

FORT HILL INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT



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Mr P McCallion
Clerk to the Committee
Committee of Education
Room 375, Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
Belfast

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Dear Mr McCallion

I wish to respond to your request for written evidence with regard to Integrated Education.

Following a successful ballot of parents and approval from the Department of Education, Fort Hill Primary officially gained Integrated Status as from 1st September 2009 and now is a controlled integrated school.

As a school we welcome children of all faiths and ethnic backgrounds while still retaining an overall caring Christian ethos where children can be educated in a safe and friendly environment. This in itself is not that different from most schools; however, as a school we have seen the beneficial impact of **TRUE Integrated Education** on our pupils, parents and staff. It is far more than rubbing shoulders with fellow human beings, whatever their size, on a daily basis who we think *may have* differences to ourselves.

Integrated Education is **not a porridge pot** where everyone is blended together and only share the same facilities. I liken true Integrated Education to a **salad bowl**, learning together but also being educated about each other's different traditions, views and faiths whilst being proud of our own individual culture and learning always, to respect others different from ourselves.

Over the last five years of gradual transition, Fort Hill's journey has totally widened and enriched adults' and children's views and why our school is now different to many others. I firmly believe this is a main reason why we have become heavily oversubscribed with 67 applications for 26 nursery places and 51 applications for 30 P1 places this year leaving many families disappointed about not getting the school of their choice. The Department of Education is currently not meeting the demand for TRUE Integrated Education within Lisburn City.

I would recommend that you visit schools such as Fort Hill to experience first-hand what we are achieving with our whole community.

We change tomorrow's world by what we build into our children today.

Yours faithfully

C S Anderson
Principal