years 1 – 7 where applicable.