



Summary of Fermanagh Shared Education Programme

Shared Education is where schools deliver part of the curriculum jointly on a cross community basis with their nearest neighbouring school from a different sector. In practice it means pupils from different schools coming together for joint classes, usually for half a day per week, each week during the academic year. On average, this equates to approximately 50 – 60 shared hours per school year for the participating pupils.

The Fermanagh Shared Education Programme commenced in September 2009 and progress in the first 3 years of the Programme is reflected in the uptake, in terms of participating schools, pupils and the extent and level of shared classes.

No. of Participating Schools

The following table shows the high proportion of schools participating each year in Shared Education. Note, that there are 43 primary schools and 14 post-primary schools in the County.

| No. of Schools involved in Fermanagh Shared Education Programme (2009 – 2012/3) | | | |
|--|---|---|-------------------------------|
| | No. of Primary Schools Involved* | No. of Post Primary Schools Involved | Total Schools Involved |
| Yr 1 (2009/10) | 43 | 6 | 49 |
| Yr 2 (2010/11) | 41 | 10 | 51 |
| Yr 3 (2011/12) | 42 | 14 | 56 |
| Yr 4 (2012/13) | 44 | 14 | 58 |

*3 Church of Ireland National Schools in the Rol are involved in the Programme

The above shows that schools wish to be involved in Shared Education and that that interest is not waning.

No. of Pupils participating in Shared Education

The following table shows the increasing number of pupils participating each year in Shared Education.

| No. of Pupils involved in Fermanagh Shared Education Programme (2009 – 2012/3) | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | No. of Primary Pupils Involved | No. of Post Primary Pupils Involved | Total Pupils Involved | % increase from Yr 1 |
| Yr 1 (2009/10) | 1658 | 202 | 1,860 | N/A |
| Yr 2 (2010/11) | 2404 | 324 | 2,728 | 47% |
| Yr 3 (2011/12) | 2645 | 672 | 3,317 | 78% |
| Yr 4 (2012/13) | 3442 | 822 | 4,264 | 129% |



The number of pupils involved in Shared Education has increased by 2,404 pupils from Year 1, which represents an increase of 129%, demonstrating the high level of demand for Shared Education in the County. Note that the number of pupils enrolled in Fermanagh schools in 2011/12 was as follows:

- Primary School pupils: 5,372
- Post Primary School pupils: 5,149

In the region of 64% of primary pupils in Fermanagh will be involved in Shared Education this year 2012/13 and 41% of all pupils in the County will participate in Shared Education this year.

No. of Shared Classes / Projects

The number of classes getting involved in Shared Education has increased incrementally over the 4 year period, as summarized in the table below.

| No. of Shared Classes - Fermanagh Shared Education Programme (2009 – 2012/3) | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| | No. of Classes (Primary) | No. of Shared Classes (Post Primary) | Total Shared Classes |
| Yr 1 (2009/10) | 30 | 17 | 47 |
| Yr 2 (2010/11) | 37 | 15 | 52 |
| Yr 3 (2011/12) | 52 | 21 | 73 |
| Yr 4 (2012/13) | 57 | 21 | 78 |

Community Relations Training for School Staff

Training was delivered to help schools in the implementation of Shared Education. The following table shows the participation in training that was organised by the Fermanagh Trust for schools.

| No. of School Staff Trained in Community Relations Fermanagh Shared Education Programme (2009 – 2012/3) | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| | No. of Staff Trained |
| Yr 1 (2009/10) | 59 |
| Yr 2 (2010/11) | 114 |
| Yr 3 (2011/12) | 106 |
| Total | 279 |

Further staff training is planned for Year 4.



Joint Training / Events for Teachers, Parents, Boards of Governors and Families

In Year 2 & 3 of the Programme, the school partnerships were encouraged to further develop their linkages. To this end, partnerships provided joint training and events for parents, staff, members of boards of governors and also wider family members. The following table summarises the levels of participation at these events.

| Partnership Building (Joint Training & Events) | | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| | Parents | Boards of Governors | School Staff | Family Members | Total |
| Yr 2 (2010/11) | 429 | 89 | 458 | 404 | 1380 |
| Yr 3 (2011/12) | 702 | 121 | 498 | 1013 | 2334 |

Again, it shows the growth in the joint collaboration taking place within the cross-community partnerships.

Respecting Difference Workshops for Parents

In addition, training was provided for parents on Respecting Difference in Years 2 & 3. The number of parents who attended the training is summarized in the table below.

| No. of Parent Attendees at Respecting Difference Training Workshops Fermanagh Shared Education Programme (2009 – 2012/3) | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| | No. of Parents who Attended |
| Yr 1 (2009/10) | N/A |
| Yr 2 (2010/11) | 230 |
| Yr 3 (2011/12) | 169 |
| Total | 399 |

Another series of parent workshops are planned for Year 4 (2012/13).



Evaluation

External evaluations of the Programme concluded that Shared Education in Fermanagh has:

1. Helped break down barriers between communities and helped increase trust and improved relationships between different sectors;
2. Increased relationships and friendships between pupils from partner schools;
3. Reduced fear, suspicion and mistrust of the 'other' community;
4. Contributed to greater understanding of and respect for cultural diversity;
5. Increased awareness of the benefits of shared education including educational, societal and economic benefits.

Area Planning

In February 2012, the Department of Education issued Guidance on Area Planning to develop a network of viable and sustainable schools that are of the right type, right size, located in the right place and have a focus on raising standards. The Terms of Reference for this work includes the in its aims and objectives:

- To reduce duplication of provision;
- To identify realistic, innovative and creative solutions to address need, including opportunities for shared schooling on a cross sectoral basis; and
- To maximise the use and sharing of the existing schools estate.

A number of school partnerships in Fermanagh have requested that shared models are explored in the area planning process.

Programme for Government (PfG)

The commitments in the PfG, provide an opportunity to sustain the impact and benefits of Shared Education:

1. Establish a Ministerial Advisory Group to explore and bring forward recommendations to the Minister for Education to advance shared education; and
2. Ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes and substantially increase the number of schools sharing facilities by 2015.



Concluding Notes

1. Shared Education has strengthened curriculum delivery and enhanced educational opportunities for pupils;
2. There is a demand from school communities for Shared Education;
3. The PfG and the on-going area planning process provide opportunities to sustain and embed shared education;
4. There is a need for joined up policy planning & implementation to ensure that shared education is effectively mainstreamed, to maximise its potential.