

On 1st July 2014 the Minister for Education announced the Shared Education Campus proposals selected to be advanced to the production of a full business case. We were delighted that the proposal submitted for the Moy Shared Campus was selected as one of the three projects approved by the Minister.

We therefore decided it was important that our joint management committee of (Moy Area Playgroup, Moy Regional Primary School and St. John's Primary School) should make a response to the request for written evidence for the Shared/Integrated Education Inquiry. This response has been formulated and agreed by all members of our joint management committee.

SHARED/INTEGRATED EDUCATION ENQUIRY

JOINT RESPONSE FROM MOY AREA PLAYGROUP, MOY REGIONAL PS AND ST. JOHN'S PS.

1. Nature and definition of Shared Education.

- 1.1 We fully agree with the definition for Shared Education provided by the Ministerial Advisory Group. "Shared education involves two or more schools or other educational sectors working in collaboration with the aim of delivering educational benefits to learners, promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion."**

In the Protocol Document for the second call for expression of interest in the Shared Campuses programme, section 2.3 states ‘Shared Education’ means the provision of opportunities for children and young people from different community backgrounds to learn together.” We agree with this statement but would more inclusive by adding “and adults” after children and young people. Our aim is to have a shared campus open to all ages.

2. Identification of the key enablers and barriers for Shared education in no significant order.

Enablers:

2.1 Parental and pupil Support

We believed that throughout all our discussions on “a shared campus” it was important that all stakeholders (Parents, pupils, staff, governors, trustees and the wider community) were kept informed.

2.2 Protection of Ethos and identity

The management bodies of all three institutions decided from the early stages that the retention of our own distinct ethos was essential. Also it was of paramount importance that we respected difference and promoted a culture of inclusion, tolerance and diversity.

2.3 Leadership and Management

We ensured that key personnel in the management of all institutions involved, had a clear vision and the absolute determination to ensure our proposal for a shared education facility became a reality.

2.4 Economic rationale

Detailed research carried out in Scotland has clearly shown that a shared facility would reduce the overall per-pupil cost of new schools, while providing extensive facilities for pupils and the wider community. This research quoted a “savings of around 25 percent in capital costs are made compared to two free standing schools” (quoted from Education and a shared future).

2.5 Church/Education authority support

It is essential that the trustees and governing authorities of all institutions involved give their full support to any shared education projects. In our case the CCMS/relevant trustees and transferors/ SELB/PEAGS have now given our project full support despite reservations in the initial stages. This was very important as the project would not be able to proceed without their agreement and acceptance of our vision of a Shared Campus in Moy.

2.6 Cross community/Cross party political support

Since 2007 our project has continually consulted/informed and enlisted the widespread support and agreement of the local community. We have met and presented our vision for a shared campus on numerous occasions to politicians, education ministers, education committees, bishops, church representatives, teaching unions and other community groups. On each occasion we received unanimous support for our vision of a shared campus.

2.7 Availability/provision of effective cross community education programmes

For this past twenty years St. John's PS and Moy Regional have jointly taken part in a range of educational activities and programmes.

As both schools are geographically very closely located there has historically been links between the Moy Regional and St. John's. These links became more structured/formal with the introduction of the EMU (Education for Mutual Understanding) programme funded by DENI. This programme enabled all classes in both schools meeting together on at least three occasions at a neutral venue to undertake a variety of curriculum based lessons.

These lessons included the areas of Drama, Art, Environmental Studies, Sport, History/Geography and Community Relations.

EMU was then replaced by the SCRIP (Schools Community Relations Programme) and this involved classes being taught lessons in each other's schools by external service providers. Again these lessons were similar to the areas listed above but there was a greater emphasis on teaching Community Relations topics.

With these closer links now having been developed we then undertook joint parent information, Parent and staff training activities, joint celebrations for Christmas and joint after school/summer activities in the areas of music, sport, drama and dance. SCRIP has now been replaced by CRED (Community Relations Equality Diversity) and both schools continue to be involved in cross community projects.

The schools then undertook, with the support of the Governors of both schools, PCPP (Primary Curriculum Partnership Programme) which was funded by the SELB and International Fund for Ireland. This programme involved children visiting each other's schools and being team taught Mutual Understanding from PDMU by the teachers. Staff and governors from both schools also attended training together in community relations (looking at respecting differences and flags and emblems). This very creative programme began in 2011 and ended in 2013 and greatly enhanced the quality of community relations activities which have been ongoing in both schools.

2.8 Government Policy/Right time for change

With the publication of the Bain Report and the impending closure of small schools a subcommittee of the Governors of Moy Regional and St. John's began to meet regularly to try and prevent closure of the Moy Regional and the possible negative impact this would have on our community. As St. John's had been assessed by CCMS as being a viable school but requiring a complete new building, the idea of a single site campus for all educational providers in the area became a vision for this subcommittee of governors. At this time the Moy Area Playgroup became part of this vision as they had recently taken up temporary accommodation in St. John's due to flooding of their premises (at the GAA grounds) and were in need of permanent accommodation.

As a result of discussions by the subcommittee of governors in 2008/09 we agreed the following series of aims/objectives to achieve our shared vision.

- Increase shared resources to provide better educational experiences for all the children.**
- Enhance Playgroup facilities and provision for the whole community.**
- Enhance community relations**
- To secure excellent educational and sports/recreational facilities and the creation of a community resource space for all age groups.**
- Explore the possibility of developing a single site educational centre which enhances and maintains the respective cultural identities/Ethos within our community.**

On 9th May 2013 ‘Together: Building a United Community’ was announced by the First and deputy First Ministers. This contained a range of proposals including details on Shared Education Campuses. This was a watershed in that this was exactly what the community in Moy was aiming for and gave our vision the credibility it needed to keep striving towards our goal of a shared campus.

Barriers:

2.9 Fear of change

This undoubtedly will be a factor. In Moy all of the education providers hope to move to a new purpose built building on a neutral site. This will be a completely new experience for us all. Most people are afraid/wary of change as it can disturb their routines and involves adapting to new systems and ways of working.

2.10 Governance

Issues of ownership, management and community use of the building will need to be carefully organised and agreed by the three management bodies involved.

2.11 Availability of funding for capital build and site procurement.

Where is the funding coming from? It needs to be made available as soon as projects are identified and are given approval to proceed to the building stage. A suitable site needs to be identified quickly and agreed upon by the education authorities and management of the three institutions involved.

3. Our analysis of models of good practice in other jurisdictions.

3.1 Benview Shared Campus visit (3rd June 2013)

Eight members of our joint management committees and a member of the Fermanagh Trust travelled to Benview Shared Campus in Glasgow. During our time there we toured the schools, interviewed the principals, teachers and members of the joint parent support. We were all very impressed and realised this could be replicated in N. Ireland. We are also very aware of research (Education and a shared future) regarding other shared campuses in Scotland and that these are also working very successfully together.

4. Priorities and actions needed to improve sharing/Shared Education

4.1 Shared Education Projects identified should be prioritised and completed much more quickly.

4.2 A wide variety of projects developed to enable greater opportunities for children, young people and adults to meet within communities (including cross community programmes).