

# SHARED AND INTEGRATED EDUCATION INQUIRY

## REQUEST FOR WRITTEN EVIDENCE

### Terms of Reference No 1

#### **Nature and definition of Shared Education and Integrated Education across all educational phases – including the need for a formal statutory definition in statute to facilitate and encourage Shared Education**

The Western Education and Library Board (WELB) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Committee for Education's inquiry into Shared/Integrated Education. The WELB believes that 'Shared Education' is *'an umbrella term'* (currently without a statutory basis) which is encompassed in the following diverse models that it has supported:

1. Non-Denominational Controlled Primary Schools with significant multi-denominational enrolment , e.g. Ballykelly PS; Culmore PS; Greenhaw PS; Londonderry Model PS; Sion Mills PS, Strabane Controlled PS;
2. Controlled Irish Medium Education;
3. Collaboration between schools from different sectors;
4. Area Learning Communities involving schools from different sectors e.g. Post Primary Area Learning Communities and the emerging Primary Area Learning Communities;
5. Integrated Education arrangements i.e. transformed and designated integrated schools' e.g. Groarty PS;
6. Shared Sustainable Educational Campuses (e.g. Lisanelly Shared Education Campus (LSEC), Limavady High School and St Mary's Limavady and the proposed Brookeborough Shared Campus);
7. Proposed Shared Cross-Border Collaboration between Schools involving St Mary's HS, Brollagh; and
8. Collaboration with the Further Education Colleges.

The WELB is of the view that the way forward is in *'integrating education'* and in terms of its understanding of Shared Education, would therefore suggest that formal Integrated Education is only one facet of Shared Education. It does not believe that Shared Education and Integrated Education are synonymous. The Integrated Sector is a legal entity, with a statutory underpinning, and through its admissions criteria and, more recently, it enrolls approximately equal numbers of pupils from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds (40% of each), as well as some from other religious and cultural backgrounds (20%), and also caters for the religious observances of both the Catholic and Protestant sectors.

In light of Article 64 (1) of The Education Reform Order (NI) 1989, which states: *'It shall be the duty of the Department to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education, that is to say the education together at school of Protestant*

*and Roman Catholic pupils*', the WELB is of the view that the legal definition of integrated education is becoming increasingly difficult to define in its own right, with the introduction of the category 'Others' ie pupils from other religious and cultural backgrounds. Examination of the legal definition prompts the question as to what '*integrated education*' means in the Order, as opposed to 'Integrated Education' and if it is implied that '*integrated education*' is an 'umbrella term' and 'Integrated Education' is a Sector within it. Since there is no current legislative provision for the accommodation of 'Others', the WELB would query if existing legislation in this area requires to be suitably amended with a view to encompassing all sections of our society.

In light of the above, it is very important, therefore, to point out that whilst the criteria of controlled schools do not dwell on the issue of religious balance; nevertheless, the composition in terms of the religious intake of many of them is similar to that of Integrated Schools – with the intakes of such schools being made up of Protestant, Catholic and Others, See Pages 3 and 4 overleaf. Such schools cannot have a particular religious denominational ethos. The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986, Article 21 (2) states that: 'In a controlled school the religious instruction required by paragraph (1) shall be undenominational religious instruction'. The WELB, therefore, considers that such schools, whilst not formally categorised as 'Integrated Schools', can increasingly be regarded, in practice, as 'integrated' and as such the Department of Education (DE) has also a duty to encourage and facilitate their development.

The WELB is also of the view that because the Controlled Sector is non-denominational in nature, all models of Shared Education, therefore, sit comfortably within this Sector's remit. The important difference here is that a community has chosen to send its children to its nearest controlled school because it is non-denominational in category. Some controlled schools prefer a governance model that includes four Transferor Representatives whilst others have opted for controlled/integrated status, with two Transferor and two Trustee Representatives respectively, and also prefer to be managed and supported by an Employing Authority (i.e. ELB or CCMS), as opposed to being grant-maintained.

In the promotion of Shared Education and Integrated Education, the WELB would be concerned that the existing work, in terms of natural sharing, within its controlled schools, as detailed below, would be disadvantaged in terms of receiving support from the Signature Project for Shared Education, as the planned funding available for Shared Education is directed towards two, or more, schools from different communities, working together. This would seem to ignore the natural sharing which has evolved, over a number of years, in some schools within the WELB, as shown overleaf.

There is a need for all schools to be treated fairly in the promotion of Shared Education, including the need for the DE to ensure its Open Enrolment and Home to

School Transport Policies do not disadvantage or displace provision in some sectors, due to the growth of other sectors.

Census Data - October 2013

1 Breakdown of all schools in WELB area (excluding Nursery) by religious denomination		Protestant		Catholic		Other Christian / Non-Christian / No religion		Total pupils
		N	%	N	%	N	%	
No	Sector							
56	Controlled Primary	5,936	69%	1,591	19%	1,072	12%	8,599
117	Maintained Primary	103	1%	19,151	97%	521	3%	19,775
5	Controlled Secondary	2,608	90%	98	3%	193	7%	2,899
19	Maintained Secondary	50	1%	9,385	99%	85	1%	9,520
4	Controlled Grammar	1,934	72%	583	22%	184	7%	2,701
4	Grant Maintained Integrated Primary	332	27%	629	50%	291	23%	1,252
3	Grant Maintained Integrated Post-primary	607	31%	1,155	59%	202	10%	1,964
9	Voluntary Grammar	993	12%	7,184	85%	247	3%	8,424
<b>217</b>		<b>12,563</b>	23%	<b>39,776</b>	72%	<b>2,795</b>	5%	<b>55,134</b>

2 Controlled Primary Schools with 10%+ Catholic Enrolment		Protestant		Catholic		Other Christian / Non-Christian / No religion		Total pupils
		N	%	N	%	N	%	
0207	Ballougry Primary School	28	30%	61	66%	4	4%	93
0208	Ballykelly Primary School	115	42%	144	52%	18	6%	277
0209	Bellarena Primary School	30	79%	4	11%	4	11%	38
0210	Belleek(2) Primary School	32	65%	11	22%	6	12%	49
0217	Culmore Primary School	13	15%	63	74%	9	11%	85
0244	Greenhaw Primary School	5	2%	284	96%	6	2%	295
0245	Groarty Primary School (Controlled Integrated)	4	10%	32	80%	4	10%	40
0248	Jones Memorial Primary School	121	67%	27	15%	33	18%	181
0256	Lisnagelvin Primary School	379	67%	70	12%	117	21%	566
0257	Londonderry Model Primary School	24	7%	252	74%	63	19%	339
0269	Sion Mills Primary School	88	33%	171	65%	4	2%	263

0271	Strabane Controlled Primary School	86	33%	146	55%	32	12%	264
0320	Gaelscoil Neachitain	0	0%	64	94%	4	6%	68
<b>13</b>	<b>Controlled Primary</b>	<b>925</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>1329</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>2,558</b>
<b>23.2%</b>		<b>16%</b>		<b>84%</b>		<b>28%</b>		<b>30%</b>

		Protestant		Catholic		Other Christian / Non-Christian / No religion		Total pupils
		N	%	N	%	N	%	
<b>3</b>	<b>Controlled Grammar Schools with 10%+ Catholic Enrolment</b>							
1303	Limavady Grammar School	528	59%	304	34%	67	7%	899
1306	Strabane Academy	366	57%	239	37%	34	5%	639
<b>2</b>	<b>Controlled Grammar</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>1538</b>
<b>50.0%</b>		<b>46%</b>		<b>93%</b>		<b>55%</b>		<b>57%</b>

		Protestant		Catholic		Other Christian / Non-Christian / No religion		Total pupils
		N	%	N	%	N	%	
<b>4</b>	<b>Maintained Primary Schools with 10%+ Protestant Enrolment</b>							
0513	Craigbrack Primary School	4	17%	16	67%	4	17%	24
<b>1</b>	<b>Maintained Primary</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>1%</b>		<b>4%</b>		<b>0%</b>		<b>1%</b>		<b>0%</b>

The WELB would strongly recommend that a **baselining exercise** be undertaken, in the form of an analysis of the intakes to all schools in Northern Ireland (NI), to get a strategic overview as to the extent to which Shared Education is already taking place in practice, as in some cases there may not be recognition of this, and in also to get a better understanding of where funding for Shared Education needs to be targeted. This analysis needs to be comprehensive and take into account the following categories of schools so that the relevant models can be applied according to the nature and appropriateness of the sharing being undertaken:

- Nursery Schools – Controlled, Nursery Units and Community Nursery Schools;
- Controlled Primary and Post Primary Schools (i.e. non-denominational schools);
- Controlled Integrated Primary Schools
- Maintained Primary and Post Primary Schools;
- Grant Maintained Integrated Primary and Post Primary Schools;
- Controlled Special Schools;
- Controlled Irish Medium Schools, Irish Medium Schools and Units;
- Voluntary and Voluntary Maintained Post Primary Schools; and
- Bi-lateral Schools.

It is important to understand the extent to which certain schools can already be recognised as '*shared*' before creating an additional '*category*' of school under the auspices of Shared Education, as this may only be duplicating an existing model.

The WELB is of the view that where Shared Education has been, and is being practised and embedded in certain controlled primary and post primary non-denominational schools, it should be recognised in the proposals contained in the Signature Project for Shared Education.

## **Terms of Reference Number 2**

### **Key Barrier/Enablers for Shared and Integrated Education**

The key enablers for Shared and Integrated Education are:

- Strategic Plan in place by the DE for cross-sectoral collaboration;
- DSC Shared Education Signature Project and Shared Campuses Project are inextricably linked and should work in partnership (ie Estates and Curriculum);
- Policy Framework for Shared Education should be consistent with DE's other Policies including the Community Relations Equality and Diversity (CRED) Policy;
- Strong collaborative leadership within schools;
- Schools' curricula sufficiently advanced before responding to the challenges of Shared Education;

- The constitution of the Boards of Governors is not ‘partisan’ but reflects the religious balance in the school to facilitate the promotion of a Shared/Integrated ethos;
- History of close collaboration;
- \*\*Rurality/Close geographical location of schools;
- Cohesion within the community and support for Shared Education (fundamental) and ability to build on community support;
- Facility for transformation from one sector to another;
- No one sector owns the land on which the schools are built (eg LSEC);
- Appropriate governance model for Shared Education Campuses; and
- The identification of appropriate legislation to allow Shared Campuses to be created; and
- Academic Selection.

\*\*There is evidence in the WELB that small rural schools have much to offer each other, in terms of Shared Education, as recently affirmed by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) in the case of a recent Primary School’s inspection in Co Fermanagh, which was classified as ‘Outstanding’, and where it was noted the primary school had: ‘well established links’ with its neighbouring small schools in the areas of music, drama and physical education. The concept of a ‘Shared Education Cluster’ also exists in the WELB where Principals and Senior Teachers deliver shared staff development, shared pupil learning and shared parental evenings.

The key barriers to Shared Education are:

- The lack of statutory underpinning with no legislative requirement to share;
- No Strategic Plan in place for cross-sectoral collaboration;
- DSC Shared Education Project and Shared Campuses Project working in isolation;
- Policy Framework for Shared Education not consistent with the DE’s other Policies;
- Weak collaborative leadership within schools;
- The composition of Boards of Governors is not representative of the religious balance in the school to promote a Shared/Integrated ethos;
- Rurality/Geographical location of schools which are distant from each other;
- Public perception of Shared Education and potential community opposition;
- Proposer of the Shared School (cf Article 14) [Employing Authority]; i.e. Composition of Board of Governors, ethos, etc;
- Inflexibility of the DE Handbook with regard to Shared Schools;
- One sector owns the land on which the schools are built, leading to an adverse impact on public perception;
- Uncertainty as to how Shared Education will be financed in the long term;
- Management and remuneration of teachers on a dual/shared site and how employment-related issues (Terms and Conditions of Service) are dealt with;
- A need for an appropriate Scheme of Management for Shared Schools;
- Admissions Policy/Criteria for Shared Schools;

- Lack of financial and legal representation on any Group responsible for Shared Education;
- Lack of funding through the Common Funding Formula;
- Implications for Home to School Transport Policy;
- The negative impact of ‘capping’ on some schools’ intakes by the DE; and
- Academic Selection.

### **Terms of Reference No 3**

#### **Identification and analysis of alternative approaches and models of good practice in other jurisdictions in terms of policy interventions and programmes**

The WELB is of the view that this aspect of the Terms of Reference is not relevant in that historical factors, the Local Management of Schools and the large number of small schools in Northern Ireland, all make it difficult to implement models of good practice from other jurisdictions. However, in the WELB, models of good practice exist in Ballykelly PS; Culmore PS; Greenhaw PS; Londonderry Model PS; Sion Mills PS, and Strabane Controlled Primary Schools, without any additional funding for Shared Education at present – an issue that needs to be addressed in the ‘roll-out’ of the DSC Shared Education Signature Project.

### **Terms of Reference No 4**

#### **Priorities and actions that need to be taken to improve sharing and integration – including the effectiveness of the relevant parts of the CRED policy; the need to engage more effectively with parents/carers; and the role of Special Schools**

In order to improve the levels of sharing and integration, there is a need to ensure a coherent Policy Framework exists, which establishes a clear purpose and rationale for the approach. The CRED Policy has a wide scope in terms of addressing issues of equality and good relations across all the Section 75 Groups. Since this has only been in place three years, the extent to which this Policy is impacting on schools needs to be assessed. The assessment of the effectiveness of the CRED Policy will be an outcome of the forthcoming inspection by the ETI later this year. The outcome of this process will need to inform how the Policy should develop and what actions need to be taken to strengthen this area of educational priorities in NI.

Shared Education is clearly linked to the CRED Policy in respect of those aspects related to reconciliation and good relations work within and between schools. However, there is clearly a need for the development of a Policy Framework in this area which sets out clearly the rationale, aims and purposes of this work. Such a Policy needs to take cognisance of a range of other relevant educational policies, including the CRED Policy and the ‘Every School a Good School’ suite of Policies. In the absence of such a Policy, there is the potential for ‘Shared Education’ to be misunderstood and misinterpreted. It is the WELB’s view that ‘Shared Education’



needs to be recognised as one approach to good relations work. However, it is not the only one.

Shared Education, to date, between mainstream schools has been supported with external funding. Given that a range of programmes, involving sharing, have already taken place, future practice in this area needs to be informed by rigorous evaluation, to objectively ensure that resources are being used effectively and are achieving the outcomes identified in the Policy. In advance of 'rolling out' the Signature Project, there is a requirement for the DE to have a strategy for the monitoring of funding and, therefore, a requirement to baseline the current position to identify the sharing and collaboration in schools, funded and non-funded. A baseline will then allow for:

- any financial data to be collated of the cost of 'rolling out' Shared Education to date;
- educational or non-educational measurements against which the funding for Shared Education can be compared; and
- consideration of a cost/benefit analysis before committing to new funding.

The scale and scope of the DSC Signature Project for Shared Education provides an opportunity for a robust baselining exercise and evaluation of the impact of the Programme.

It is evident that, to date, there has been a commitment to Shared Education as long as there is adequate funding to support the teaching staff. The WELB would ask the question: *'If schools were asked to subsidise the additional cost of Shared Education from their own resources, would there be the same commitment to it as there was when they were funded for its implementation?'*

Prior to committing to Shared Education Programmes, schools will require reassurances with regard to the following:

- duration of additional funding for Shared Education;
- funding and managing absence cover for sickness and maternity leave;
- cost of training;
- managing staff during school closures;
- cost of travel; and
- *commitment required if funding is withdrawn.*

In relation to working with parents and carers, there is already a strong commitment to this partnership reflected in 'Every School a Good School: a Policy for School Improvement'. This Policy may need some further development in the context of a 'Shared Education Policy'.

In closing, and in line with the Terms of Reference supplied, the WELB is of the view that with regard to:

Terms of Reference No 1:

- 1(a) better definitions and criteria are needed in statute to define 'shared' and 'integrated' education as 'Shared Education' means different things to different people;
- 1(b) Shared Education should be implemented with a view to it being 'mainstreamed' into the education system in NI and should not be viewed in isolation as 'a project';
- 1(c) criteria should be drawn up that demonstrate 'mainstreaming' has been achieved in the absence of funding in the long-term;
- 1(d) schools should not be funded unless their vision is to embed Shared Education as 'a way of working';
- 1(e) a capacity building programme should be developed for school leaders that concentrates on developing collaborative leadership and equips schools with the 'tools' to monitor and evaluate progress along the Shared Education continuum; and
- 1(f) thought needs to be given to those schools that do not engage in Shared Education and the impact of their disengagement on the system as a whole.

Terms of Reference No 2:

The enablers and barriers should be addressed as soon as possible.

Terms of Reference No 3:

Existing models of good practice should be recognised and built upon as opposed to importing 'models from other jurisdictions'.

Terms of Reference No 4:

A coherent Policy Framework should be developed for Shared Education that complements existing relevant educational policies.