

## **SHARED EDUCATION**

### **Introduction**

Advancing Shared Education is both a Programme for Government commitment and an action within the Together: Building a United Community strategy.

A Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) was established in July 2012 to advise the Minister on how best to advance shared education which is defined as:

- meets the needs of, and provides for the education together of learners from all Section 75 categories and socio-economic status;
- involves schools and other education providers of differing ownership, sectoral identity and ethos, management type or governance arrangements; and
- delivers educational benefits to learners, promotes the efficient and effective use of resources, and promotes equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.

Shared Education means the provision of opportunities for children and young people from different community backgrounds to learn together.

Shared Education is expected to be organised and delivered in such a way that promotes equality of opportunity and social inclusion by providing opportunities for children from differing s75 groups (e.g. children from different racial backgrounds, children with and without disabilities, children who are carers or school age mothers) and from differing socio-economic backgrounds to learn together at school and in less formal education.

The MAG reported in March 2013. In accepting its report, the Education Minister encouraged a public debate on the report and its recommendations.

After a period of reflection in a statement of 22 October 2013 to the Assembly the Minister accepted the recommendations of the report, reserving judgement on how best to implement a number of the recommendations. Work to implement the recommendations has been taken forward.

Progress to date is outlined below. The relevant MAG recommendation has been included in each section for ease of reference.

MAG RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENTAL POSITION
<p><i>Recommendation 1:</i> The Education Bill should be amended to place a statutory duty on the new Education and Skills Authority (ESA) to encourage and facilitate shared education as defined in this report.</p>	<p>The Minister accepted this recommendation. The original intention had been to include, as an amendment to the Education Bill through which the Education and Skills Authority would be established, a power to encourage and facilitate shared education.</p> <p>As progress on the Education Bill has been halted, the Minister is considering bringing forward a stand-alone Bill designed to support shared education.</p>
<p><i>Recommendation 2:</i> ESA should establish a central unit, or identify an existing unit, that should take lead responsibility for encouraging and facilitating shared education. This unit should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and drive forward a strategy for advancing shared education that includes setting targets and goals, monitoring shared education activities and producing an annual report on progress being made;</li> <li>• Review all existing and proposed policies within education, and provide advice as required, to ensure that all activities seek to encourage and facilitate shared education where appropriate; and</li> <li>• Commission research and evaluations into shared education and facilitate the sharing and dissemination of good practice.</li> </ul>	<p>The Minister accepted this recommendation. It had been intended that ESA would ensure a central focus on shared education. This recommendation will now be taken forward in progressing the one-board model of reform that is necessary to enable education administration to comply with the changes to local government that will take place from April 2015. In the meantime, the Minister will expect the ELBs to take a consistent, regional approach to encouraging and facilitating shared education. At the same time, the Department itself will ensure that a clear strategy is put in place for advancing shared education.</p>
<p><i>Recommendation 3:</i> As part of the proposed revised common funding formula suggested by Sir Robert Salisbury in his independent review for the Department of Education, a ‘shared education premium’ should be incorporated into the funding formula for schools and other educational institutions. This premium would recognize the added value of shared education and should be weighted in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of pupils that are engaged in shared education activities, as defined in this report; and</li> </ul>	<p>While recognising the need for funding, the Minister reserved his position on this recommendation as it was not clear that the common funding formula was most appropriate delivery mechanism. Subsequently, it has been agreed that a Shared Education funding scheme will be established to provide financial support for schools engaged in shared education. Consideration is being given to establishing this as a potential Delivering Social Change Signature Programme. As part of this, work is ongoing to secure significant</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proportion of school time that pupils are engaged in such activities.</li> </ul>	<p>funding from Atlantic Philanthropies and OFMdfM as well as DE.</p>
<p><i>Recommendation 4:</i> Where schools and other educational institutions are in receipt of a shared education premium, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) should explicitly review the use of that funding in its inspection reports particularly in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The added value of such shared education activities;</li> <li>• The value for money of the funding provided; and</li> <li>• The quality and effectiveness of the shared education activities.</li> </ul>	<p>The Minister has accepted this recommendation. In parallel with the Shared Education programme, ETI will progress the work of Shared Education within inspection and district work with a view of identifying how ‘sharing’ has the potential to enhance learners’ educational and social learning.</p> <p>In preparing for this work a small team of ETI Inspectors will develop Shared Education indicators, protocols and materials for inspection and district work. The team will also provide ongoing staff development on writing, reporting and recording of effective Shared Education practice.</p>
<p><i>Recommendation 5:</i> The ETI should produce an annual report that reviews the current range and extent of shared education activities across Northern Ireland, highlights good practice and makes recommendations regarding how these could be extended and improved.</p>	<p>The Minister has accepted this recommendation. The Chief Inspector’s Report is published biennially and in future will make specific comment on Shared Education. The next report is due for publication in autumn 2014.</p>
<p><i>Recommendation 6:</i> ESA should develop a framework for supporting the early and continuing professional development of teachers that encourages its delivery through shared education and thus via effective collaboration between schools and other educational institutions. It is recommended that such a framework should encourage collaborative networks of schools and other educational institutions identifying their own professional development needs and being devolved appropriate levels of funding through the common funding formula to commission the training, courses and/or other support that they require.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 7:</i> ESA should ensure that teachers and principals have access to a range of training courses and resource materials to</p>	<p>The Minister has accepted these recommendations.</p> <p>In the absence of progress on the legislation needed to establish ESA, the Department will, as part of its work to finalise a new teacher professional development strategy, ensure that this includes steps to provide teachers, from initial teacher education through to the most experienced teachers, with opportunities to learn together, including in relation to preparation for teaching through shared education.</p> <p>Specifically in relation to recommendation 8, DE awaits the outworkings of the independent review of teacher education infrastructure commissioned by DEL. DE will consider the outcomes in the context of</p>

<p>help them develop the knowledge and skills required to organise and manage effectively shared education activities and classes. These courses and materials should include a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing and organizing collaborative activities, projects and classes between schools and other educational establishments;</li> <li>• Dealing with negative relationships and poor interactions between pupils;</li> <li>• Covering sensitive topics and issues; and</li> <li>• Exploring ways that existing school subjects might best emphasise commonality in history and between cultures but also actively involve students in contact with cultural activities with those from other sectors e.g., sport, dance, music and language (including Irish and Scottish Gaelic).</li> </ul> <p><i>Recommendation 8</i> : The Department of Education and the Department for Employment and Learning, in conjunction with the higher education institutions responsible for delivering teacher training and professional development courses, should review existing provision to consider appropriate mechanisms for collaboration to ensure that student teachers and teachers returning for professional development can be provided with opportunities to learn together, including in relation to preparation for teaching through shared education.</p>	<p>future arrangements for initial teacher education and its proposed strategy for teacher professional development.</p> <p>Through its Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) policy, DE will continue to ensure provision for teacher education on sensitive and controversial issues and managing shared education classes. A training strategy implemented across all ELBs has been in place since 2012.</p> <p>Additionally, as part of the Executive’s <i>Together: Building a United Community</i> strategy, a commitment has been made to develop an anti-sectarianism module and relevant teacher education. Discussions are underway on how best to implement this and to increase the pace of delivery.</p>
<p><i>Recommendation 9</i>: Schools and other educational establishments should develop more meaningful relationships with parents and caregivers to ensure that their rights to be involved in the education of their children are fully respected and supported. To achieve this, it is recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESA establish an appropriate network that supports schools and other educational institutions in developing relationships with parents and care-givers and in creating and sharing best practice regionally; and</li> </ul>	<p>The Minister has accepted this recommendation. Consideration will be given as part of the Shared Education Programme as to how schools can develop more meaningful relationships with parents and caregivers to ensure that their rights to be involved in the education of their children are fully respected and supported.</p> <p>The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations require schools to outline their strategies for raising the standards of attainment among all pupils and for providing for the special, additional or other individual</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools and other educational establishments include a specific section in their Development Plans that includes clear plans and goals, for how they intend to engage parents and caregivers and ensure their active and sustained support in the education of their children.</li> </ul>	<p>educational needs of pupils. Guidance highlights the importance of consulting with those involved in the life and work of the school; the regulations require that the school development plan outlines the arrangements that have been made to take account of the views of pupils, parents, staff and other persons or bodies.</p> <p>Schools engaging in the Shared Education programme will be required to include a specific reference in their School Development Plans that includes their plans and goals for advancing shared education and engaging with parents and caregivers.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 10</u> : An independent review should be undertaken of current practice in relation to the delivery of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal, Social and Emotional Development (Pre-School Education);</li> <li>Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2);</li> <li>Local and Global Citizenship (Key Stages 3 and 4); and</li> <li>The Curriculum Framework for Youth Work (Youth Service).</li> </ul> <p>The review should consider the effectiveness of the current Community Relations Equality and Diversity (CRED) policy and also include consideration of the opportunities that are provided for children and young people to discuss and explore issues associated with divisions, conflict and inequalities in Northern Ireland. The review should make recommendations regarding the content of these areas of learning and also how teachers and other educationalists can best be supported to deliver these.</p>	<p>The Minister has accepted this recommendation. ETI will undertake the independent review of current practice commencing with a review of the effectiveness of the CRED policy in the autumn. Other areas will be explored on a rolling basis across 2015-2019.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 11</u>: In fulfilment of its duties under Article 12 of the UNCRC, the Department of Education should make it a requirement that all schools establish School Councils. Within this, School Councils</p>	<p>As part of his statement on advancing shared education, the Minister made clear his aim that every school will have an effective method of encouraging young people’s participation in the life of the school.</p>

<p>need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be fully representative of the school body and of all year groups;</li> <li>• Provide a mechanism for consulting children and young people on all school matters that affect them, including plans for shared education activities;</li> <li>• Support children and young people in forming and expressing their views; and</li> <li>• Include appropriate mechanisms for the views of children and young people to then be considered and given due weight by the school.</li> </ul>	<p>The Department is already committed to encouraging all schools to find meaningful ways of giving children and young people a voice and of listening and responding to their views and continues to encourage schools to adopt the Democra-schools programme.</p> <p>The DE website contains information on school councils, which are one mechanism by which effective pupil participation can be achieved, and links to the Democra-School programme. However DE does not wish to be prescriptive about the approach.</p> <p>DE is currently preparing a Circular that will provide further guidance for Principals and Boards of Governors on how to encourage pupil participation in decision making in schools. The circular will include information and guidelines on best practice to help schools identify the method and degree of participation that best suits the needs of their pupils.</p>
<p><i>Recommendation 12:</i> The necessary legislation should be brought forward for schools and other educational institutions to be designated as ‘public authorities’ under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and thus to be required to comply with the statutory duties to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. In doing this, consideration should be given to whether it is possible to reduce the demands that will be placed on schools and other educational institutions in terms of meeting their specific responsibilities under Section 75 whilst maintaining their core duties to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 13:</i> The Education and Skills Authority, in conjunction with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, should establish a unit to provide training, produce support materials and to advise schools and educational institutions in relation to</p>	<p>The Minister has accepted the principles behind these recommendations and agrees that schools have an important role in promoting equality of opportunity and good relations.</p> <p>The matter of legislation to designate schools as ‘public authorities’ is one for OFMdFM in the first instance and the Minister is writing to FM and dFM to communicate the detail of these recommendations and to seek their views on the practicalities of designating schools for Section 75 purposes.</p> <p>Turning to recommendation 13, the Department will consider the support arrangements that schools would need following a decision by OFMdFM on whether and how to designate schools as ‘public authorities’.</p>

<p>preparing, implementing and monitoring the equality schemes they would be required to produce under Section 75. It is expected that one aspect of meeting the duty to promote good relations will include engagement in shared education initiatives.</p>	
<p><i>Recommendation 14:</i> The Department of Education should undertake a review of how shared education, and the enhanced collaboration between mainstream schools, special schools and educational support centres, can most effectively meet the needs of children and young people with disabilities, those with emotional and behavioural difficulties and those with special educational needs. The review should focus on the development of effective models for collaboration that can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure, wherever possible, that children and young people are taught in mainstream schools; and</li> <li>• For the small minority of children and young people where mainstream schooling is not suitable, that they have meaningful opportunities to learn with children and young people in mainstream school environments.</li> </ul>	<p>The Minister has accepted this recommendation. It is the Department’s policy that, wherever possible, children and young people can be educated together in mainstream settings. A review of the existing legislative framework for SEN and Inclusion has been completed and work is progressing on a new Special Educational Needs Bill, which the Minister expects to bring to the Executive shortly. This underpins the existing commitment to inclusion.</p> <p>An ETI ‘Guide to Collaborative Practice’ which is based on learning from twenty four special schools that worked collaboratively on a joint curriculum project of their choosing with a neighbouring mainstream school is in place. This guidance sets out the key elements arising from these projects which support and encourage collaborative working. It provides a template, alongside a synopsis of the case study projects, to all schools and Area Learning Communities to use to build their capacity to respond more effectively to a wider range of pupils needs through collaborative working.</p> <p>Additionally, the Department will continue work to develop the role of Area Learning Communities and to encourage the particular contribution within ALCs of special schools. All Special Schools and Learning Support Centres have received guidance advising them, as active members, to continue to optimise the opportunities available across ALCs (which will include shared education opportunities) to provide access to a broad and balanced offer of qualifications for learning programmes.</p>

<p><u>Recommendation15:</u> The Department of Education, Education and Library Boards and the CCMS should play an active role in promoting shared education through the area-based planning processes for post-primary and primary schools. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being proactive in identifying opportunities for shared education that may not have been considered and setting out options for schools and colleges to consider; and</li> <li>• Supporting and advising schools that wish to develop shared education arrangements, including providing advice on how two or more schools can transfer their status into a ‘shared school’ whereby they maintain their respective forms of ethos.</li> </ul>	<p>The Minister has accepted this recommendation and has indicated his intention to bring forward guidance on sharing options for schools and communities that will assist in providing practical advice relevant for a development proposal.</p> <p>Area Planning Terms of Reference and subsequent guidance already encourages Shared Education options to be brought forward.</p> <p>Processes are already in place for schools wishing to transform to integrated status and for schools wishing to expand.</p> <p>Together: Building a United Community Strategy commits to establishing 10 shared education campuses. The Shared Education Campuses Programme, which was launched in January 2014, will complement the work already underway within DE on shared education and Area Planning and will be targeted at infrastructure projects aimed at improving or facilitating sharing initiatives within local schools.</p> <p>The programme will target schools that can demonstrate the following types of sharing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared Facilities – where new facilities are built to allow for shared use by all schools within the model;</li> <li>• Enhanced Facilities – where current facilities are improved to allow for shared use by all schools within the model; and</li> <li>• Shared Campus – where schools are co-located and share infrastructure e.g. the Lisanelly model.</li> </ul> <p>Sixteen expressions of interest were received. Projects to be advanced are to be announced in June 2014 with commencement of the first projects expected in 2016-17.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation16:</u> Where there is sufficient, viable and consistent parental demand, the Department of Education should actively</p>	<p>While accepting this recommendation in principle, the Minister has made it clear that this is with a caveat that any proposal must be</p>



<p>support the establishment of schools and other educational institutions with a particular religious, philosophical or cultural ethos.</p>	<p>sustainable and capable of delivering high quality education.</p> <p>Work is in progress with the Transferors Representative Council and Catholic Trustees regarding the potential for a jointly managed school model which would provide an alternative model for educating pupils together at the same school and that would have the support of the main churches.</p>
<p><i>Recommendation 17:</i> In relation to all existing schools, the Department of Education should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a transformation process for schools where there is clear parental demand wishing to adopt a particular ethos – whether, for example, this be faith-based, integrated, secular or Irish Medium – and to ensure that it is user friendly and not bureaucratic and that parents are made aware of their powers under the processes established;</li> <li>• Identify how, in the light of parental demand, the process can be made easier whereby a school can incorporate the badge of a particular school type or sector in its title; and</li> <li>• While recognizing the responsibility of the Department to ensure the viability of schools in each local area, where there is clear evidence of over-subscription, it should allow existing schools to expand, in a phased and careful manner, in order to meet the demand that exists among parents.</li> </ul>	<p>The Minister has accepted this recommendation. Processes are already in place for schools wishing to transform to integrated status and for schools wishing to expand. Boards of Governors are responsible for setting the ethos of a school. This applies to schools of all management types.</p>

Recommendation 18: The Northern Ireland Executive should, without delay, introduce the necessary legislation to prevent schools from selecting children on the basis of academic ability and require schools to develop admissions criteria that are truly inclusive and egalitarian in nature.

Recommendation 19: The Department of Education, through the area-based planning process should consider how best to plan for sustainable post-primary schools with all-ability intakes. In doing this, the Department should have regard for parental demand in each local area for schools with a different religious, philosophical or cultural ethos and make every effort to ensure diversity of provision to meet this demand where it is feasible.

Recommendation 20: The Department of Education should initiate a fundamental review of the use of selection within schools with all-ability intakes to explore the benefits and limitations of different models of banding and streaming. The review should be tasked with making recommendations regarding how best to take forward selection within schools so that all children and young people reach their full potential.

The Minister has accepted these recommendations. The Department's policy position, supported by international evidence, on the limited educational value of academic selection at the age of 10 or 11 is clear. However, legislation can only be introduced with cross-party support which, to date, has not been forthcoming.